Public Realm Action Plan

July 2022
The Downtown San Francisco Public Realm Action Plan was commissioned by Downtown SF Partnership, the community benefit district serving San Francisco's Financial District and Jackson Square, and produced by SITELAB urban studio, in collaboration with John Bela and Fehr + Peers.

Acknowledgements

We thank the following for their time, guidance and support in informing this plan:

Downtown residents, visitors, workers, and community organizations

Downtown SF Partnership
Board of Directors
District Identity and Streetscape Improvement Committee

Public Life Assessment volunteers

City of San Francisco*
Office of Economic & Workforce Development (OEWD)
Julie Flynn and Amy Cohen
SF Public Works
Tony Esterbrooks, Michelle Woo, and Paul Barradas
SF Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)
Chris Kidd and Victoria Chong
SF Planning
Maria De Alva and Robin Abad Ocubillo

*While the City has provided input at key milestones, the plan is not an official city document. The listed City agencies offered information around existing and upcoming projects on streets and public spaces within the geographic boundaries of the Downtown SF Partnership district and provided informal input as to potential feasibility of plan components.

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SITELAB urban studio, in collaboration with John Bela and Fehr + Peers, has crafted a Public Realm Action Plan for Downtown SF Partnership that recognizes the opportunities and challenges facing Downtown SF today and proposes a bold vision to guide the transformation of the district into a social destination.
1 Overview + Vision
Positioning Downtown SF

Downtown SF Partnership is a community benefit district founded in 2020 and developed by a coalition of property and business owners. It serves two of the oldest continuous business districts in San Francisco, Financial District (FiDi) and Jackson Square, and parts of SoMa. Downtown SF Partnership funds and provides cleaning and safety services, marketing, communication, and public space activation for 43 blocks of downtown San Francisco.
Downtown San Francisco has been the center of gravity for the Bay Area for decades, serving as a major economic powerhouse for jobs.

Downtown SF benefits from its prime, central location, connected by every major transportation system in the region.

The district is dominated by office/mixed use today, but needs to begin shifting to more heavily mixed use district with residential in order to thrive and become more resilient in the future.
Why a Public Realm Action Plan, and why now?

It is clear that downtown San Francisco can’t continue “business as usual”. The COVID-19 pandemic unveiled unprecedented challenges for particularly the City’s financial core, as well as more demands for a high quality public realm, the shared spaces in streets and open spaces where public life unfolds.

Creating invitations for people to come [back] to Downtown SF is essential for its recovery. It is a critical time to reimagine Downtown and its public realm.
Although workers are coming back, the recovery has been slow...

The “Work From Home” trend that began in the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced the overall numbers of trips to Downtown SF. Particularly, trips for eating, social, shopping, and recreation have been slow to recover due to the lack of office workforce foot traffic.

Source: Replica. Total trips estimated using Replica’s “Trends” tool for census tracts 117 and 611 which mostly align with Downtown SF’s boundary.
There’s hope to bring life back to Downtown. Improved cleanliness + safety are top drivers, with a desire for more greenery, places to sit outdoors, and a vibrant ground floor.

Surprisingly, COVID resolutions was not the top reason for workers and visitors to return to Downtown SF.

Source: SITELAB, Online Survey February 2022
Downtown SF Community responses (831 total)
Downtown SF: more than a workplace, a social destination

Vegetation to enliven urban landscape

Signature branding + wayfinding to reinforce district identity

Outdoor seating for gathering + eating

Art that elevates history and placemaking
This is a moment to reimagine the future of Downtown SF.

This is a time to be bold.
Together with stakeholders and community, this Public Realm Action Plan is a **roadmap** for the **next iteration** of Downtown SF’s streets and open spaces, through a set of **physical, programmatic, and organizational** recommendations.
Our understanding of people and place elevated in the Action Plan:

**Visioning Kick-off Session + Sitewalks**

**Public Life and Space Assessment**
- 8 streets
- 16 public spaces
- 21 volunteers
- 82 intercept surveys

**Public Life Movement / Stationary Assessment + Intercept Surveys**

**Public Space Qualitative Assessment (Enjoyment, Comfort, Protection), Observations + Facade Study**

**City Agency Insights**
- OEWD
- SFMTA
- SF Planning
- Public Works

**Desktop Research**
- History
- Planning Trends
- Precedent Research
- GIS Data Mapping
- Replica Data

**Online Survey**
- 871 Participants

**Downtown SF Partnership Board/ Members Stakeholders/ General Public**

**Demographic Movement Trends**
Public Realm Action Plan Goals

ADVANCE DOWNTOWN SF’S IDENTITY
By layering its rich history + architecture, with a new wave of activity

UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL
By building upon the public realm assets and focusing on where there is alignment + energy, which will in turn promote economic recovery

OWN THE PIONEERING SPIRIT
By being a lab for new ideas of what a downtown can be and offer

TIP THE SCALE
With streets that prioritize people and a more inclusive downtown, a place for more than office work
Plan Elements

Public Realm Concepts
A theme related to a particular aspect of the public realm which identifies challenges and proposes district-wide strategies to address these issues.

Strategies
Essential moves that will invite public life into public spaces, with important considerations and recommended action items.

Action Areas
Multiple strategies applied to action areas to create high traction and impact. Includes both near-term pilots to be deployed within a year, and long-term vision.
Public Realm Concepts

Focused on Physical:

- **Pedestrian Paradise**: Expands pedestrian space through reclaiming the curb, opening streets, and building better connections.

- **Rediscover Public Open Spaces**: Brings new energy and interest to public open spaces through light touch to long term improvements + programming.

- **Let’s Green**: Campaigns for Downtown to maximize trees and plantings in its streets and open spaces.

Focused on Programmatic:

- **Downtown as a Stage**: Increases vibrancy in Downtown by making it a memorable experience through intentional curation of arts and events.

- **Continue Downtown’s Story**: Strengthens while encourages evolving Downtown’s identity through placemaking, wayfinding, and recalling its rich cultural history.

- **Re-energize from the Ground Up**: Reactivates the ground floor through targeted revamps and incentive programs.
From ‘One-Offs’ to Campaigns

Connected Opportunities are the convergence of opportunity zones brought together by strategies within each concept.

Within Connected Opportunities are pilots recommended within Action Areas.
Focus on Convergence For High Impact

**Action Areas** are drawn from a culmination of intersecting opportunity areas in Downtown SF, which include:

- **Policies + Recent/Planned Investments**
  - Downtown SF Partnership Initiatives + Projects
  - Private Investments + Shared Spaces
  - City’s Priority Projects + Quick Builds
  - Downtown Streetscape Plan (1995)

- **Community Input and Observation**
  - Online Survey (2022)
  - Public Life Intercept Survey (2021)
Prioritizing Pilots to Act Now

While the Public Realm Action Plan is about both immediate and long-term strategies, there is need a to act now to bring energy into Downtown.

A ‘pilot’ is a first-mover. Pilots act as a strategic way to test strategies on-the-ground – they can ideally be implemented quickly, and then one can observe what works to inform how to refine for maximum benefit.

Piloting also lays important groundwork for streamlining processes for future projects.
Leading the Change

While it can’t solve every problem facing a complex urban center, it is the first step is crafting a energized, inviting ecosystem that can continue to support cultural and economic growth in the district.
Call to Action

This Action Plan is the initial step forward in seeding a new vision for Downtown SF’s public realm. Downtown SF Partnership calls upon the Downtown SF community and wider public, as well as the City to participate and influence future iterations of these ideas and implementation of the Plan.

What are your priorities? What role will you play?
Downtown SF, Then + Now
Our understanding of Downtown SF, from its inception to now, was informed by seeing the district through multiple lenses:

- **ECONOMIC DRIVERS**
- **HISTORY AND PERCEPTION**
- **HUMAN-CENTERED MOBILITY NETWORK**
- **PUBLIC SPACE**
- **ARTS, CULTURE, AND AMENITIES**
- **GROUND FLOOR**
- **PUBLIC LIFE ASSESSMENT AND ONLINE SURVEY**
The Bay Area was designed to get people into the city, and San Francisco has grown into a regional economic powerhouse. Downtown SF lies at that core, contributing to over 220K jobs.

Its prime, central location made it perfect for office construction — Downtown SF has great mobility and walkability. It is important to recognize that majority of the area is made up of businesses and property owners related to commercial uses.

Why does Downtown SF draw companies here? There is synergy to be closer to other business partners, attraction to gather talented workers, status of brand identity, centralize operations, and have a triple-bottom line framework.
HOW IT IS TODAY

But the land use is dominated by Office

Today, the majority of land use is primarily Office and Mixed Use (without Residential).

It suffers from the public perception as just a "financial district". And in fact, the C-3 district lost about 31K jobs between 1981 and 2009. One of the reasons is because other neighborhoods gained more traction for leasing businesses.

San Francisco office vacancy rate 20.5%

Source: SFData (2019)

Todd Trumbull - SF Chronicle
Source: Cushman & Wakefield Research (October 2021)

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HOW IT IS TODAY

History is concentrated in Downtown

Downtown SF is full of **historical landmarks** and **iconic architecture**. It is built on many layers and events of major booms and challenges..

The city’s **original shoreline passes through Downtown SF** and about half of the district is built over the port’s original wharfs. Some relics of this history survived the Great 1909 Earthquake and Fire.
Today, Downtown SF remains very walkable in scale and organization. In contrast to much of the city, its topography is flat and encourages human-powered transportation.

Downtown SF’s density and historic buildings create a compelling, inviting urban fabric that rewards those that travel at a walking pace with the discovery of rich details and ornamentation at a variety of scales.

It is centrally located along Market Street, which serves as a major transit corridor.

What makes Downtown SF a special place to you?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stakeholders (25)</th>
<th>Board members (15)</th>
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<td>50%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: SITELAB, Online Survey February 2022

Great Bicycling Protest of 1896, FoundSF

O’Farrell & Eddy’s plan 1849, showing proposed extension S of Market Street

Stanford University
Although 2 of the top 10 most active bike share locations in the city are found in or near Downtown SF, only the streets south of Market Street feature bike lanes.

