



**DOWNTOWN SF**

# Public Realm Action Plan

**July 2022**

# Acknowledgements

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**.

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July 2022

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\*

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*\*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.





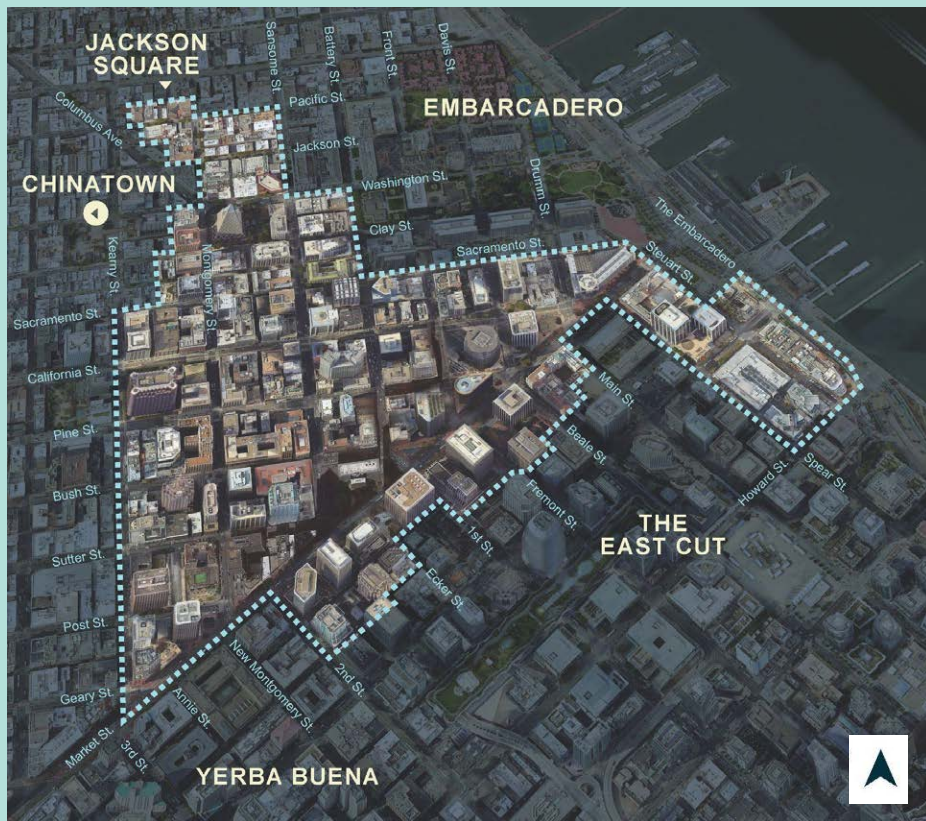
# 1

# 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 SF Partnership's District Boundary**

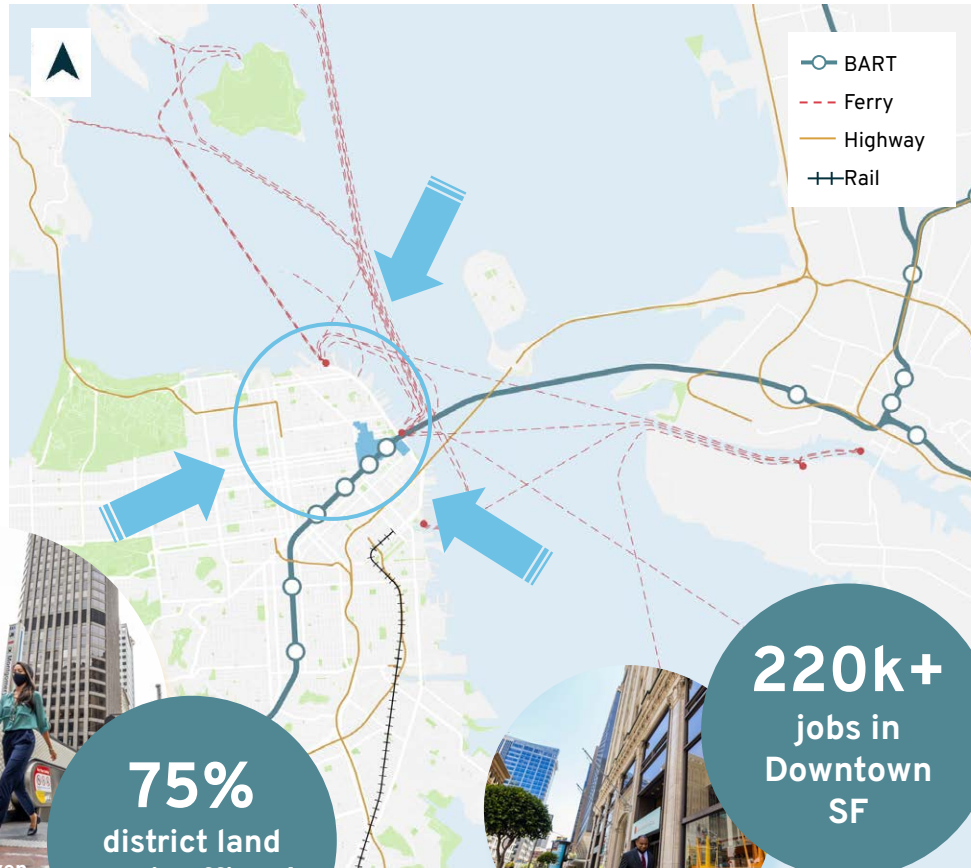
Source: Downtown SF Partnership



**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.



**75%**  
district land  
use is office /  
mixed use



**220k+**  
jobs in  
Downtown  
SF

# 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.

DCBD

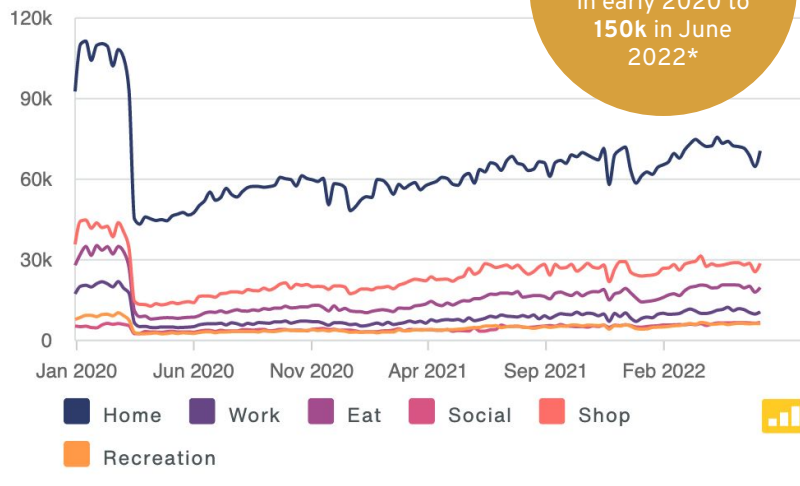
## Trip Purpose

Trip volume in this geography, typical weekday

Week of Dec 30, 2019 to the week of Jun 6, 2022

REPLICA

Total trip count has decreased from about 240k in early 2020 to 150k in June 2022\*



Source: Replica. Total trips estimated using Replica’s “Trends” tool for census tracts 117 and 611 which mostly align with Downtown SF’s boundary

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

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.



62%



68%



68%



50%




50%

Source: SITELAB, Online Survey February 2022  
Downtown SF Community responses (831 total)



# Downtown SF: more than a workplace, a social destination



An aerial photograph of San Francisco, California, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous skyscrapers. The Transamerica Pyramid is the most prominent building on the right side. In the background, the city extends to the water, with the Golden Gate Bridge visible in the distance. The sky is clear and blue. A dark teal banner with white text is overlaid across the middle of the image.

**This is a moment to reimagine  
the future of Downtown SF.**

This block is a continuation of the image above, showing the same aerial view of San Francisco. A dark teal banner with white text is overlaid at the bottom, with a large teal arrow pointing to the right, indicating a transition or continuation of the message.

**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  
Movement /  
Stationary  
Assessment  
+  
Intercept  
Surveys**

**Public Life  
and Space  
Assessment**

**8 streets  
16 public  
spaces  
21 volunteers  
82 intercept  
surveys**



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

**OEWD  
SFMTA  
SF Planning  
Public Works**

**City  
Agency  
Insights**

**Online  
Survey**

**871**  
Participants

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

**Desktop  
Research**

**Planning  
Trends**

**History**

**Precedent  
Research**

**Replica  
Data**

**GIS Data  
Mapping**

**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

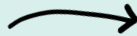
With streets that prioritize people and a more inclusive downtown, a place for more than office work

# 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



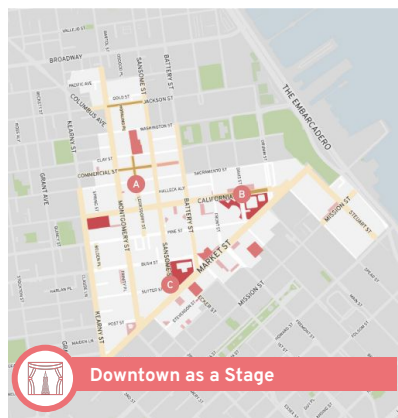
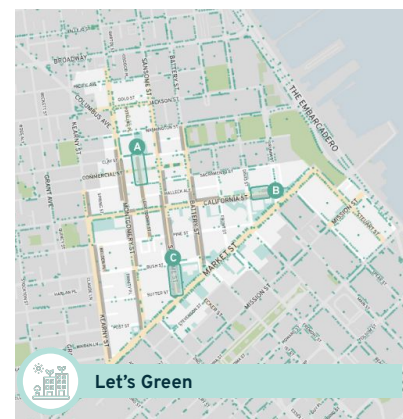
## Re-energize from the Ground Up

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**.