The bike network north of Market Street is made up of Sharrows, which are more uncomfortable and dangerous to use. The city plans to address this in part with Vision Zero Quick Build projects at Battery Street and Sansome Street.

*Stations at Market St + Steuart St and Washington St + Kearny St ranked among top 10 stations by total trips consistently August-October 2019. Source: Bay Wheels
HOW IT IS TODAY

Without any parks, streets are a vast majority of Downtown SF’s public space

Laneways and some street segments may have the capacity to support pedestrian activity. Examples include road diets, alternative uses of metered parking, and temporary street vacations.

Parklets, “shared spaces”, and curb lanes can be activating parts of the public realm. These are initiated ground up and support local involvement in public activation. Results from the public life survey revealed most activated spaces are integrated with outdoor dining or event.

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0 Public parks

Top 3 Foot+Bike Traffic Streets: Market St. Montgomery St. 2nd St.
HOW IT IS TODAY

Full picture of the public realm

- Streets make up 36% of Downtown SF
- 15 alleyways
- 34 Privately-Owned Public Open Space (POPOS)
- 2 Public plazas
- 0 Public parks
- 48 Shared Spaces approved
- 0 Slow Streets

*Data as of 4/14/2022

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Downtown’s civic life has been defined in shared spaces.

Downtown has been the stage for parades, protests, markets, and celebrations throughout San Francisco’s history.

The public realm in Downtown SF is not in traditional public parks.
How It Is Today

POPOS are Downtown’s “parks”

What is a POPOS?
Privately-owned Public Open Space

The first POPOS were built voluntarily, in exchange for density bonuses, or as a condition of planning approval. The Downtown Plan of 1985 created first systemic requirements to provide POPOS as a part of projects in C-3 Districts.

POPOS are assets that create many unique urban spaces, with all sizes and forms as plazas, terraces, atriums, rooftop parks, and even pocket parks nestled between buildings.

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34 Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPOS) make a significant contribution to the public realm

Source: DataSF.org
The ground floor is critical part of public realm...and is inconsistent.
In February 2022, we asked the downtown community, stakeholders, and the Board members of Downtown SF Partnership a series of questions through an online survey.*

This survey reinforced our belief that people are interested in the future of Downtown SF and revealed findings to inform efforts for forthcoming Downtown SF Public Realm Action Plan.

*The Online Survey was provided in English, Spanish, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, and Tagalog. We recognize that the survey was conducted during COVID, and as a result, there was generally less activity and foot traffic in Downtown SF.
### Online Survey Findings

All groups want to see more outdoor seating, greenery, and active ground floor.

#### What would you like to see more of in Downtown SF’s streets and public spaces?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Workers 363 respondents</th>
<th>Visitors 86 respondents</th>
<th>SF Residents 534 respondents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Seating to Eat/Gather</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greenery/Greenspace</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Ground Floor</td>
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<td>Outdoor food market</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places for kids</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SITELAB, Online Survey February 2022

Downtown SF Community responses (831 total responses)

Note: Respondents were able to self-categorize as Workers, Visitors, SF Residents, or a combination thereof.

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The Action Plan will elevate the things that make Downtown SF special...

- Intimacy and density
- Architecture and history
- Contrast of scales
- Walkability
- Great transit options
- Variety of plazas & small-scale alleys with huge potential
- Embracing of art and community
9-5 culture, with an over-reliance on office workforce

Perception that there is “nothing for me” downtown

Challenges in attracting new investment

Not enough foot traffic

Lack of investment in bike infrastructure

Negative perception of cleanliness + safety

...and counter the challenges that make Downtown SF vulnerable.
3

Public Realm Network
Downtown SF’s Public Realm Network is made up of:

Emerging Pedestrian Corridors
Present-day pedestrian network of corridors that serves as a framework for where street and sidewalks improvements shall be prioritized within Downtown SF

Action Areas
Areas drawn from a culmination of intersecting opportunity areas in Downtown SF – of physical space, with pedestrian activity, community interest, and public + private investments
Public Realm Opportunities

Where is there space in the Public Realm?

The Public Realm is made up of the shared spaces between buildings, typically streets and open spaces. These are the spaces where this Public Realm Action Plan can test strategies on the ground through trial-runs called “pilots” as well as more long-term improvements.

**STREETS**
Including travel lanes and sidewalks

**PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC OPEN SPACES (POPOS)**

**INDOOR POPOS**

**PUBLIC PLAZA**
Mechanics Monument Plaza, Robert Frost Plaza

**BIKEWAYS**
Emerging Pedestrian Corridors + Action Areas

Through our on-the-ground observation and understanding of community interest and improvements by both the City and property owners, we identified the highlighted emerging pedestrian corridors and six Action Areas where the Plan could have a first big impact:

A Dine on Leidesdorff*
B Downtown Gateway*
C Market Oasis*
D Belden Place
E Jackson Square
F SoMa/Steuart

*Action Areas A-C are considered priority Action Areas. Action Area A elevates a portion of Downtown SF’s unique alleyway network, and Areas B and C have high visibility with the existing foot traffic on Market Street.
Identifying Emerging Pedestrian Corridors
City Improvements

What public improvements are underway, in the pipeline, or have been recently completed?

The City is already making moves to improve Downtown through a variety of capital improvements. These investments represent opportunities to engage with the City to make the case for a more cohesive public realm that supports the downtown community and its stakeholders.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

- **Vision Zero Quick Build Projects**
  [Legislation Summer 2022, Construction TBD]
- **Better Market St**
  [Phase 1 Construction 2022-2024 Mid-Market, future phases pending funding]
- **SFMTA Pedestrian Improvements**
  [Columbus Ave 2021, Active Beale St 2020, 2nd St 2020]
- **SFMTA Transit Improvements**
  [Transit U Project Construction 2022, Mission St SoMA 2021, SFMTA Cable Car 2021]
- **Other SFMTA Projects in Pipeline**
  [Embarcadero Quick Build 2022, Engagement ongoing]

*Improvements completed as of May 2022*
Priority Pedestrian Streets

Which streets shall be high priority for pedestrian improvements?

This Public Realm Action Plan builds upon the City’s Downtown Streetscape Plan (1995), which established a pedestrian street vision with street classifications as noted below. Although this plan was prepared nearly 20 years ago, much of the street hierarchy remains relevant today in Downtown, though with unfulfilled potential, in addition to new emerging north-south connections.

**DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE PLAN**

- **Civic Streets**
  “Most important symbolic streets in San Francisco [...] which merit distinctive urban design attention”

- **Special Streets**
  “Noteworthy for their citywide symbolic recognition, streetscape environment, and pedestrian function”

- **Secondary Streets**
  “Significant and symbolic pedestrian paths between important destinations”

- **Walk Through and Destination Alleys**
  “Provide safe and attractive pedestrian environments”

**TODAY’S EMERGING CONNECTIONS**
Emerging Pedestrian Corridors

Where do city improvements and priority pedestrian streets overlap?
Emerging Pedestrian Corridors

What emerges is this present-day pedestrian network of corridors, which shall serve as a framework for where street and sidewalks improvements shall be prioritized within Downtown SF.
Identifying Action Areas
Community Interest

Where are community favorites and areas with traction?

People responded to our Community Survey and told us what they like in Downtown SF, and our Public Life and Space Assessment identified where people are spending time today. This interest and existing activity will plant the seed for successful improvements to the public realm.

BART STATION ENTRANCES

PUBLIC SPACE AND LIFE ASSESSMENT

- Top 5 Stationary Open Spaces - Person count
- Top 4 Movement Areas - Foot traffic count

ONLINE SURVEY

- “Favorite Places / Features” of Downtown SF
Private + Downtown SF Investments

Where are private + Downtown SF Partnership’s investments happening in the near future?

Private investment signals that stakeholders have confidence in the area and are optimistic about its future. In addition, Downtown SF Partnership has several of its own projects in the works in collaboration with business owners and the City. Strategic public realm improvements in coordination with private investment can multiply their impact on the public realm and attract more people to the district.

- **PRIVATE INVESTMENTS**
- **DOWNTOWN SF PARTNERSHIP PIPELINE PROJECTS**
- **SF PLANNING GROUNDPLAY PARKLETS**
- **RECENTLY COMPLETED INVESTMENTS**

Approved Shared Spaces Applications*:
- Sidewalk/Curb
- Street Openings
- Private Lots

*Source: City and County of San Francisco, data as of 4/14/2022
Action Areas

Where do public realm opportunities align with...

...Community interest
...City improvements
...and private + Downtown SF Partnership investments?
Based on these considerations, we identified six Action Areas where the Public Realm Action Plan could have a big first impact, with Action Areas A-C as priority Action Areas.

**A** Dine on Leidesdorff*
- Streets + Ground Floor: Leidesdorff St, Commercial St

**B** Downtown Gateway*
- POPOS + Public Spaces: 101 California St, 100 California St, 50 California St, One California, Robert Frost Plaza
- Streets + Ground Floor: Market St, California St, Drumm St, and Davis St

**C** Market Oasis*
- POPOS + Public Spaces: 1 Bush St, Citicorp Center Atrium, Ecker Plaza, One Montgomery, Battery Bridge Mural Project
- Streets + Ground Floor: Market St, Sansome St

**D** Belden Place
- POPOS: 555 California St
- Streets + Ground Floor: Kearny St, Belden Pl

**E** Jackson Square
- POPOS: Transamerica Redwood Park
- Streets + Ground Floor: Hotaling Pl, Jackson St, Gold St

**F** SoMa/Steuart
- POPOS: One Market Plaza
- Streets + Ground Floor Steuart St
4 Concepts + Strategies
Public Realm Concepts + Strategies

The Public Realm Action Plan is organized around six “concepts”, or themes related to a particular aspect of the public realm. Each concept houses district-wide “strategies”, or essential moves, that bring the concept to life. Often the strategies are complementary to one another, as exemplified in Chapter 5 Priority Action Areas + Pilot Projects.

Each concept is introduced in the following pages, followed by details on the key strategy within each. This includes major elements that can be deployed and scaled; a map of Connected Opportunities; pilot recommendations within priority Action Areas; and next steps to consider as launch points.
## Public Realm Concepts + Strategies

### Focused on Physical:

- **Pedestrian Paradise**
  - Reclaim the Curb
  - Build Better Connections (as insert)
  - Street Openings (as insert)

- **Rediscover Public Open Spaces**
  - Pop into our Public Spaces
  - Inspired Investments

- **Let’s Green**
  - Green the Streets
  - Plazas as Parks

### Focused on Programmatic:

- **Downtown as a Stage**
  - Make Downtown an Experience
  - Curate a Downtown Canvas

- **Continue Downtown’s Story**
  - You are Here
  - Recall a Layered History

- **Re-energize from the Ground Up**
  - Targeted Revamp
  - Incentive Programs

*Note: The strategy in **bold** is the key strategy within each concept.*

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**Downtown SF Public Realm Action Plan | July 2022**
Pedestrian Paradise
Downtown SF has historically been the most walkable urban neighborhood in the Bay Area, designed before cars. Transforming streets is complicated and often controversial, yet critical. Downtown's streets can do and serve more. They can be safe, comfortable, and delightful for pedestrians and bicyclists - reclaiming their original purpose.

What does this do?

**Pedestrian Paradise**

**Expands Pedestrian Space**
Prioritizes people over vehicles and encourages walking in Downtown

**Connects People to Place on the Ground**
Claims the district as a “place to be” rather than a place to pass through, increasing foot traffic to local businesses

**Implements the Journey**
Makes the experience going from point A to point B more enjoyable for pedestrians

**Calms Traffic**
Makes interactions between pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars safer
Pedestrian Paradise

Though downtown is walkable in scale and streets make up the majority of public space downtown, the pedestrian experience is not proactively serving the people:

1. Today the pedestrian experience feels disjointed and people treat downtown as a place to pass through.
2. There are few comfortable and inviting places to stop and stay a while on sidewalks.
3. Lack of mid-block crossings leads to people crossing outside of designated crossings.
4. There is minimal bike infrastructure despite being the most transit-friendly destination.

Why is this important?

I think downtown is so slow these days it would be worth it to close more streets and make them like Maiden Ln where you have restaurants, outdoor seating as well as walking + seating areas…

36% ...of the district’s area is dedicated to streets

Without any parks, streets make up the vast majority of Downtown SF’s Public Space

60% ...of people who live and work in Downtown SF walk or take transit, yet the typical street allocates only 34% of space to pedestrians
How do we get there?

**Reclaim the Curb**
Improve the pedestrian experience and invite people to stay by expanding spaces for people along the street.

**Street Openings**
Open streets for people by strategically restricting vehicle movements on key streets and alleyways with temporary or permanent closures, creating spaces for movement, community, and events.

**Build Better Connections**
Make moving through the district more comfortable and fun by improving biking infrastructure, adding mid-block pedestrian crossings, and improving the alleyway network.

Pedestrian Paradise

Streets must emphasize safety, comfort, and delightful experiences for pedestrians and bicyclists in order to draw people, and not more cars, to Downtown San Francisco.

Taking back curb spaces and expanding usage for pedestrians, cyclists, and public activity will encourage public life and positive connection to Downtown SF.
Opportunity Areas

Curbside Lane: Public and Commercial Parklets

- **Shared Spaces Program**
  - San Francisco, CA
  - Allows the use of the curbside lane for public or commercial parklet (outdoor dining platforms)

  Additional uses to consider: bike storage, landscaping, permanent curb extensions, bulb-outs

Entire Street: Alleyway

- **Dairy Block**
  - Denver, CO
  - The city’s downtown transformed an alleyway into a destination that is designed to be used by the community, hosting events and mixing everyday use that supports local businesses, residents, and visitors.

  Additional uses to consider: expanded sidewalk, bike storage, landscaping, and furnishing

Travel Lane: Expanded Sidewalk

- **Vancouver Curbside Patio Program**
  - Vancouver, Canada
  - A city sponsored public space was created in the collection of Vancouver’s curbside patio program to respond to COVID-19. It is one of 20 pop-up plazas that provide public seating, bike parking, and programming.

  Additional uses to consider: landscaping and furnishing

Corner Extension: Bulb-outs

- **Vision Zero: Purple Safety Zone**
  - Oakland, CA
  - Oakland DOT improved the crosswalk to improve safety after a pedestrian fatality. This was a quick strategy by introducing bright color, bollards, and curb ramps, rather than more cost intensive strategies like raised buffers.

  Additional uses to consider: paired landscaping
While strategies of “Reclaim the Curb” at the scale of a parking space or curb face can improve parts of downtown streets, a program of improvements that strings together these elements to create great corridors will have the greatest impact.

**Recommended Pilots:** While there are many opportunities in the district, preliminary study points to these three highlighted streets as high opportunity starting points to capture pedestrian traffic from Market St., boosting existing foot traffic to nearby restaurants and businesses.
Recommended Pilots

A  Leidesdorff St at Commercial St
Link shared spaces between restaurants by limiting loading and allowing full pedestrian access

Shared Space continuation: Bollards + Roll out planters + Seating + Update Surface Treatment + Add Lighting/Safety

B  California St at Drumm St
Provide additional bike facilities in curbside space at transit hub to support micro-mobility
Bike Parking + Surface Treatment + Constructed Bulb Out

C  Sansome St at Sutter St
Use Sansome to create a continuous pedestrian zone between 1 Bush and CitiCorp Plaza, as it has great sunlight and transit access

POPOS extension + Seating + Surface Treatment + Creative Bollards + Greenery
Next Steps

**Identify top 5+ curb zones to be converted into pedestrian uses:**
- Consolidate existing loading zones to be more efficient and "shared" and/or identify underutilized or legacy road space.
- Identify parking spaces which are top candidates for pocket parks, parklets, Shared Spaces, micro-mobility, biking/charging stations, and curb expansions.
- Build off of momentum from the new Battery Sansome Corridors from Vision Zero and amplify its impact.

**Spearhead a program out of the Battery Bridge Project to implement a first round of projects:**
- Start temporary, with intent to be permanent - utilize paint, arts, moveable seating and planters.
- Propose a new “general encroachment permit” to the City to facilitate implementing projects at scale with requirements checklist and maintenance plans.
- Evaluate impact in pedestrian activity (increase in activity, performance) to document successes and iterate.

**Recruit other stakeholders to multiply and amplify curbside spaces using pilot precedent:**
- Establish Downtown SF Partnership as liaison and resource for process and permitting - utilizing general encroachment permit and existing city programs.
RECLAIM THE CURB

Considerations

Selection Criteria

Streets - Candidates for parklets, lane reallocation, and alleyway strategies ideally meet the following criteria:
- Low vehicle traffic volumes
- Do not host essential loading that cannot be relocated
- Are able to relocate transit stops or accommodate them
- Meet required emergency vehicle access

Sidewalks - Must be able to maintain a sufficient level of service to facilitate pedestrian movement and meet required clearances, in addition to space required for the activities the strategy introduces.

Implementation

- **Pilots** - Temporary quick-build efforts, such as adding in branded seating, planters, and bollards can be quickly implemented. Parklets could be applied for and implemented approximately within a year, after approvals.
- **Permanent Improvements** - Painted curb extensions and bulb-outs in streets require more coordination, permitting, and approvals between entities. If adopted by the City, a streamlined permit program could expedite qualifying projects.

Potential Challenges

- Curbs that facilitate loading may need to be rearranged or relocated
- Parking requirements may limit the possibility to replace spaces

Partner Strategies

- **Pop into our Public Spaces**
- **Green the Streets**
- **Curate a Downtown Canvas**
Leidesdorff St. is an alleyway that spans across many blocks in the middle of the district, yet is a disconnected system. There are scattered pockets of seating and outdoor dining, and sections where loading is more frequent than others. By using the street as a platform to host events, add colorful seating, art and surface treatment, the pedestrian experience can be enhanced creating a unique alleyway spine through the district.

WHAT IT IS:
- Temporarily or permanently close streets/lanes to vehicles so that streets can be “opened” to better serve people
- Can be a platform to hold events [see ‘Downtown as a Stage’], add custom seating [see ‘Continue Downtown’s Story’], and be adjacent to POPOS [see ‘Rediscover Public Open Spaces’]
- Types of strategies:
  - Road Diet, Shared Street, and Pedestrianized Street

ACTION ITEMS:
- Identify streets that could use furnishings, art, or spaces for outdoor eating and gathering
- Help streamline permitting to temporarily close streets/lanes to vehicles so that streets for a special event
- What can be advised from the new Belden Lane street closure project

OPPORTUNITY SPACES / CRITERIA:
- Streets that do not block essential traffic flow and transit lines
- Streets that have high pedestrian volumes
- Streets that already have shared spaces that could be expanded

PARTNER CONCEPTS:
- How might blank walls feature a mural?
- How might permanent seating be installed?
- How might other spaces integrate better with the ground floor?
- How can this area be a space for events?

Making the case for Leidesdorff St:

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Build Better Connections

WHAT IT IS:
- In strategic locations add pedestrian scrambles, connect alleys with mid-block crossings, and create high-visibility crosswalks.
- Build on city bikeway improvements by creating more protected bike lanes and installing additional amenities that support micro mobility, such as storage areas or repair stations.
- Expand curb in coordination with existing projects in the pipeline (ex. Vision Zero Battery St. /Sansome St.)

ACTION ITEMS:
- Study which partnerships and respective applications / permits are required to improve connections.
- Identify Key Partnerships to advocate for and implement better connections, such as SF Bicycle Coalition, Vision Zero SF, and SFMTA.
- Pursue improvements though existing permits, such as SFMTA Sidewalk Bicycle Rack Request and SFMTA Application to Sponsor new on-street bicycle parking corral.