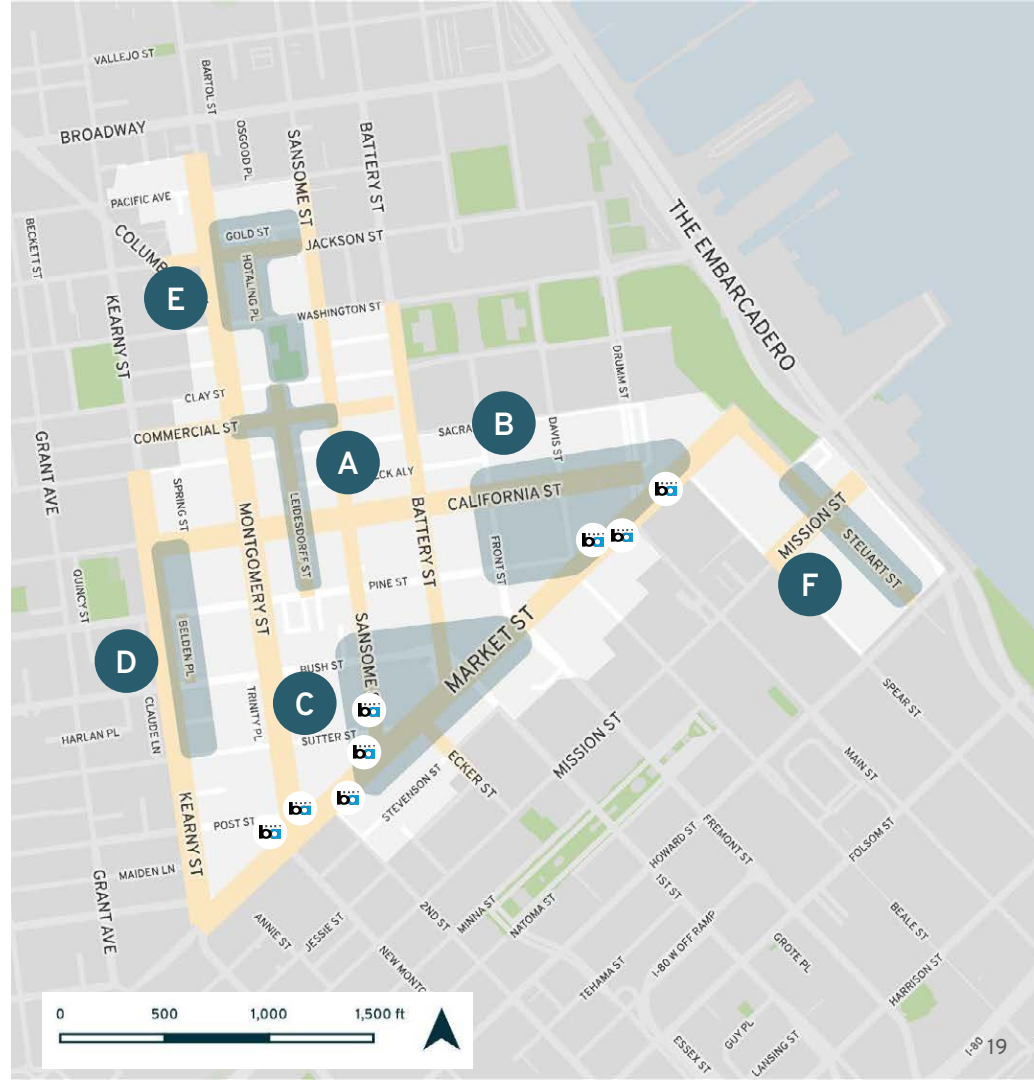
Within Connected Opportunities are **pilots** recommended within Action Areas.



# 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)



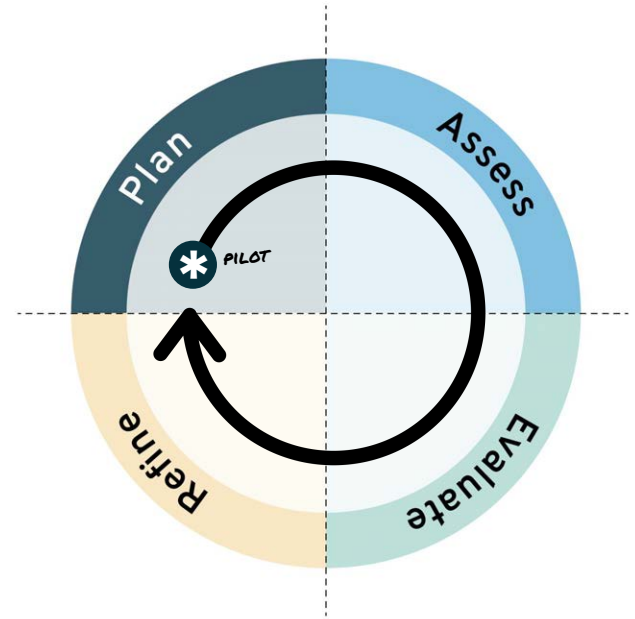


# Prioritizing Pilots to Act Now

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.

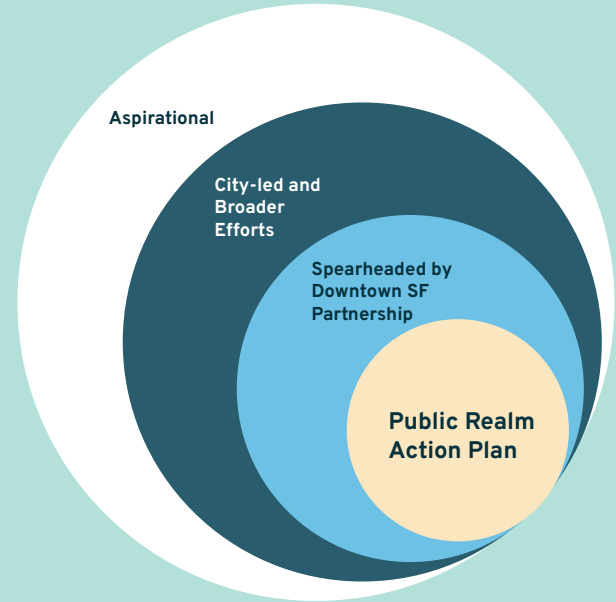
A **'pilot'** is a first-mover. Pilots act as a strategic way to **test strategies** on-the-ground – they can ideally be implemented quickly, and then one can observe what works to inform how to refine for maximum benefit.

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?**





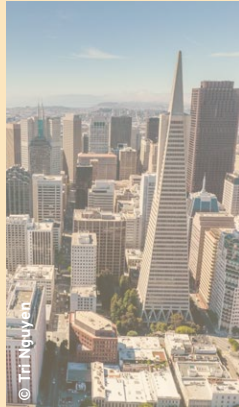
# 2

## Downtown SF, Then + Now

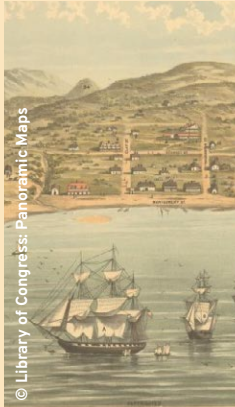


# Layered Lenses

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**



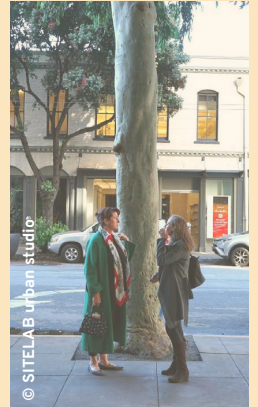
**PUBLIC SPACE**



**ARTS, CULTURE, AND AMENITIES**



**GROUND FLOOR**



**PUBLIC LIFE ASSESSMENT AND ONLINE SURVEY**

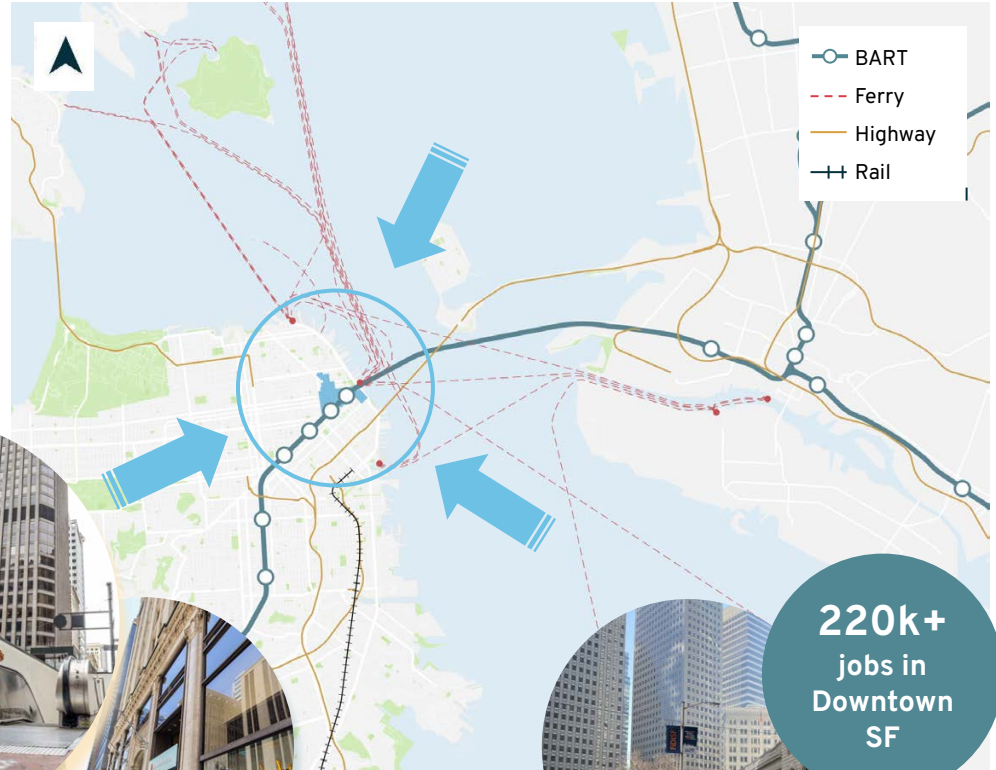
HOW IT IS TODAY

# All roads lead to Downtown

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.