OPPORTUNITY SPACES / CRITERIA:
- Streets that have high pedestrian or micro-mobility volumes or have upcoming improvements scheduled.

PARTNER CONCEPTS:

Making the case for an improved bikeway network:

The current bike network includes Battery, Sansome, Market, Sutter, and Pine Streets. In the long term, consider further expansion of the bike network, particularly with protected bike lanes and cross-district connections.

In the near term, complement SFMTA’s Vision Zero Quick-Build project on Battery and Sansome Streets by curating additional amenities along bike corridors to support active mobility users. Pop-up bike shops and repair stations can be adjacent to bike corridors. Partnerships between ground floor businesses can help accelerate bringing these amenities into the streets.
Rediscover Public Open Spaces
Downtown SF has no public parks. Public Open spaces in the district are limited to 2 public plazas and 34 “POPOS”, or Privately Owned Public Open Spaces. Many of these spaces lack the elements to draw public life. These places can be improved to create an collective identity for Downtown SF and provide the best opportunities to stay and gather. A network of Public Open Spaces should be fostered through public invitations, generous amenities, and physical improvements.

What does this do?

Calls Attention to Adjacent Businesses
Encourages people to visit Public Open Spaces adjacent to businesses and buildings as places to gather and spend time.

Adds to the Open Space Network
Provides critical open spaces for staying activities that compliment pedestrian movement corridors, including unique indoor and rooftop spaces.

Makes Life Public
Provides key amenities to make people feel comfortable spending more time in public spaces.

Inspires New Investments
The increased presence of public life will spur new improvements and investments in the district.
Rediscover Public Open Spaces

Today, many of downtown’s public open spaces are underutilized and are often-times unnoticed by pedestrians. They are not inviting for people to use because:

1. People are not aware of these spaces or that they are allowed to use them freely
2. Most POPOS/Plazas lack a variety of seating types and key amenities that accommodate a range of users
3. They are missing compelling programming and events

Why is this important?

**34**

POPOS and 2 public plazas are located in the District

- **75%** Have no signage indicating they are public spaces*
- **22%** Are closed outside of business hours*
- **79%** Offer no public restrooms*
- **44%** Are not directly accessible to the public*

*All POPOS data from SFData “Privately Owned Public Open Spaces” updated May 13, 2022

68% want to see more outdoor areas to eat/gather in Downtown SF Online Survey

75% Lack of seating and spaces to gather makes the place empty and unwelcoming

79% Have no signage indicating they are public spaces*

22% Are closed outside of business hours*

79% Offer no public restrooms*

44% Are not directly accessible to the public*

68% want to see more outdoor areas to eat/gather in Downtown SF Online Survey

**The outdoor events and food/drinks that were available, gave me a compelling reason to visit. I'd say more safe, clean, open space with food vendors and outdoor entertainment would attract people.**

*All images © SITELAB urban studio*
Rediscover Public Open Spaces

We must accommodate and nurture public life in these spaces through targeted outreach, generous amenities, physical improvements, and programming to foster a network of public spaces that provide unique opportunities for workers, visitors, and residents.

How do we get there?

Pop into our Public Spaces

Active programming, light improvements, and broadcasting invitations can help people rediscover POPOS and public plazas as essential places for gathering and connecting with neighbors.

Inspired Investments

Incite collective action among owners and operators to invest in the future of Downtown SF’s public realm by improving POPOS, making them more visible, and opening them to the community.
Active Programming

Active programming gives people a reason to stay and linger in parks and plazas. Programming can range from carts and pop-up shops to larger events. Additionally, playful elements can allow for fun and creative ways to get people moving.

Activation through Events
Small events and can bring vibrancy to underutilized open spaces
[See ‘Make Downtown an Experience’]

Embrace Play for All
Fun and creative ways to get people moving could enliven spaces

Carts, Kiosks, Trucks
Some spaces will benefit from having additional activators, especially in locations where there are no adjacent retail or food+beverage options
The Recipe for a Vibrant Public Space

Welcome to Sit and Stay

Light improvements can create more accommodating and accessible spaces where people feel welcome to stay.

Even small improvements to today’s plazas and other shared spaces can draw in public life. Providing a wider variety of seating, including moveable furnishings, help more people feel comfortable spending time downtown and feel proactive and participatory.

Open the edges where public spaces meet commercial ground floors by adding seating or removing barriers, as transparency can also help spur public life.

Grand Park, LA

Integrated Edges
Consider adjacent uses of buildings and connect them to open space by enlivening with transparency and openings to increase visibility

Amenities
Light fixtures, greenery, and accessible bathrooms can invite people to stay

Make it Your Own
Moveable furnishings and other elements can allow people to have adjacency over how to use the open space

Seating Improvements + Comfort
A program run by Downtown SF Partnership which provides mix of seating that supports a variety of people and adds comfort to stay
Invite people into public spaces by telling what’s happening downtown, guide them using bold wayfinding, attract through art, and let them stay a while.

By making the public aware of their public spaces and what they offer, people will start to incorporate them into their weekly routine.

Wayfinding + Signage
Improve visibility of signs to remind people they are welcome [See ‘You are Here’]

Public Spaces Inventory + Calendar
Create a platform where people can learn more about the District’s open spaces and discover upcoming events

Art
Murals, sculptures, and place-based art can be a focal point to a space and attract users [See ‘Make Downtown an Experience’]
While all public open spaces offer unique opportunities to engage people in the public realm, POPOS and Plazas that are visible and easily accessible from Emerging Pedestrian Corridors have the greatest potential for activation. These corridors tend to have active ground floors and quality transit service.

**Recommended Pilots:** Especially attractive POPOS and plazas located near one another can amplify their impact. Intentionally targeting these open space clusters adjacent to key corridors with active programming, light improvements, and add strategic invitations will create momentum towards building a larger open space network.
Recommended Pilots

A. Commercial St at Leidesdorff St
Expand existing lunchtime street opening by extending hours and add both private and public seating options, inviting people to gather.

B. 1 California St
Invite people to use the space by increasing landscaping and seating with tables. Activations through music and temporary events can welcome users into the space.

C. One Bush Plaza
Draw attention to this hidden space with colorful seating and programming, create invitations through signage at entrances to plaza.
Next Steps

Identify top 5+ spaces for POPOS improvements program as first movers:
- Organize with a set of owners to optimize a collective process shepherded by Downtown SF Partnership for light improvements
- Deploy common elements (color, lighting, furnishings, signage) at multiple locations to create a broader identity and invitation
- Encourage property owners to expand open hours by offering a pilot partnership program with Downtown SF Partnership
- Expand ambassador teams to support daily use of POPOS/Plazas

Create an inventory, user-friendly map and calendar for all POPOS and Plazas in the district:
- Catalog open spaces based on characteristics
- Provide information such as open hours, location, and amenities to public on website
- Encourage programming and events, create downtown calendar [See ‘Make Downtown an Experience’]

New York City Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)
New York, NY
The City of New York established the POPS program, which has led to the creation of over 590 Privately Owned Public Spaces throughout NYC since 1961. The POPS program serves as the gatekeeper of these public space assets. Design requirements ensure spaces provide ample amenities (including public signage) and feel inviting to the public, while allowing for plenty of variability in design. POPOS provide needed greenery in an urban environment similar to Downtown SF, and often host lunchtime programming, holiday lighting, or kiosks.
Considerations

Selecting Criteria

- Adjacency to transit, ground floor businesses, and offices
- Seating capacity and variety that is accessible to all ages
- Space for temporary seating, vendors, and ‘light touches’
- POPOS/Plazas with accessibility/visibility towards street

Process + Key Partnerships

- Key Partners - Downtown SF Partnership, Property Owners, Business Tenants, SFMTA, Public Works, SF Planning, SF OEWD, Business Groups, SF Arts Commission, Nonprofit and Community-Based Organizations, SF Entertainment Commission
- Associated City Programs:
  - SF Recreation and Parks Special Event Application
- Letter of Approval from Property Owner for Private Property may be required
- Maintenance - Downtown SF Partnership, Public Works, Property Owners/ Business tenants
- Security - SFPD or private security

Implementation

- **Pilots - Organize temporary events** in POPOS/Plazas. Provide Downtown SF branded tables and chairs during lunchtime [See ‘You are Here’]
- **Permanent Changes - Create a permanent program** in which at minimum 5 POPOS/Plazas have stewards managing seating/furnishings or consistent daily or weekly events [See ‘Make Downtown an Experience’]

Potential Challenges

- Stewardship and partnerships from Property Owners can vary
- Funding constraints can be roadblocks to host larger, more expensive programming

Partner Strategies

- Plazas as Parks
- Make Downtown an Experience
- You are Here
- Curate a Downtown Canvas
- Targeted Revamp

Downtown SF Public Realm Action Plan  |  July 2022
Let’s Green
Let’s Green

Trees and green spaces are essential to our mental and physical health. Expanding the urban forest and landscape will improve the human ecosystem and create dynamic spaces that improve people’s comfort and invitation to spend more time in Downtown SF. COVID-19 has clearly demonstrated the need and desire for shared outside gathering spaces.

What does this do?

**Implements Quality of Life**
Green spaces help improve quality of life for people, benefitting physical and mental well-being, as well as provide comfort.

**Invests in Green Infrastructure**
More green spaces improves the environment through proactive water management and increasing stormwater treatment.

**Makes Businesses Attractive**
Green experiences provide an attractive landscape where people will want to go to and spend time.

**Combats Climate Change**
Cities are large contributors to CO2 emissions and more vegetated spaces can offset this effect while also encouraging of walking.
Let’s Green

Downtown feels disconnected from nature because of its large quantity of impervious surfaces:

1. Some streets have little to no trees or planted vegetation to make the pedestrian experience pleasant and comfortable.
2. There are limited number of streets that mitigate stormwater runoff through green infrastructure.
3. There are 0 public parks in the district, increasing the need for alternative, quality ‘staying’ spaces where people can feel connected to nature.

Why is this important?

1 in 3 Respondents from Public Life Intercept Survey want to see more green spaces in Downtown SF.

68% Respondents from the Online Survey want to see more green spaces in Downtown SF.

"No more tall buildings to fill empty lots, turn these into green spaces. They are much needed for our mental health and good for the planet."

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Let’s Green

Improving the physical environment will benefit the social environment, bringing the community together through the resourceful use of urban green spaces that are open to all. Urban green spaces bring environmental, social/psychological, and economic benefits to cities.

How do we get there?

Green the Streets

Add street trees, planters, and sidewalk vegetation to expand the urban landscape in Downtown, where no parks exist.

Plazas as Parks

Public plazas and POPOS can serve as opportune places to expand the need for outdoor spaces and refuge from the city.
The Toolkit for an Urban Landscape

**Street Tree**
*Conditions:* Min space of 4’x4’x6’ depth, Permanent
*Maintenance Level:* High

**Parklet**
*Conditions:* Parking space, Temporary - Permanent
*Maintenance Level:* High

**Planter**
*Conditions:* Flexible, Temporary - Permanent
*Maintenance Level:* Medium

**Planted Street Medians**
*Conditions:* Subgrade conditions, Permanent
*Maintenance Level:* High

**Planted Sidewalk Zones**
*Conditions:* Subgrade conditions, Sidewalk width, Permanent
*Maintenance Level:* Medium

**Green Walls + Roofs**
*Conditions:* Light/shade, Permanent
*Maintenance Level:* Medium

**Bioswales**
*Conditions:* Subgrade conditions, Permanent
*Maintenance Level:* Medium

**Pervious Strips**
*Conditions:* Subgrade conditions, Sidewalk width, Permanent
*Maintenance Level:* Medium
A green urban landscape offers many benefits in the public realm:

- Trees and plants make people more comfortable by protecting against harsh weather conditions, making streets feel less windy on cold days and less sunny on hot days.
- Vegetated surfaces help mitigate extreme weather by reducing the urban heat island effect.
- Some landscape elements such as planters can help protect pedestrians from vehicular traffic, acting both a visual and physical barrier.
The urban landscape also expands possibilities for **green infrastructure, especially stormwater management**. Bioswales, rain gardens, and permeable surfaces allow for reduction of surface runoff from rain events, and allow for water to be collected, filtered, and dispersed into the larger watershed or to cisterns for reuse in buildings and irrigation systems.

Additional Resources:
- SF Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC)’s Stormwater Design Guidelines

**Bioswales and rain gardens help collect rain water, slow runoff and filter water from pollution**

**Permeable surfaces allows for infiltration and water to be reused and reduce flooding**

**Water used to irrigate or be reused in building**

**Water cisterns treat water**

**Rain roofs assist in harvesting water, mitigate heat island effect and reduce building energy use**
Opportunity Areas

Curbside

**Parklets**
San Francisco, CA
Throughout San Francisco, curbside parking spaces have been transformed into small parks known as Parklets, which feature landscaping, planters, and other green elements. Parklets are facilitated through Groundplay SF, a multiagency program that is the parent to the Parklet Program.

**Linden Living Alley**
San Francisco, CA
Created by Place Lab Advisor Loring Sagan and architect David Winslow, this alley was converted into a pedestrian oriented destination featuring low-impact paving materials, tree, and planters. Since its creation, SF has established a Living Alleys Toolkit and Plazas Program to facilitate conversion of similar underutilized streetscapes.

Major Corridors

**Jackson Ave**
Long Island City, NY
Streets make up the vast majority of Downtown SF’s public space and can support planted medians on major corridors. The Long Island City Business Improvement District (BID)’s horticulture program pioneered the planting + maintenance of over 1,000 plants/trees through partnership with NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation.

**Hudson Square Standard Tree Program**
New York, NY
The Hudson Square BID launched a tree program through partnership with NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation and New York Tree Trust to plant and retrofit trees. Today, they have planted or retrofitted over 500 trees in the district, reimagining potential for urban sidewalks and tree planting.

Alleyways

**Linden Living Alley**
San Francisco, CA
Created by Place Lab Advisor Loring Sagan and architect David Winslow, this alley was converted into a pedestrian oriented destination featuring low-impact paving materials, tree, and planters. Since its creation, SF has established a Living Alleys Toolkit and Plazas Program to facilitate conversion of similar underutilized streetscapes.

Sidewalks

**Hudson Square Standard Tree Program**
New York, NY
The Hudson Square BID launched a tree program through partnership with NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation and New York Tree Trust to plant and retrofit trees. Today, they have planted or retrofitted over 500 trees in the district, reimagining potential for urban sidewalks and tree planting.
Applying the Toolkit

**Planting Conditions**

Different planting strategies require varying level of considerations. When deciding what landscape strategy is ideal, it is important to assess the following factors:

- **Location**: Determining the area of space and understanding subsurface conditions can reveal opportunities and limitations.
- **Environmental Conditions**: Looking at qualities of the environment, including amount of sun/shade, room for tree canopy growth, and soil conditions.
- **Level of Maintenance**: Maintenance is critical with plants, and requires long-term stewardship for success.
- **Temporary vs. Permanent**: Deciding if intervention is intended to be temporary or moveable (ex: adding above-ground planters) or if there opportunity for mature trees.

**Additional Resources**:
- SF Public Works Sidewalk Landscaping
- SF Plantfinder
- SF Bureau of Urban Forestry
- Friends of the Urban Forest

**Environmental Conditions**

- Amount of sun/shade
- Room for canopy growth
- Soil conditions
- Native is adapted to area (Plant hardiness zone)

**Location**

- Subsurface conditions
- Spatial opportunity area

**Level of Maintenance**

- Capacity for stewardship
- Amount of water / pruning required

**Temporary vs. Permanent**

- Intentions around purpose and flexibility
- Amount of room for growth
GREEN THE STREETS

Connected Opportunities

Streets as candidates for greening include adding parklets, street trees, planters, and other forms of landscaping. It is important that areas:

- Do not host essential loading activities that cannot be relocated
- Have enough space in frontage or furnishing zones for adequate planting
- In Sidewalks - Landscaping must be able to maintain a sufficient level of service to facilitate pedestrian movement in addition to space required for the activities the strategy introduces. Permits may be required

Recommended Pilots: There are opportunities to add landscape in Downtown SF on various types of streets, ranging in strategies from adding street trees, planters, or sidewalk buffers. The level of implementation varies heavily on subgrade and microclimate conditions, as well as the level of maintenance and funding available for adding greenery. These pilots are chosen for their pedestrian activity and versatility in adding creative strategies for green.

Emerging Pedestrian Corridors
- Existing Street Trees
- Gaps in Urban Canopy
- POPOS/Plazas

Recommended Pilots
**Recommended Pilots**

**A Alley: Leidesdorff St**

Strategy: Green walls and planters can add comfort to the space as there are lots of vertical surfaces with limited sidewalks. Adding permeable paving, and plant beds could also improve human comfort and invite people to stay.

**B Sidewalk: Cable Car Terminus at Robert Frost Plaza**

Strategy: Adding tree canopies and vegetation can improve the waiting experience of the Cable Car. Pair with seating elements and furnishings that could be temporary or moveable.

**C Street: Sansome St**

Strategy: Add curbside plantings or pervious strips to protect pedestrians and bikers and mitigate stormwater runoff.
GREEN THE STREETS

Next Steps

Create an inventory of street trees and planted zones and management plan to better monitor and sustain care:

- Identify underutilized opportunity areas that could be turned into an urban garden, pocket park, parklet, or added curbside planting
- Catalog planting/vegetation based on type and need with SF Urban Forestry and SF Public Works to effectively maintain trees, planters, vegetation and plant more native vegetation in addition to areas that are constrained by underground vaults/utilities
- Expand ambassador program to support and provide guidance to Let’s Green campaign

Foster joint efforts and share benefits between private economic development and Let’s Green campaign:

- Provide support and allocate resources to local businesses for creation of new parklets or green spaces [See ‘Reclaim the Curb’]
- Incentivize funding for vegetation through developer fees in new or redevelopment plans

Host a community tree planting volunteer day with Friends of the Urban Forest and the Downtown SF community (residents, local businesses, etc):

- Organize a day (or program/series) with Friends of the Urban Forest
- Make a call for volunteers, including outreach to major employers in the district and local businesses

Dogpatch Neighborhood
San Francisco, CA

The Dogpatch neighborhood utilized the growth of building development to leverage improvements in the public landscape, from adding mid-block alleys, and by increasing green and comfortable spaces. Many of its greening efforts were implemented by the Dogpatch & Northwest Potrero Hill Green Benefit District. Types of planted elements include sidewalk planter beds and bulb-outs using native vegetation on 22nd St., edge and frontage zone planting on Tennessee St, and street trees and a large green wall on Third St.
GREEN THE STREETS

Considerations

Selection Criteria

- Identify locations of sidewalks and plazas where trees/landscape is barren
- Study sun / shade / microclimate conditions to determine best location for types of plants/use
- Work with ground floor businesses that can use green opportunities
- Review SF Better Streets: Sidewalk Landscaping
- Review SFPUC’s Stormwater Design Guidelines

Process + Key Partnerships

- Key Partners - SFMTA, Public Works, SF Planning, SF Bureau of Urban Forestry, SFPUC, StreetTreeSF, Friends of the Urban Forest, other volunteer and non-profit organizations
- Associated City Programs:
  - Sidewalk Landscape Permit
  - Tree Planting Permit
  - Minor/Major Encroachment Permit
- Maintenance - Downtown SF Partnership, Public Works, Property Owners/Business Tenants

Implementation

Pilots - Downtown SF Partnership could work with the City to identify streets and areas that could best use a green lift, create funding/incentive opportunities and target temporary plantings. Downtown SF Partnership could pioneer community participation through planting day or “adopt-a-planter” strategy for maintenance, or PARK(ing) Day

Permanent Changes - Could take a year or longer to get permit approvals to plant trees or add stormwater management solutions that have not been implemented previously in a certain area. Development of a long-term maintenance plan

Potential Challenges

- Maintenance of trees and planters have to be organized, scheduled, have source of funding and lead stewardship program
- Subgrade conditions may limit the planting of in-ground trees or vegetation

Partner Strategies

- Reclaim the Curb
- Street Openings
- Pop into our Public Spaces
- Plazas as Parks

Downtown SF Public Realm Action Plan | July 2022
Downtown as a Stage
Downtown as a Stage

Like a performance stage, downtown can transform its public realm into a unique cultural destination through intentional cultivation of arts and events that draw people in and connect people to each other and place.