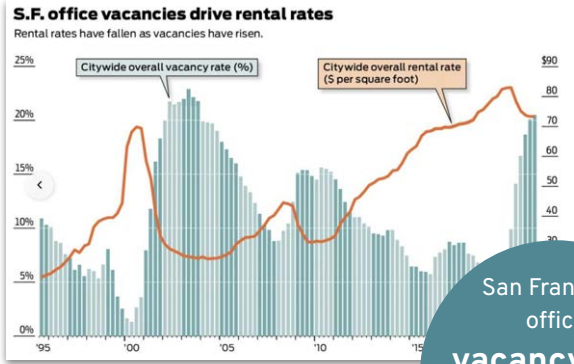




# But the land use is dominated by Office

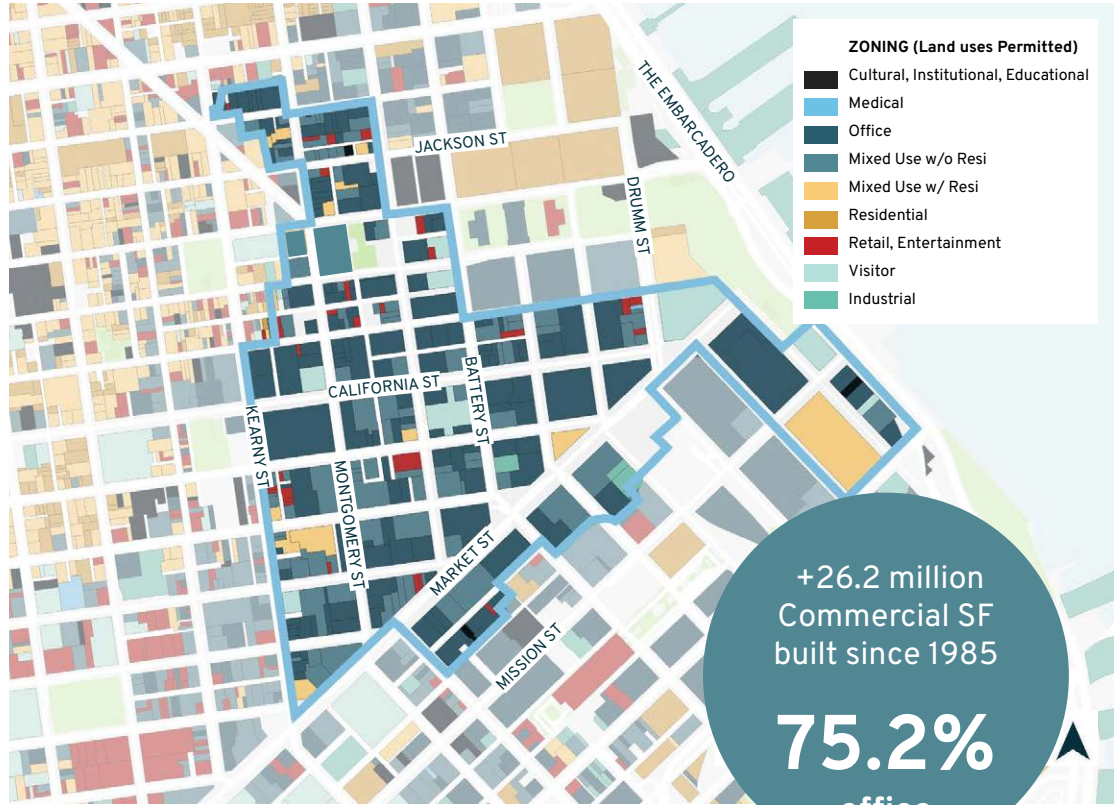
Today, the majority of land use is primarily **Office and Mixed Use (without Residential)**.

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.



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

San Francisco office vacancy rate **20.5%**



Source: SFData (2019)



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.



HOW IT IS TODAY

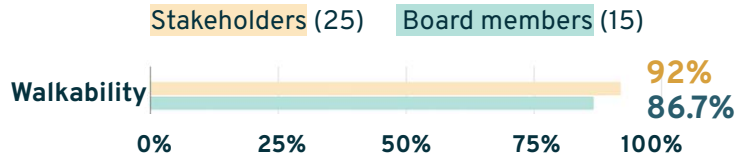
# Downtown is highly walkable, with a grid that predates the car

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**.

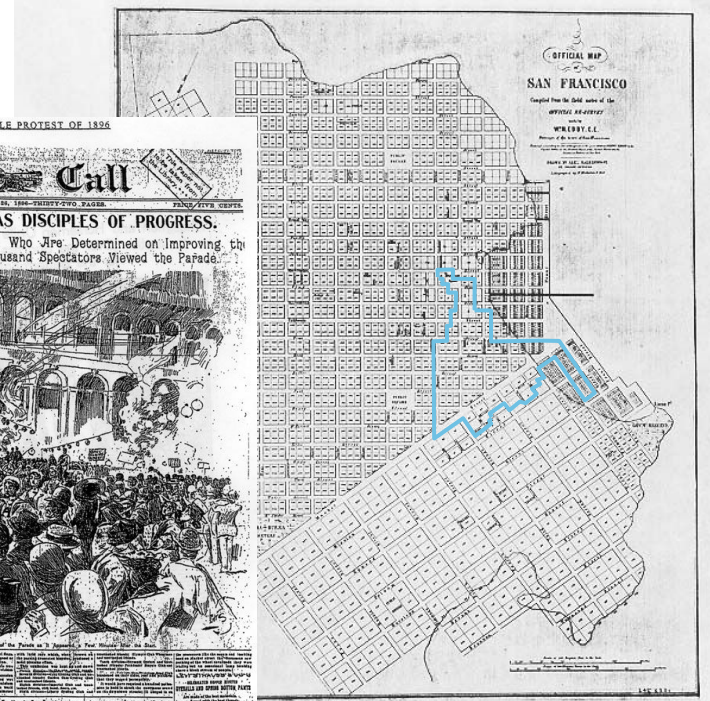
What makes Downtown SF a special place to you?



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



# There is high biking demand with minimal infrastructure

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.



All bikeways north of Market St are currently **unprotected Sharrows**



\*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

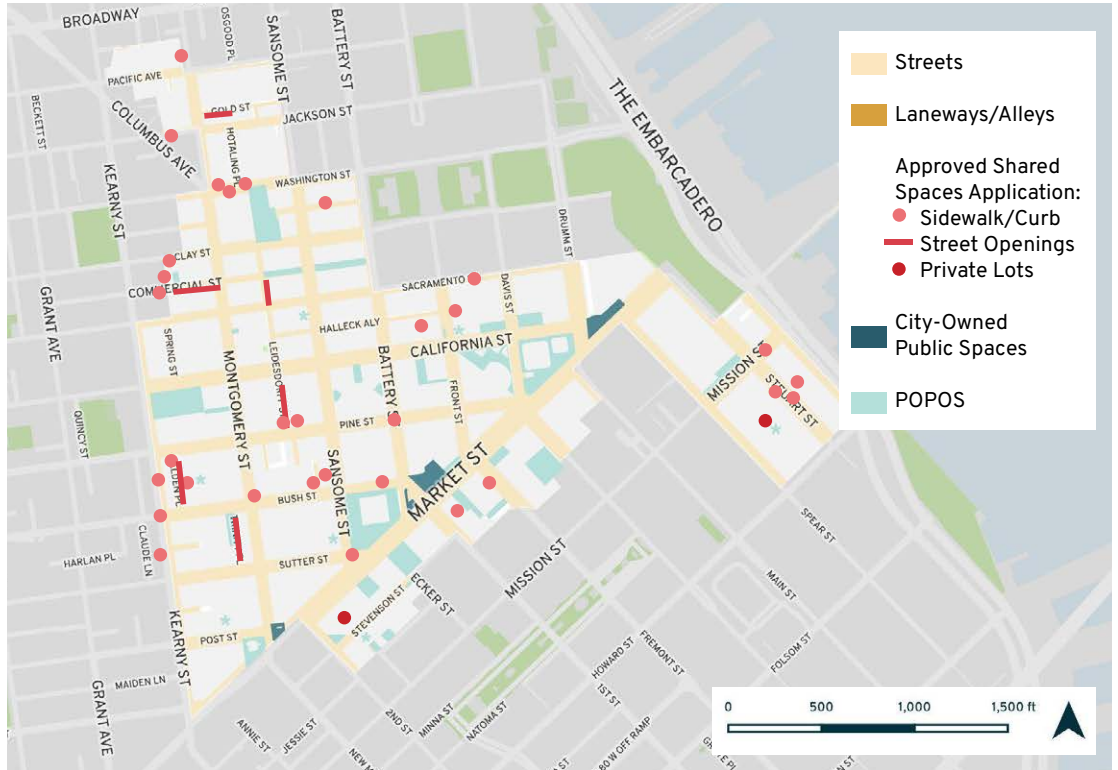
Laneways and some street segments may have the capacity to support pedestrian activity. Examples include road diets, alternative uses of metered parking, and temporary street vacations.

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.

Streets make up  
36%  
of the district.

Top 3 Foot+Bike  
Traffic Streets:  
Market St.  
Montgomery St.  
2nd St.