Streets like Market St have historically held parades and special ceremonies, while the district’s variety of public open spaces could host a diverse array of events.

What does this do?

**Attracts New Users**
Create invitation to more visitors into the public realm to extend life in the district beyond 9-5 working hours.

**Connects People to Place**
Establish the district as “the place to be” with things to do, rather than a place to pass through.

**Fosters a Neighborhood Identity**
Build an identity for the districts and encourages people through events and programming to feel welcomed.

**Art becomes a Tool**
Strategic place-based art fosters community participation and involvement in creating shared spaces.
Downtown as a Stage

People want to see more cultural events in Downtown SF. More events will create traction and momentum towards building energy and capture foot traffic in the city, which is especially important in this COVID-19 recovery era:

1. There are limited number of events that occur in Downtown, and no platform that lists things to do in Downtown SF

2. Today, downtown does not have a recurring movement that is identifiable and characteristic to the district

Why is this important?

1 in 2...survey respondents want to see more Arts and Events in Downtown SF

$2.2 million...was spent by the 36,000 visitors in the district during December, 2020’s Let’s Glow SF event. Such events have a huge ripple effect.

The opportunity for large-scale, site-specific artwork are phenomenal...
The connection with more human-scale artwork large-scale work...is nearly infinite. We have cold, windy, concrete passages everywhere.

Let’s GLOW SF saw 36,000 visitors who spend $2.2 million in the district. There were 2-4x more pedestrians because of the event.

Some environments in Downtown SF are inactive and ambiance should meet the desired level of activity.

Annual Bastille Day celebration at Belden Place, hosted by Downtown SF Partnership

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Downtown as a Stage

Public events and art adds enormous value to the cultural community of downtown. There is more impact and strength in multiplicity, therefore diversifying and hosting multiple events/art will generate much needed energy in the district.

How do we get there?

Make Downtown an Experience

Interactive and engaging cultural events organized around art, music, dance, entertainment, and food will invite people into streets and plazas.

Curate a Downtown Canvas

A new wave of place-based art, from murals to installations to sculptures, will attract people to downtown spaces and contribute to the cultural and aesthetic quality of the neighborhood.
Opportunity Areas

POPOS + Plazas

Let’s GLOW SF
San Francisco, CA
Privately Owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS) have large spaces for gathering and can feature events. Let’s GLOW was a popular, seasonal event hosted by Downtown SF Partnership and private property owners that captured energy and festivity within POPOS, increasing foot traffic and consumer spending in the neighborhood.

Sidewalk Cinema
San Francisco, CA
The SF Urban Film Festival is a gathering that promotes diversity and storytelling. One event at the festival, Sidewalk Cinema, is a prime example of temporary alley activation through film screening. This pilot was championed by the Lower Polk CBD to bring public outdoor cinema to the neighborhood.

Streets

Shared Spaces: Valencia Street
San Francisco, CA
Streets make up the vast majority of Downtown SF’s public space and can be a great host to many events. A street pilot on Valencia Street was a multiagency effort and program of the Economic Recovery Task Force to aid businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was so successful that the closure continues to this day.

Alleyways

Ground Floor + Sidewalks

Storefront for Art + Architecture
New York NY
Starting in 1982, the independent, artist run forum organizes programs that questions the relationship between public and private space. Part gallery/exhibit space part host space for events, the place is an example of how public and private spaces can interact.
When considering events, it is important to also **plan for capacity**. The public realm has a wide range of spaces of that can host a range of events at different scales, ranging from **small, temporary gatherings to larger congregations**. Events can be held on **night or weekends** to draw bigger crowds and reduce the impact on vehicle traffic and transit service. Tents, stages, seating areas all have varying dimensions which can be incorporated into each type of capacity, depending on the nature of the event and scale.
POPOS/Plazas are locations that can hold events of various capacities, largely depending on the physical size. There is opportunity for spill-out opportunities. Consider the area, arrangement, and furnishings needed for each event.

Streets and Alleyways are great places for medium to large gatherings, but would work best where there is low traffic and minimal impact on transit networks. Consider street segments with flexible routes, and alleyways such as Leidesdorff St, Belden Pl, and Hotaling St, which already have pedestrian activity.

Recommended Pilots: Events will be most impactful when held near complementary ground floor businesses and transit stations, to both capture passing foot traffic and for businesses to benefit from the foot traffic. Sidewalks are opportune places to host events to capture the energy of people moving in and out.
Recommended Pilots

A Alley: Leidesdorff St
Strategy: Host temporary special event that includes vendors and restrict vehicle access and allow for coordinated seating and wayfinding to be included. Murals can forge an identity and character to the street. [See “You are Here”]

B Plaza: Robert Frost Plaza
Strategy: Foster thematic and cultural events in the gateway to the district. Events can be seasonal and relate to holidays and other special cultural events that celebrate the unique diversity and history of San Francisco.

C Street + POPOS: Sansome St + One Bush Plaza
Strategy: Temporary close the street and add seating and programming, and open adjacent POPOS - capture energy of Market St and Montgomery St BART.
Provide the platform that connects stakeholders/property owners together with organizations to hold events in the district:

- Post a comprehensive calendar that tracks upcoming events which is promoted through social media and a page for “things to do”/“activities”
- Identify partner POPOS/Plazas/Streets for key events and list locations that can be a venue to host events as a resource
- Harness relationships between businesses, community groups, and cultural institutions to foster events and gatherings

Take the lead in initiating and organizing special events:

- Like Let’s GLOW SF, partner with local artists, business owners, and creatives to generate more recurring events like a historic or public open space tour [See ‘Rediscover Public Open Spaces’ and ‘Continue Downtown’s Story’]
- Measure public life before, during, and after events to gauge economic and social goals
- Provide and steward amenities such as renting temporary restrooms, moveable seating/chairs/tents in addition to organized groups for security and clean-up
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### Considerations

**Selection Criteria**

- Area size needed for event type, length, and number of attendees
- Furnishings and amenities available can determine if they must be supplied
- Assess adjacency to complementary ground-floor commercial spaces
- Presence of restrooms or space for temporary facilities in the venue
- Relationship with POPOS/Plazas manager and adjacent businesses
- Permitting requirements for capacity and type of events

**Process + Key Partnerships**

- Key Partners - Downtown SF Partnership, Property Owners/Business Owners, SF Planning, SF Mayor’s Office, SF Public Works, SFMTA, SF Board of Supervisors, SFFD, SFPD, SF Arts Commission, Nonprofit and Community-Based Organizations
- Associated City Programs:
  - SF Outdoor Event Permit
  - Special Event Application
- Maintenance - Downtown SF Partnership, SF Public Works, Property Owners / Business Tenants

**Implementation**

- **Pilots (Small Events)** - Downtown SF Partnership could work to streamline coordination between event organizers, POPOS owners, and city departments to reduce implementation time to as little as a few months for smaller events.
- **Large events** - It could take a year or longer to get permits to hold events on streets that have not been previously closed to traffic. Study opportune street segments in advance to target strategic economic corridors and help facilitate this process for organizing partners and create a resource of areas that can be used for events

**Potential Challenges**

- Full street closures may require more coordination and be planned further in advance
- Security + Insurance will be needed for larger capacity events
- Access to public restrooms is essential for people to spend more time

**Partner Strategies**

- You are Here
- Recall a Layered History
- Reclaim the Curb
- Street Openings
- Targeted Revamp
- Incentive Programs
- Pop into our Public Spaces
- Plazas as Parks
Continue Downtown’s Story
Downtown has a rich, multifaceted history, continually evolving over the decades to remain as the region’s core. Its layers of history make it a special place and should be embraced alongside a new wave of energy to shift the perception of Downtown to be a social destination.

**What does this do?**

**Evolve Downtown’s identity**  
Change the perception of the 9-5 workplace to a social destination.

**Create Association to Place**  
Establish a distinct visual language in the public realm associated with Downtown SF.

**Elevates its Rich Past**  
Bring to light chronicles of the past through identifiable landmarks.

**Guides People**  
Wayfinding strategies can help people navigate the district and discover something new.
Continue Downtown’s Story

Downtown SF has a unique identity that is buried by the identity that it is home to offices. There are many historical landmarks in downtown, and wayfinding/branding could elevate the identity of the place as one of rich, layered history:

1. People are often times unfamiliar with the varied historical gems of Downtown SF, they are not visible enough

2. There are limited visual cues to indicate that people are within the district, lacking invitation or identity as destination

3. There is a perception that the district is not for people, as a financial 9-5 district

Why is this important?

Survey respondents describe Downtown SF as “Historic”

There are many historically significant landmarks and one landmark district

Art and walks that help people understand the historic nature of San Francisco!

I’d love to see more highlights of its history, I know very little. I would like to see how it has changed.

The district is historically significant, with relics of the past that shows a familiar, yet different San Francisco

In the district’s gateway near Embarcadero, people walk past markers which point to rich history. There should be a new type of interpretive strategy

There is already momentum being built in Downtown SF through Trash Talk - what more can be done to signal the district’s brand?
Continue Downtown’s Story

Strategic branding that includes wayfinding, signage, and distinct furnishings could elevate the place and capture people’s attention. Showcasing the various layers of history and relics of the past can provide an experiential and educational understanding of the place.