0  
Public parks



Source: DataSF.org



# Full picture of the public realm



Streets  
make up  
**36%** of  
Downtown  
SF



**34**  
Privately-Owned  
Public Open  
Space (POPOS)

**2**  
Public  
plazas



**0**  
Public  
parks

**15**  
alleyways

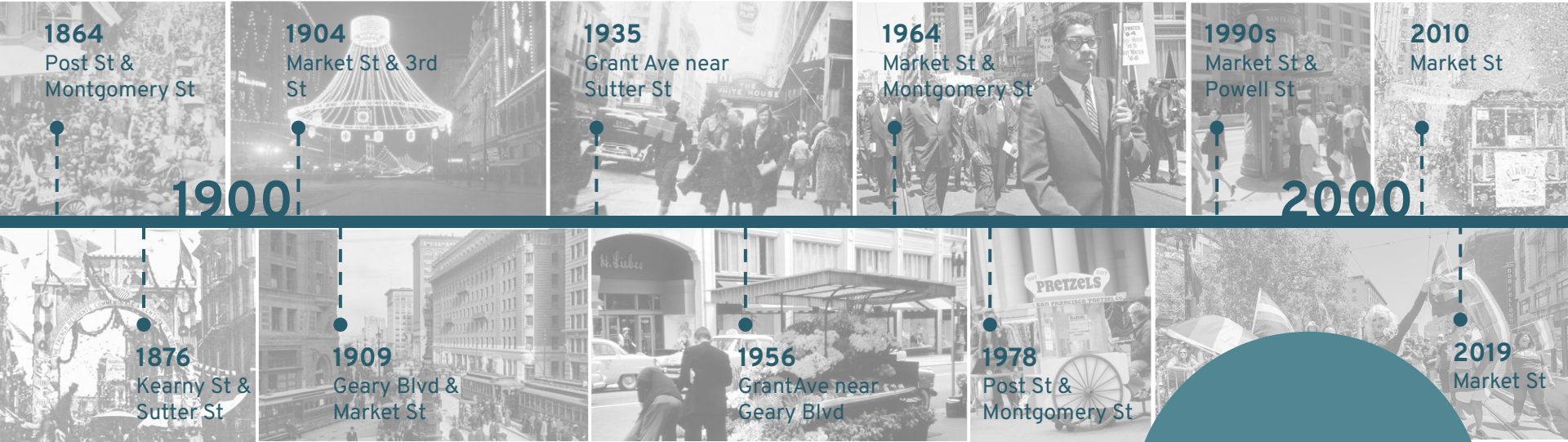


**0**  
Slow  
Streets

**48**  
Shared  
Spaces  
approved



# 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.



**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



Many Entrances

Minimum Interaction

Human Scale + Active

No Porosity



Vibrant

Active

Inactive

Inanimate



# Downtown SF Online Survey

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.

831

Respondents  
Downtown SF  
Community and  
General Public

25

Respondents  
Downtown SF  
Partnership  
Stakeholders

15

Respondents  
Downtown SF  
Partnership Board  
Members



# 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?



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.

# 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**



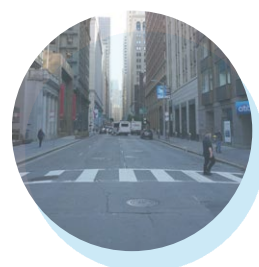
**9-5 culture, with  
an over-reliance on  
office workforce**



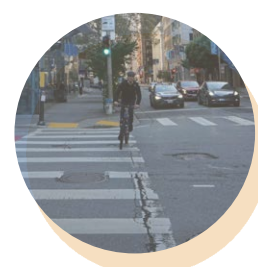
**Perception that  
there is “nothing  
for me” downtown**



**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.**

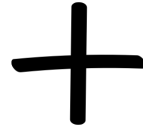


# 3

# 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

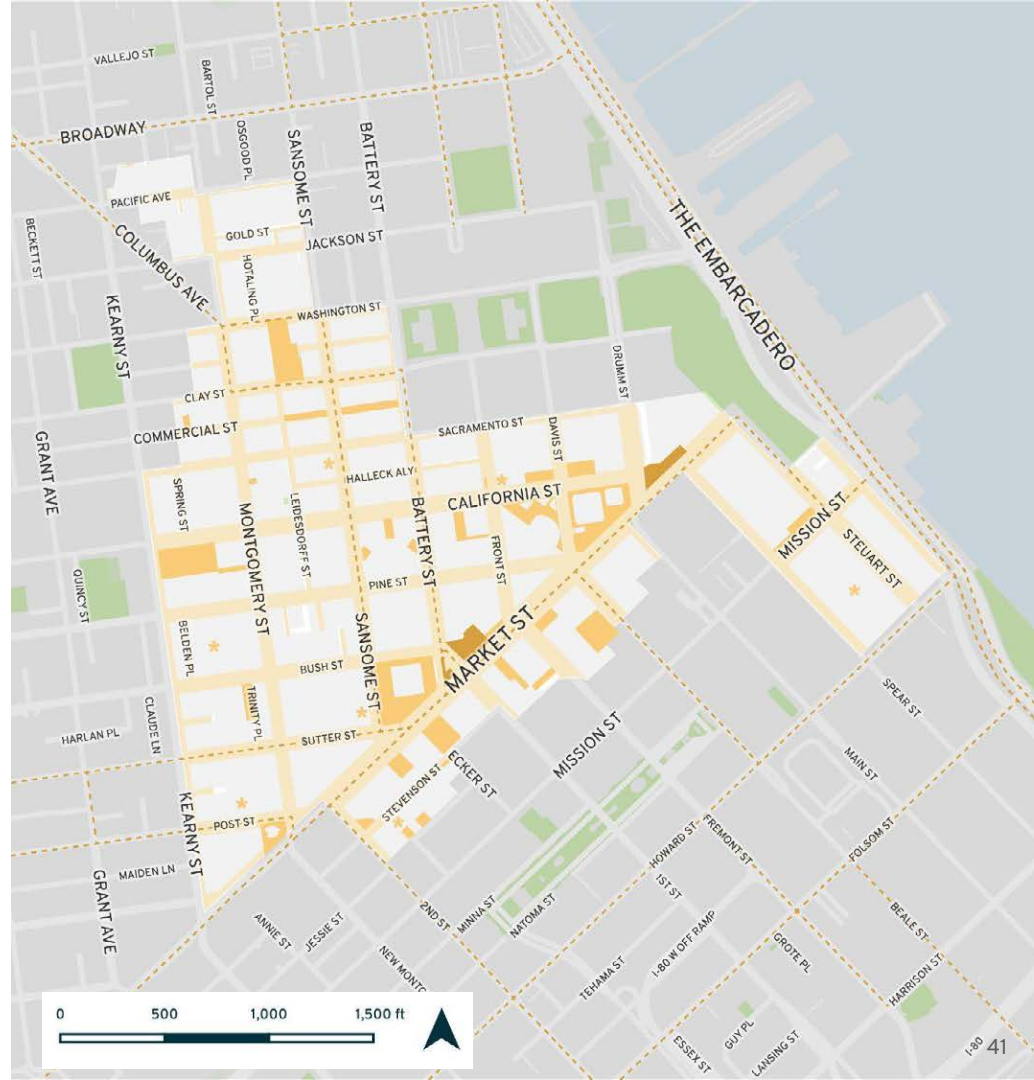
Areas drawn from a culmination of intersecting opportunity areas in Downtown SF – of physical space, with pedestrian activity, community interest, and public + private investments

# 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**



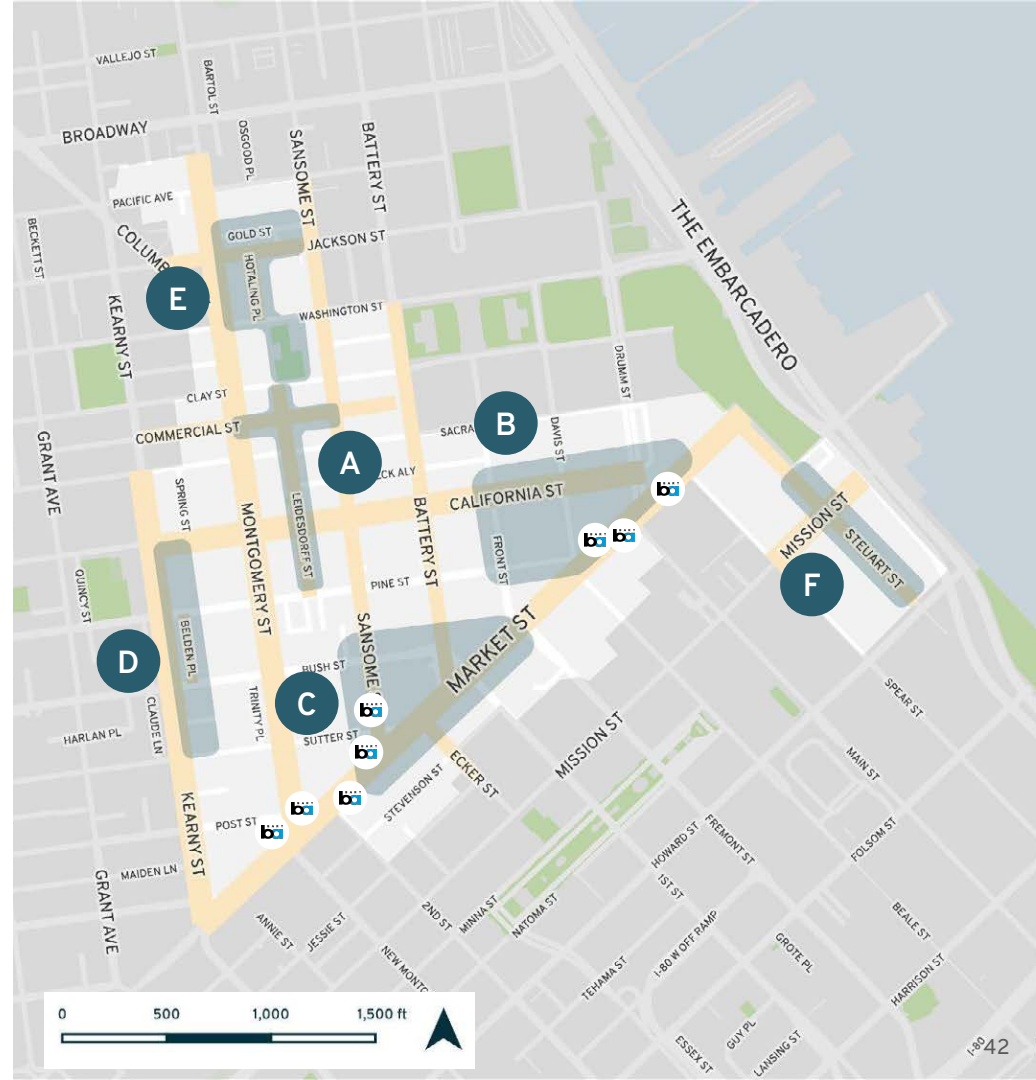


# Emerging Pedestrian Corridors + Action Areas

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

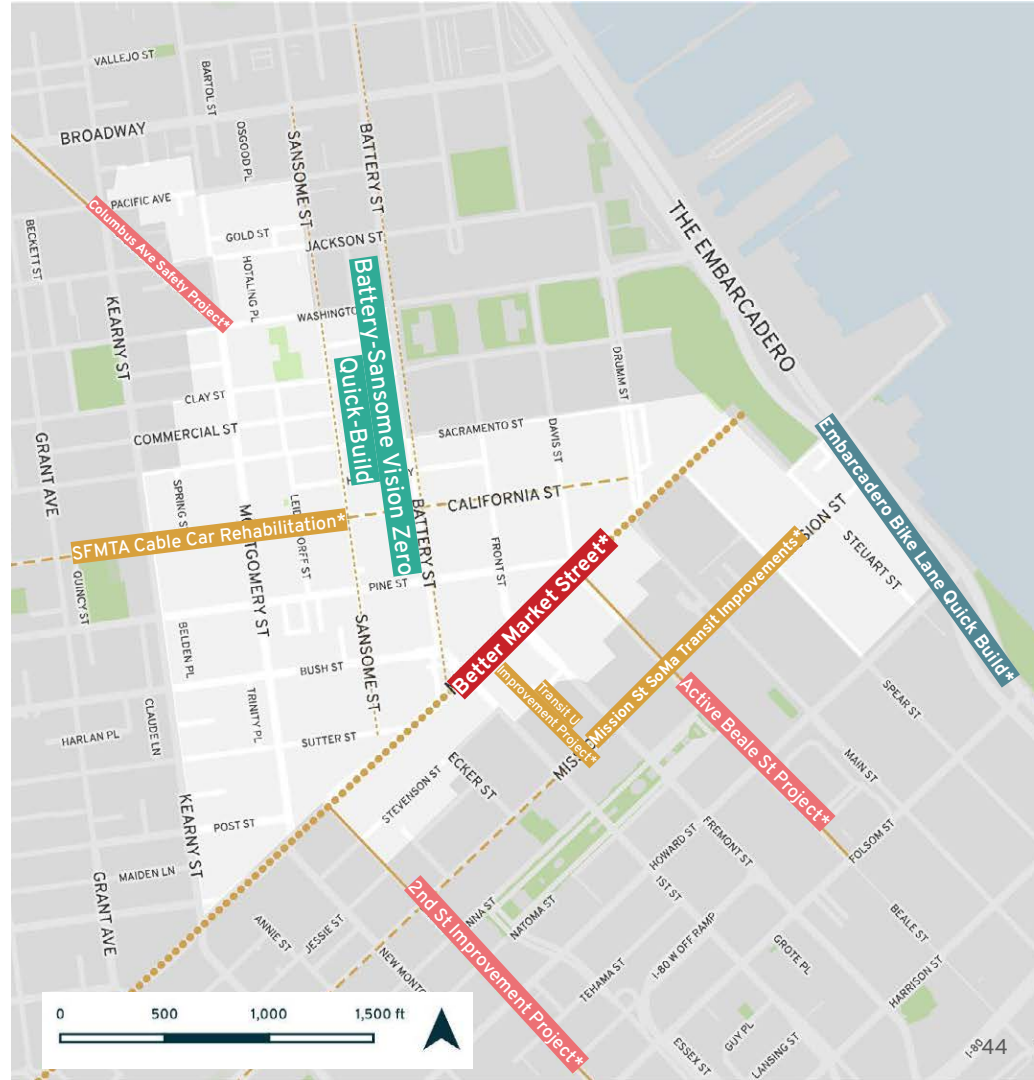
*What public improvements are underway, in the pipeline, or have been recently completed?*

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.