How do we get there?

You are Here

Downtown SF Partnership should expand its branding to include wayfinding, signage, and distinct furnishings that help define Downtown SF as a special place and tell its story.

Recall the Layered History

Tours and an online guide can share these iconic architectural and historic stories with the public.
Placemaking Toolkit

- Chairs+Furnishings in Signature Color
- Wayfinding or Historic Signage
- Kiosks
- Decorative Lighting
- Flags / Banners / Poles
- Murals / Paintings / Sculpture
- Signature Crossings
- Distinct Paving
Next Steps

* Create a Downtown SF placemaking toolkit
  - Create a specific palette of street furniture, lighting, and color applications for Downtown SF
  - Engage an environmental graphic design consultant to lead effort

* Implement toolkit district-wide in tiered phases:
  - **Tier 1:** Short-term temporary installments that can be placed in public realm immediately once secured (such as signature color moveable tables/chairs, art pieces, or QR codes linking to website to highlight local “hot spots”, open spaces, and historic landmarks)
  - **Tier 2:** Temporary or permanent installments that require higher level of maintenance and planning than Tier 1 (such as flags/banners, moveable planters, or ground murals)
  - **Tier 3:** Long term installments developed with community input/feedback and requires regular stewardship (such as special overhead lighting, a large scale mural, or signature crosswalk)

* Build a Downtown SF Partnership placemaking team.
  - A small team to lead internal efforts, either within Downtown SF Partnership organization or committee structure
  - Stewards to distribute and monitor temporary pieces such as moveable furniture/chairs/signs

Hudson Square Business Improvement District (BID)
Hudson Square BID’s placemaking efforts include bright lime green street furnishings deployed in the district’s public spaces. Their unique look acts as an indicator of place, while being a fun way to capture passerbys’ attention to these provided amenities.
Connected Opportunities

The district lies at the **intersection** of many significant neighborhoods in San Francisco. Placemaking efforts should focus on drawing people into the district through **gateway edges**, along important **pedestrian corridors**, and into **outdoor spaces for gathering**.

Make the Downtown SF brand consistent and highly visible to daily users and visitors/tourists through signage, wayfinding, and colorful seating. It should be clear for someone moving through the district to know where they are beyond architectural and historical landmarks, through consistent branding + signage strategies and a combination of different toolkit pieces. An enjoyable and distinct experience will shape the overall perception of the area over time.

**Recommended Pilot:** Launch a combination of strategies in the most visible and trafficked areas, starting from toolkits in Tier 1 to Tier 3. Specifically target points corridors that connect the district to adjacent neighborhoods and guide people to be aware of where they are through placemaking.
Considerations

Selection Criteria
- Availability and type of furnishings
- Visibility and accessibility
- Adjacency to complementary ground-floor commercial spaces
- Relationship with POPOS owner
- Installation and maintenance requirements and limitations

Process + Key Partnerships
- Key Partners - Downtown SF Partnership, Business Groups, SF Arts Commission, Nonprofit and Community-Based Organizations, SF Public Works, SF Historical Society, SF Historical Association
- Maintenance - Downtown SF Partnership
- Security - SFPD or private

Implementation
- Pilots (Small Events) - Organizing a temporary branding refresh and distribution of Downtown SF branded chairs in POPOS or adding in markers/maps to bus stops and building walls should take less than a year.
- Long term efforts - Maintenance and continued improvement of permanent and digital wayfinding could take longer.

Potential Challenges
- Funding and maintenance associated with increased wayfinding and furnishings
- Permits required from SF Planning/Public Works departments

Partner Strategies
- Reclaim the Curb Street Openings
- Make Downtown an Experience Curate a Downtown Canvas
- Pop into our Public Spaces Inspired Investments
- Targeted Revamp
- Green the Streets Plazas as Parks

YOU ARE HERE
Considerations

Green the Streets
Plazas as Parks
Re-energize from Ground Up
Re-energize from Ground up

The future of economic vitality lies fundamentally in ground floor activity. There needs to be focused, collective action to revitalize the recent vacancy in Downtown SF. Vacancies should be seen as opportunities to reassess how the ground floor interacts with the public realm.

What does this do?

Supports Local Economy
The ground floor is the vital zone where people shop, dine, and visit.

Foster New and Intentional Places
Fortify the district as a new place to be rather than a place to pass through.

Creates a Complete Neighborhood
Increasing amenities and places for people already residing in the district or adjacent neighborhoods will support lifestyles.

Shifts Single Use to Mixed-Use
Mixed-use developments create diversified revenue streams for developers while enhancing community socialization.
Re-energize from Ground up

COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted businesses, affecting operating hours, increasing vacancies, and pushing people to work from home. There is room for growth as people are finding safer and innovative ways to gather, dine, shop, and work flexibly:

1. Today, there are vacant ground floors near key intersections, streets, and entrances toward plazas/open spaces

2. The users of the district largely consist of office workers, and there is a slow return to office

Why is this important?

Survey respondents wanted more active ground floors adjacent to Downtown SF’s streets and public spaces

62%

Majority of land use is dominated by Office and Mixed-Use without Residential in Downtown. Currently in San Francisco, office vacancy rates are at 21.7%

21.7% Office vacancy

“Would love to see downtown become a more vibrant place outside of business hours. Need more ground floor life in the evenings and weekends!”

Online Survey March 2022

Break up large lease spaces into smaller units so small businesses (Etsy makers, mom and pop) can afford to try brick and mortar
There are opportunities to elevate experiences adjacent to ground floors, but voids must be filled first. Targeting zones that could benefit from new ground floor uses and adding incentive programs to allow for diversity of uses could bring energy to the district both during and outside of 9-5 hours.

Targeted Revamp

Create synergy between the ground floor, streets and open spaces by identifying targeted “zones” that have activity-generating potential.

Incentive Programs

Foster opportunity programs, such as flexible ground floor use, to make vacant spaces available for diverse uses and support district growth.
The Roadmap to Targeted Revamp

**Makes the space**
- Stakeholders
- Business Owners
- Developers

**Makes the use**
- Downtown SF Partnership
- Non-profits
- Community-based Organizations
- Employees, Visitors, Residents

**Fills gap of stewardship**
- Vacancy Tax or balance existing investment with potential investment

**Makes the rules**
- City officials
- SF Planning
- Mayor’s Office
- SF Board of Supervisors

**Dedicate funding for emerging businesses and disperse to community-based organizations**
- Set up a mechanism for ground floor retail support

**Remove barriers for new business types**
Finding Opportunities to Bridge Public and Private Space

**Physical**

- **Advocate** for businesses in unused kiosks, POPOS, newstands, and vacant retail space.
- **Art program to reduce negative impacts of inactive + inanimate ground floors (murals)**.
- **Use arts and events to invite indoor and rooftop POPOS use**.
- **Take advantage of indoor POPOS as spaces for working or rejuvenation**.

**Informal**

- **Connect people to others, stories, and food through interviews and menus on website and newsletters**.
- **Use GF spaces for pop-up events**.
- **Host outdoor work in parklets or widened sidewalks**.

**Structured**

- **Ground floor incentive programs**

**Temporary**

- **Temporary art program in collaboration such as Glow SF & Paint the Void**

**Program/Incentives/Policies**

- **Creating continuity and variety of ground floor experiences**
- **Move social/communal programming to ground floor**
- **Collaborate with businesses and property owners to understand needs and concerns**
- **Online retail map with POPOS**
- **Create online retail map with POPOS**

**Temporary +**

- **Permanent +**

**Permanent +**

- **Ground floor incentive programs**
Connected Opportunities

There are areas in the district that have a lot of pedestrian activity compared to others, and areas that have more active ground floors. Identifying areas already with ground floor activity can help target “zones” that could use a revamp or build on existing momentum.

There needs to be ground floor types beyond traditional “active use” retail, and creation of more flexible and adaptive spaces, such as new ways to cowork, shop and dine locally.

Furthermore, there is a spectrum of high quality facades that enhance the pedestrian experience to lower quality facades, which are barren and lack cohesion between indoor and outdoor spaces. Identifying facades of good quality will reveal gaps that should be knit together to create strong, engaging, and active corridors.
Recommended Pilots

A  Key Corner Activator: Leidesdorff St at Commercial St

Strategy: Revamp the facade with color, plantings and wider openings while filling vacancy with a temporary, rotating pop-up, including locally made shop, art gallery, co-working space, or specialty food+beverage

B  POPOS + Plaza Frontage: 50 California St

Strategy: Create an invitation to sit both inside and outside of a POPOS or Plaza, creating opportunity for a more connected ground floor relationship with the public realm

C  Quality Ground Floor Conversion: Sansome St at Bush St

Strategy: Introduce multiple vendors within a larger, vacant lot to add variety and reduce risk towards single use. A food hall and marketplace could fill the need for amenities in the district, with proximity to Montgomery BART
### Next Steps

**Build on momentum** of places that are doing well, such as improvements to Belden Place:
- Measure foot traffic change before and after Belden Place improvements
- Find opportunities for shared or flexible spaces throughout the district by building an inventory
- Promote a “lunch in the district” event, using spaces of vacant ground floors or POPOS/Plazas for people to takeout and eat in designated areas

**Be an advocate** for new and different uses in the district while promoting current businesses:
- Identify gaps and vacancies and be a resource for new businesses that want to open in Downtown SF
- Add art and offer grants with the City to uplift and revamp store frontages
- Encourage local marketplaces and shopping experiences in the district, through managing a program that connects people who want to host temporary pop-ups or rotating events
- Advertise local restaurants, bars, and hotels through an online, interactive map
  - Feature menus, interviews (connect people to story / food)
  - Special day neighborhood discount as incentive program

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**Storefronts, LA & Great Streets Initiative**  
**Los Angeles, CA**  
Pilot initiatives by LA-Mas, FOUND/LA, Mayor’s Office, and other organizations were created to support minority business owners across the city by providing free design, permitting, and construction administration for interior and exterior physical improvements. The goals were to reimagine short-term creative placemaking strategies and enhance business visibility. The designs were based on community workshops and interviews with Key Stakeholders, with the Mayor’s office commissioning the project.
Selection Criteria

- Identify key target areas where ground floor activity is doing well and build off of momentum in neighboring areas
- Consider adjacencies to major transit stops, including BART, MUNI, and Cable Car
- Determine and create a list of which ground floor is vacant to identify which space could be opportune for targeted revamp
- Conduct a study on space quality and potential use
  - Spaces for co-working, pop-up retail, food/beverage, etc.