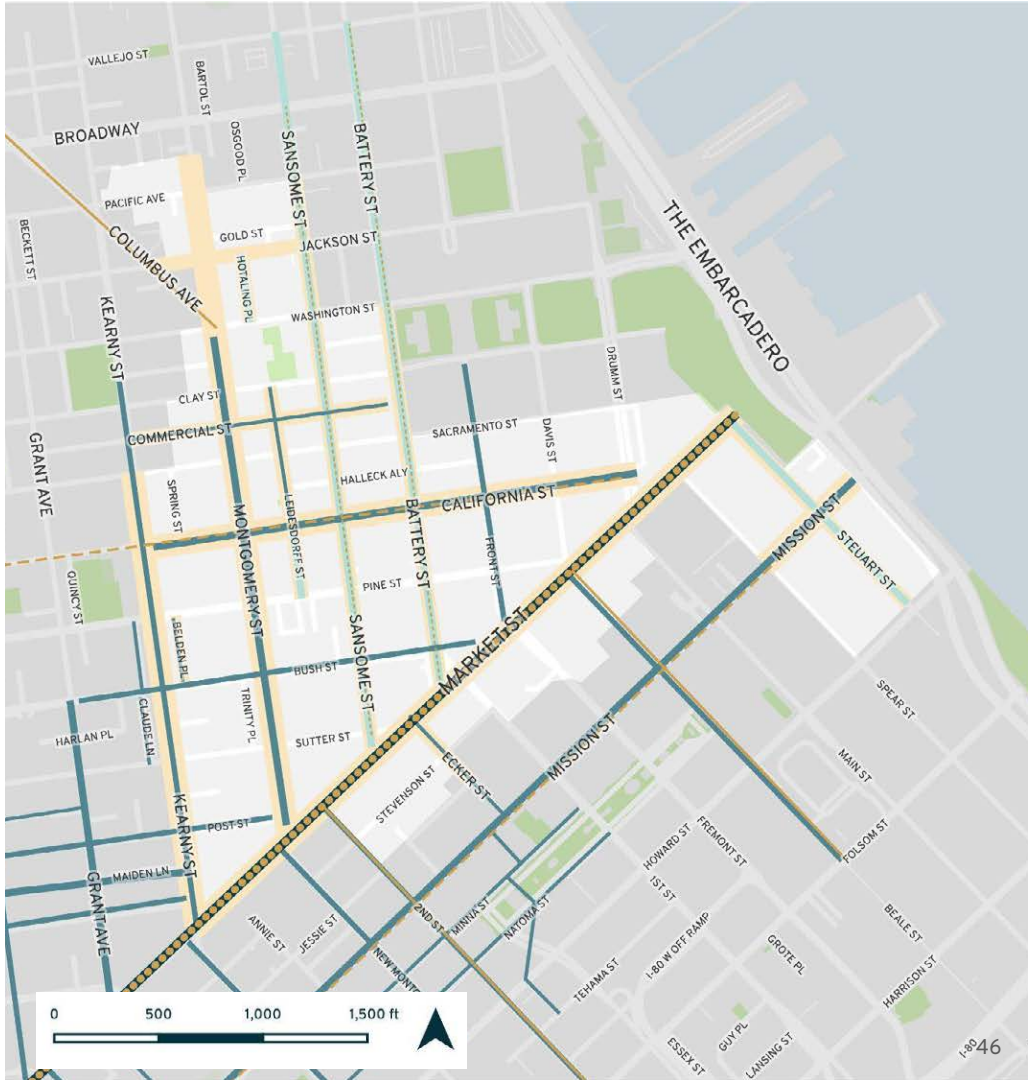
## DOWNTOWN STREETScape PLAN

- 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

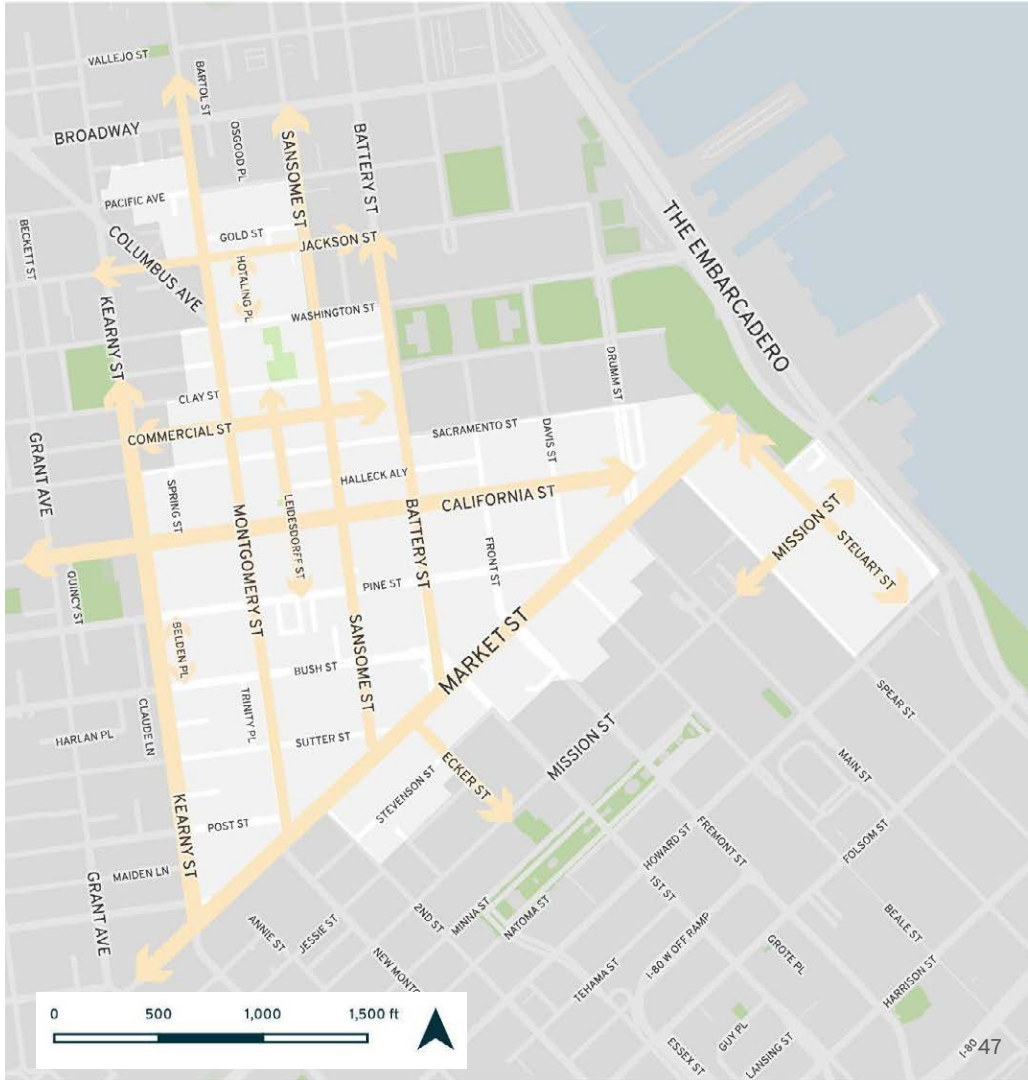
*Where do city improvements and priority pedestrian streets overlap?*



# 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.

— EMERGING PEDESTRIAN CORRIDORS





# 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.

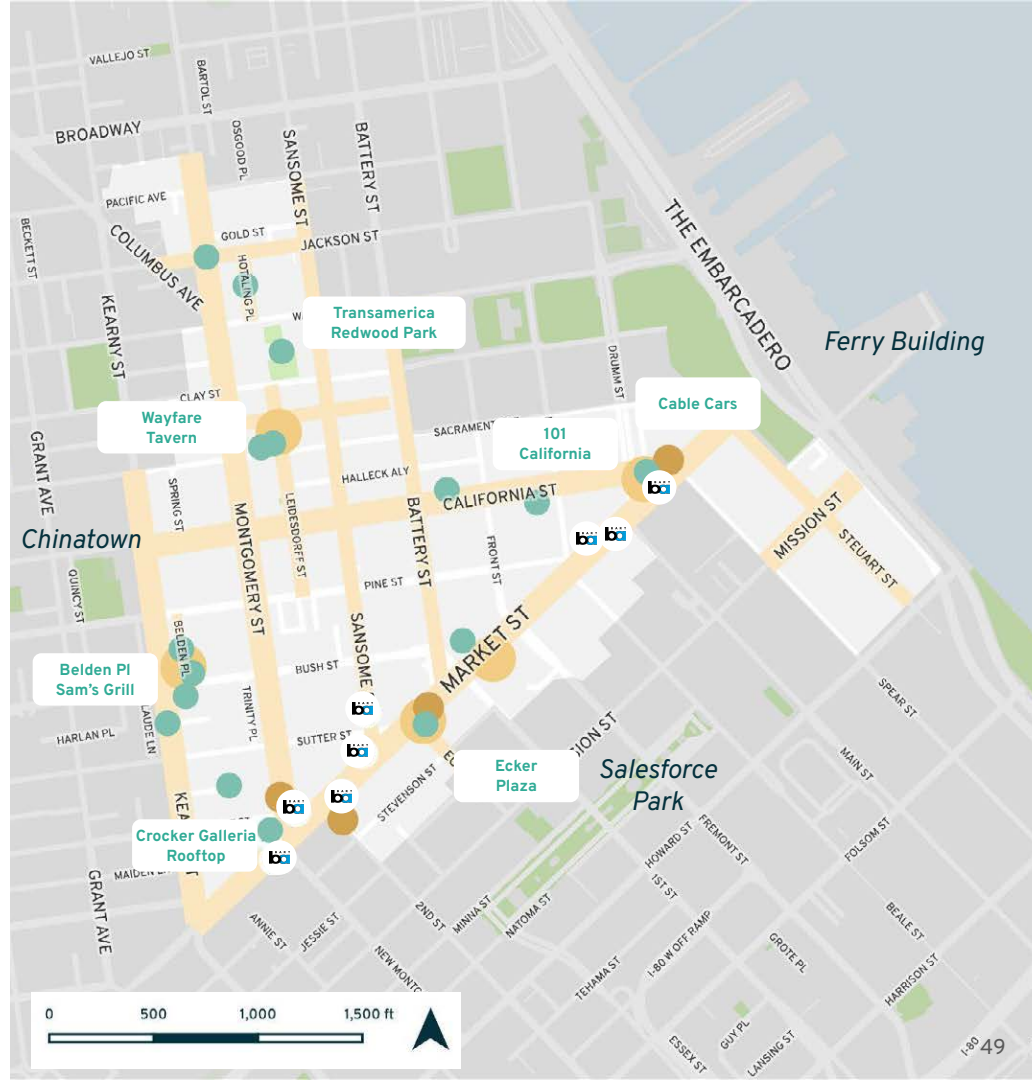
## BART STATION ENTRANCES

## 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





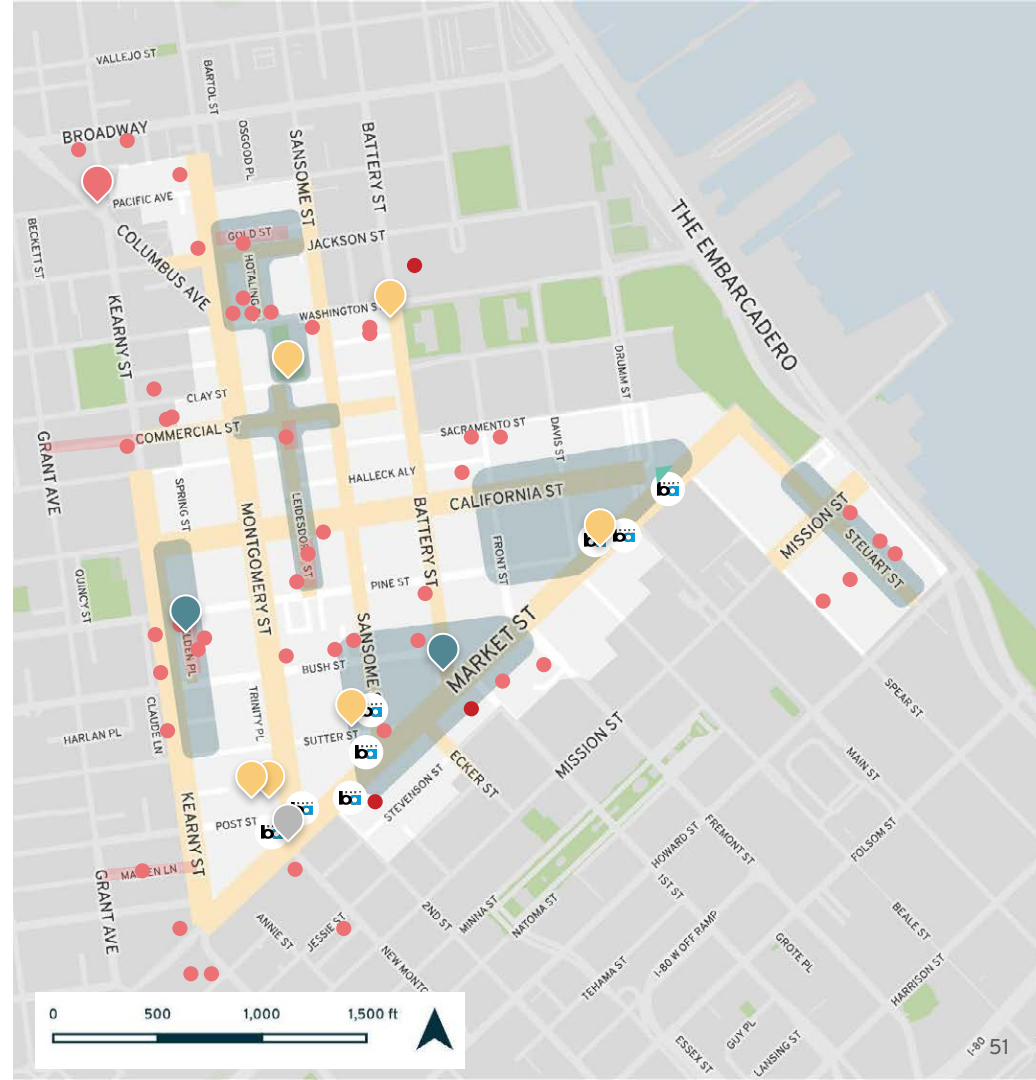
# Action Areas

Where do **public realm opportunities** align with...

... **Community interest**

... **City improvements**

...and **private + Downtown SF Partnership investments?**



# Action Areas

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

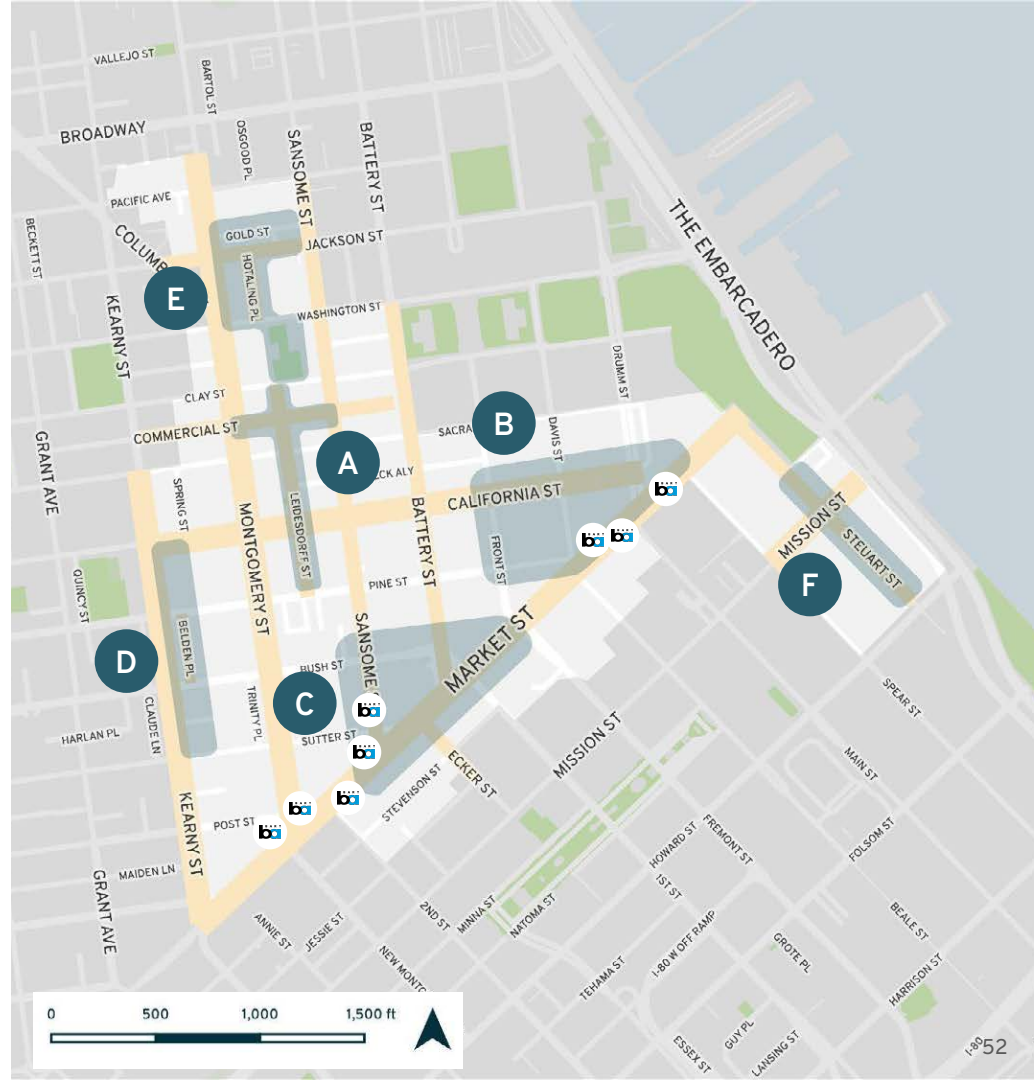
## Jackson Square

- 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.

*Focused on Physical:*



**Pedestrian Paradise**



**Rediscover Public Open Spaces**



**Let's Green**

*Focused on Programmatic:*



**Downtown as a Stage**



**Continue Downtown's Story**



**Re-energize from the Ground Up**

# 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.*



# Pedestrian Paradise







## 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?



### 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



### Improves 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?

36%

... of the district's area is dedicated to **streets**

0

public parks

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

“

*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...*

Online Survey  
March 2022

”



*Seating is often limited to ledges and planters, creating an unwelcoming environment*



*Many people are crossing the street outside of designated crossings, showing the need for better pedestrian connections*



*Many boarding and waiting areas lack seating, shades, or wind protection*



## 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.

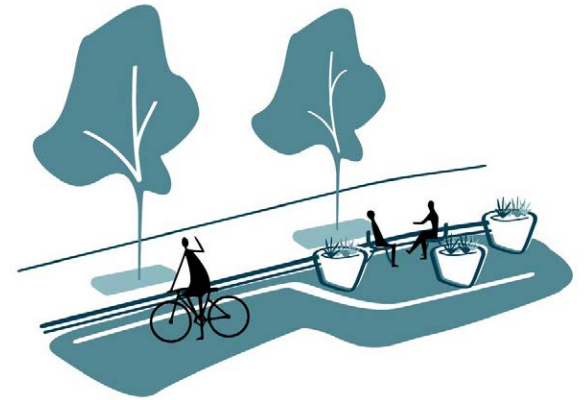
Taking back curb spaces and expanding usage for pedestrians, cyclists and public activity will encourage public life and positive connection to Downtown SF.

# 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.



# 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*



© SITELAB urban studio

## 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*



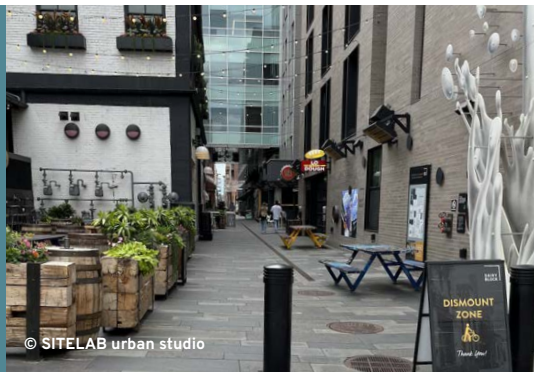
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## Entire Street: Alleyway

### 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*



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## 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*

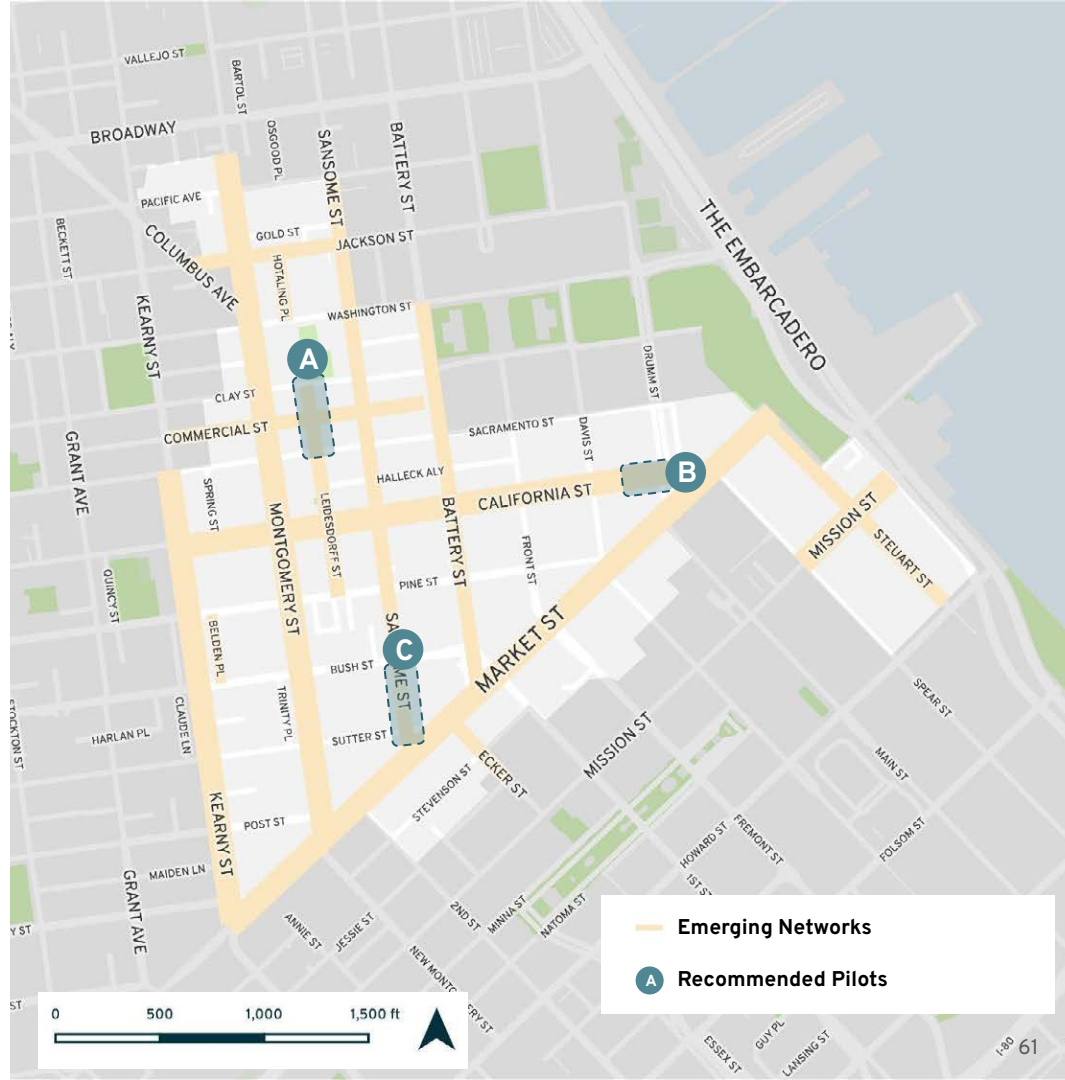


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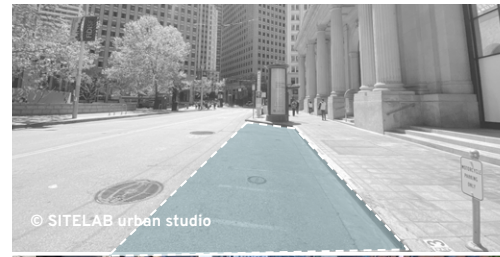
# Connected Opportunities