Process + Key Partnerships

- Key Partners - Business Tenants, Property Owners, SF OEWD, SF Mayor's Office, SF Arts Commission, Nonprofit and Community-Based Organizations
- Associated Programs:
  - Paint the Void
  - The Storefront
  - MadeinSF

Implementation

Pilots - Advocate and initiate temporary pop-ups in vacant ground floor spaces, by targeted one in each focus area

Permanent Changes - Create a long term lease strategy, such as working with developers/property-owners/businesses in developing a new space such as a flexible coworking space or food/market hall

Potential Challenges

- Economic shifts/challenged are charged by larger factors outside of control
- Different property-owners have varying lease agreements and requirements

Partner Strategies

- Reclaim the Curb
- Street Openings
- Make Downtown an Experience Curate a Downtown Canvas
- Pop into our Public Spaces Inspired Investments
- You are Here Recall the Layered History
- Green the Streets Plazas as Parks

Downtown SF Public Realm Action Plan | July 2022
5
Priority Action Areas + Pilot Projects
Priority Action Areas + Pilot Projects

The three priority Action Areas (Action Areas A-C) are further defined in the following pages with a vision for near-term pilots to deploy within a year, which will build momentum and inform iterations for a long-term vision.

These proposals will require strong partnerships, particularly between Downtown SF Partnership, property owners, tenants, and the City, to implement, and should continue to engage the Downtown SF community, building upon 2022 Online Survey findings.
Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

- Add activation and programming?
- Assess the need for midblock crossings
- Elevate alleys with string lights and planters? Test permanent closure?
- Work with ground floor to add art and murals?

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Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

Existing Context

The historic alleyways where Leidesdorff St and Commercial St meet are ripe for activation through food and storytelling of its past. It sits at a key crossroad between Transamerica Park, the Embarcadero Center, and Chinatown.
Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff
Near-term Pilot

**Major Moves:**

1) Street opening on Leidesdorff St, reinforced with street and wall mural

2) Highlight historic buried shoreline and pier with street mural

3) Protected spill out areas in front of businesses with active ground floors

*Further coordination required with SFMTA
## Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

### Long-term Vision

**Major Moves:**

1) Additional tree plantings on Leidesdorff St and north edge of Commercial St

2) Table intersection and mid-block crossings help pedestrians navigate traffic safely

3) Better pedestrian connections through curbed bulb outs and mid-block crossings

*Further coordination required with SFMTA*
Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

Existing

© SITELAB urban studio
Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

Proposed

You are Here
String lighting across alleyway

Curate a Downtown Canvas
Large scale mural or projection

Targeted Revamp
Host a pop-up vendor to add buzz

Recall the Layered History
Historic horse posts tell a story

Street Opening
Pedestrianize Leidesdorff St

Green the Streets
Planters and trees line the streets

Targeted Revamp
Seating for outdoor dining
Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

Existing
Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

Proposed

- Vegetation to enliven urban landscape
- Outdoor seating for gathering + eating
- Art that elevates history and placemaking
- Signature branding + wayfinding to reinforce district identity
How can we “mark” this gateway moment into the district?

Can we capture energy of Market St with moveable furniture, wayfinding, and kiosks?

What’s the potential for pedestrian scramble and surface treatment?

How might we leverage updates to 101 California St on surrounding spaces and ground floors?

All images © SITELAB urban studio
The Downtown Gateway offers an opportunity to capture abundant foot traffic coming from the Ferry Building along Market St, leading pedestrians toward the intersection of California St and Front St, which hosts four generously-sized POPOS.

**Existing Context**

- Leads to Embarcadero and Ferry Building, major visitor attractions
- Iconic historic streetcar
- Draw energy from Market St
- Four different POPOS share this intersection
- Overbuilt streets that served old highway
- Small-scale restaurants and retail
- Overbuilt streets that served old highway
- The Downtown Gateway offers an opportunity to capture abundant foot traffic coming from the Ferry Building along Market St, leading pedestrians toward the intersection of California St and Front St, which hosts four generously-sized POPOS.
Action Area B: Downtown Gateway
Near-term Pilot

Major Moves:

1) Bulb outs at California St + Davis St connect and create safer crossings between POPOS

2) Greenery and lights draw activity from Robert Frost Plaza

3) Curb on north edge of California St used to create staying spaces

*Further coordination required with SFMTA
Action Area B: Downtown Gateway

Long-term Vision

Major Moves:
1) South edge of California St activated on weekends by food vendors
2) POPOS improvements create feeling of connection at four corners
3) Improved crossing draws activity from Robert Frost Plaza

*Further coordination required with SFMTA
Action Area B: Downtown Gateway

Existing
Downtown SF Public Realm Action Plan

**Action Area B: Downtown Gateway**

**Proposed**

- **Build Better Connections**
  - Pedestrian scramble connection

- **You are Here**
  - Signature crosswalks for branding

- **Make Downtown an Experience**
  - Partner with POPOS owners to program

- **Make the pavilion a destination.**
  - Explore pop-up uses.

- **Pop into our Public Spaces**
  - Quick refresh of existing POPOS

- **Reclaim the Curb**
  - Safer crossings with expansions

- **Green the Streets**
  - Increase vegetated spaces

- **Curate a Downtown Canvas**
  - Mural opportunity
**Action Area C: Market Oasis**

- **Mechanics Monument Plaza**
- **Ecker Plaza**
- **Sansome St + Sutter St**
- **One Bush St**
- **Battery Bridge Mural Project**

**Questions:**
- Could we limit private vehicles and better support active mobility here?
- How can we better leverage this sunlit POPOs - activation, programming, moveable seating?
- How can the plaza and its adjacent retail be brought back to their fullest potential?
- How can we better connect the collection of public spaces along Market St?

*All images © SITELAB urban studio*
Sansome St is a critical segment of the emerging pedestrian network, connecting Downtown to SoMa and Salesforce Park to the south. Bounded on either side by Citicorp Center and One Bush Street Plaza, this street could offer much needed respite from the hustle and bustle of Market St.
Action Area C: Market Oasis
Near-term Pilot

A. Parking areas reprogrammed to accommodate motorcycle and micro mobility parking in combination with planters and seating areas
B. Improved and widened crossings across Market St to Ecker Plaza
C. Improve visibility of POPOS from street
D. Add seating options to popular lunchtime area
E. Planters added to reinforce staying space
F. Facades to be used in light projection display
G. Mural draws attention to Pavilion
H. Reintroduce kiosk stall
I. Staying space created with planters and seating and activated with food cart
J. Activate the ground floor with collection of short-term pop-ups
K. Activate as a new, highly-visible downtown destination
L. Battery Bridge Mural Project (Downtown SF Partnership)

Major Moves:
1) Curb area is used to create staying spaces for pedestrians
2) Pavilion is reactivated as new destination
3) Protected areas under existing trees provide flexible variety of seating
4) Kiosks and carts are reintroduced along 1 Bush St
Action Area C: Market Oasis
Long-term Vision

A. New curbs are constructed to provide level access from sidewalk to curbside areas*

B. Street is closed to through vehicles except transit - motorcycle and micro mobility parking maintained*

C. POPOS improvement to reduce barrier between sidewalk and sunken area, with generous furnishings that can be activated through programming

D. Green rooms are created with ground plantings that reinforce staying spaces along Sansome St

E. Street openings for special events

F. With improvements, POPOS can be used as a performance space and host a variety of events

G. Surface treatment at the intersection of Sansome St and Sutter St

H. Long-term lease at 225 Bush St, such as market OR food hall

I. Activated ground floor business is provided with spill-out space along sidewalk

Major Moves:

1) Create a stronger connection from Sansome St to sunken POPOS at One Bush St by removing walled edge and creating stepped seating

2) New trees help reduce wind tunnel effect

3) Green rooms created with ground plantings near existing trees

* further coordination required with SFMTA
Market St is one of the City’s most important corridors and supports pedestrian, cyclist, and transit movement. A series of public spaces are offered along Market – the newest being Downtown SF Partnership’s Battery Bridge. Elevating all open spaces along Market St to their full potential will reinforce a “Market Oasis”.

**Action Area C: Market Oasis**

**Existing Context**

- **Market St**
- **City-owned plaza**
- **Bike share station**
- **Battery Bridge Mural Project** (Downtown SF Partnership)

Within Downtown, Market Street offers many public open spaces and places for pause and respite.
Action Area C: Market Oasis
Near-term Pilot

**Major Moves:**

1) Create an improved experience of significant public spaces along Market St (Battery Bridge and Mechanics Monument Plaza)

2) Activate area with events and programming to invite people into spaces

3) Steward moveable tables + chairs daily to encourage staying
Action Area C: Market Oasis

Existing
**Action Area C: Market Oasis**

**Proposed**

**Targeted Revamp**
*Potential market or food hall*

**Green the Streets**
*Planters and trees*

**Reclaim the Curb**
*Expand space along curb*

**You are Here**
*Signature furnishings + wayfinding*

**Targeted Revamp**
*Make the pavilion a novel destination*

**POP into our Public Spaces**
*Enliven barren plaza with seating*

**Curate a Downtown Canvas**
*Unique ribbon-like art opportunity*

**Make Downtown an Experience**
*Platform for special events or mural*
Downtown SF has a strong foundation – it’s time to build on the momentum.

What role will you play?