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



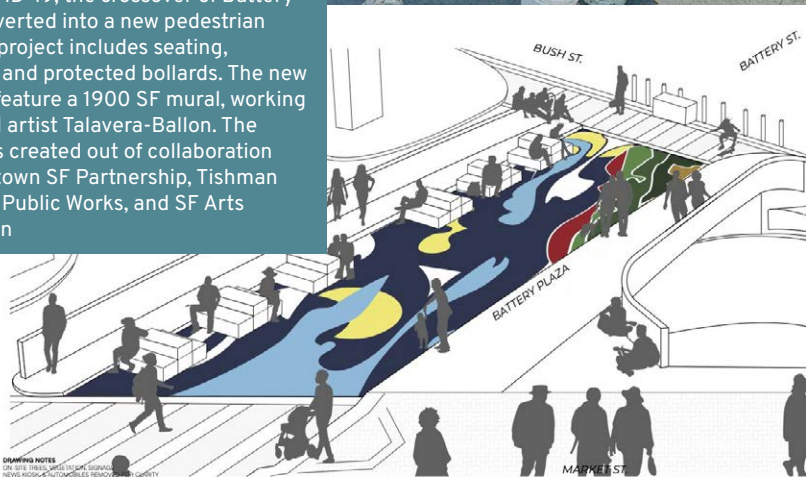
# Next Steps

- \* **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



## Battery Bridge Pilot Project San Francisco, CA

Developed from closing access to vehicles during COVID-19, the crossover of Battery St has converted into a new pedestrian plaza. The project includes seating, landscape, and protected bollards. The new phase will feature a 1900 SF mural, working with a local artist Talavera-Ballon. The project was created out of collaboration with Downtown SF Partnership, Tishman Speyer, SF Public Works, and SF Arts Commission



DRAWING NOTES  
ON SITE STAKES, MARKERS, SIGNAGE, BOLLARDS  
NEWER MODELS FOR VEHICLES, ROADWAY, CURB

MAPKETS



# 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.

## Process + Key Partnerships

- Key Partners - SFMTA, SF Public Works, SF Planning, Property Owners, Business Tenants, SF OEWD, Business Groups, SF Fire Department (SFFD)
- Associated City Programs:
  - **Shared Spaces Program**
  - **Groundplay Program**
  - **SFMTA Quick Build Program**
- Maintenance - Downtown SF Partnership, Public Works, Property Owners/ Business tenants
- Health and Security - Ambassadors, SF Police Department (SFPD)

## 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



You are Here



Green the Streets



Curate a Downtown Canvas

# Street Openings

## 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:



## Making the case for Leidesdorff St:

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.



All images © SITELAB urban studio

# 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 through 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:



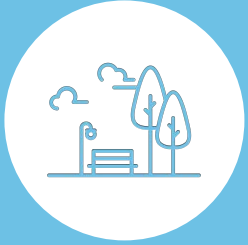
## Making the case for an improved bikeway network:

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.

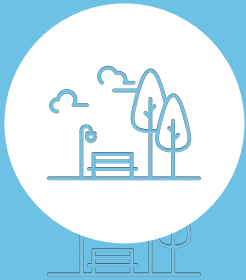






# Rediscover Public Open Spaces



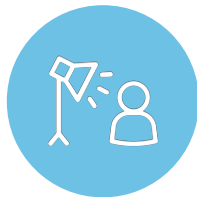


## Rediscover Public Open Spaces

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.

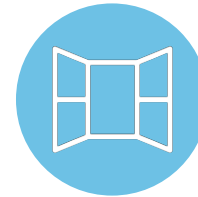
These places can be improved to create an collective identity for Downtown SF and provide the **best opportunities to stay and gather**. A network of Public Open Spaces should be fostered through **public invitations**, **generous amenities**, and **physical improvements**.

# What does this do?



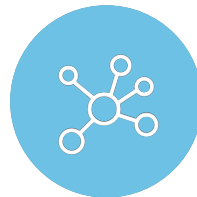
### Calls Attention to Adjacent Businesses

Encourages people to visit Public Open Spaces adjacent to businesses and buildings as places to gather and spend time



### Makes Life Public

Provides key amenities to make people feel comfortable spending more time in public spaces



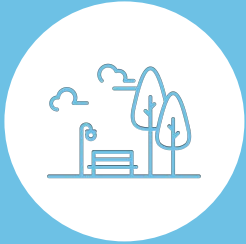
### Adds to the Open Space Network

Provides critical open spaces for staying activities that compliment pedestrian movement corridors, including unique indoor and rooftop 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



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

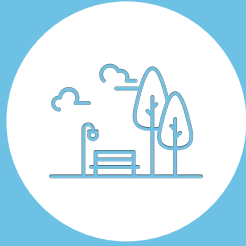
68%

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.*

Online Survey  
March 2022





## 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.

# The Recipe for a Vibrant Public Space

## 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.



### Embrace Play for All

Fun and creative ways to get people moving could enliven spaces

### Activation through Events

Small events and can bring vibrancy to underutilized open spaces  
[See 'Make Downtown an Experience']

Mint Plaza, SF



### 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.



### Integrated Edges

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



### 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



### 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

# The Recipe for a Vibrant Public Space

## Broadcasting Invitations

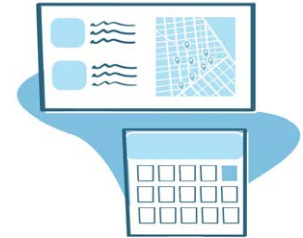
Invite people into public spaces by telling what's happening downtown, guide them using bold wayfinding, attract through art, and let them stay a while.

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']



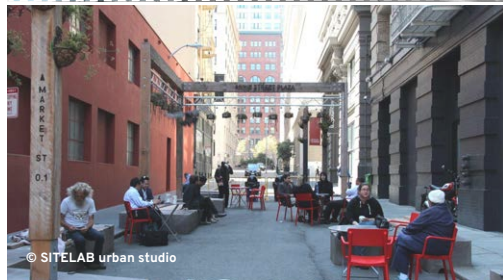
# Connected Opportunities

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.

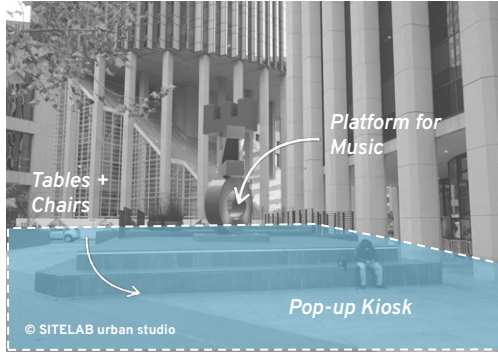


# Recommended Pilots



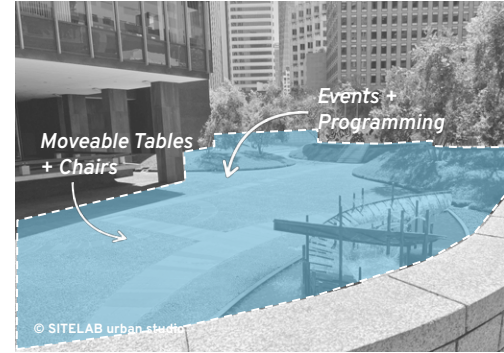
## A Commercial St at Leidesdorff St

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 though 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



You are Here



Make Downtown an Experience  
Curate a Downtown Canvas



Targeted Revamp





# 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?



### Improves Quality of Life

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



### Makes Businesses Attractive

Green experiences provide an attractive landscape where people will want to go to and spend time



### Invests in Green Infrastructure

More green spaces improves the environment through proactive water management and increasing stormwater treatment



### 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



*Some streets in Downtown SF have no trees, planters or other vegetation*



*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.*

Online Survey  
March 2022



*The few planters that do exist are often empty - there is a lack of maintenance*



## Let's Green

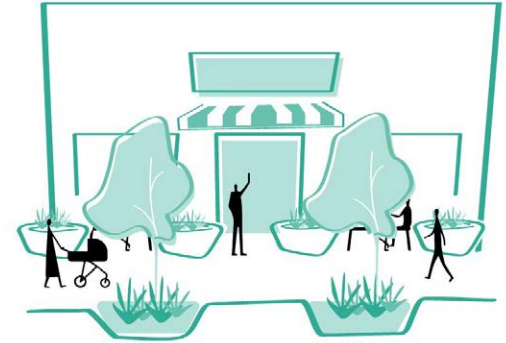
Improving the physical environment will benefit the social environment, bringing the community together through the resourceful use of urban green spaces that are open to all. Urban green spaces bring environmental, social/psychological, and economic benefits to cities.

# 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.

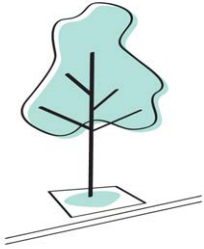


## Plazas as Parks

Public plazas and POPOS can serve as **opportune places** to expand the need for outdoor spaces and refuge from the city.

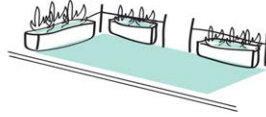


# The Toolkit for an Urban Landscape



## Street Tree

*Conditions:* Min space of 4'x4'x6'  
depth, Permanent  
*Maintenance Level:* High



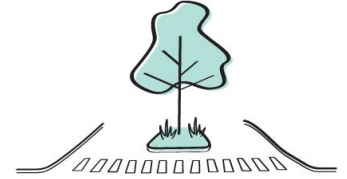
## Parklet

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



## Planter

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



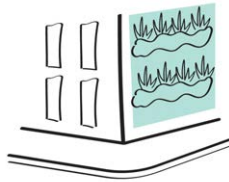
## Planted Street Medians

*Conditions:* Subgrade conditions,  
Permanent  
*Maintenance Level:* High



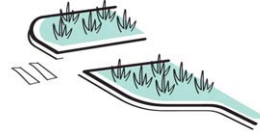
## Planted Sidewalk Zones

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



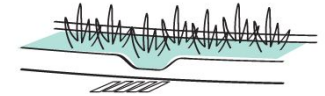
## Green Walls + Roofs

*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

# The Urban Forest

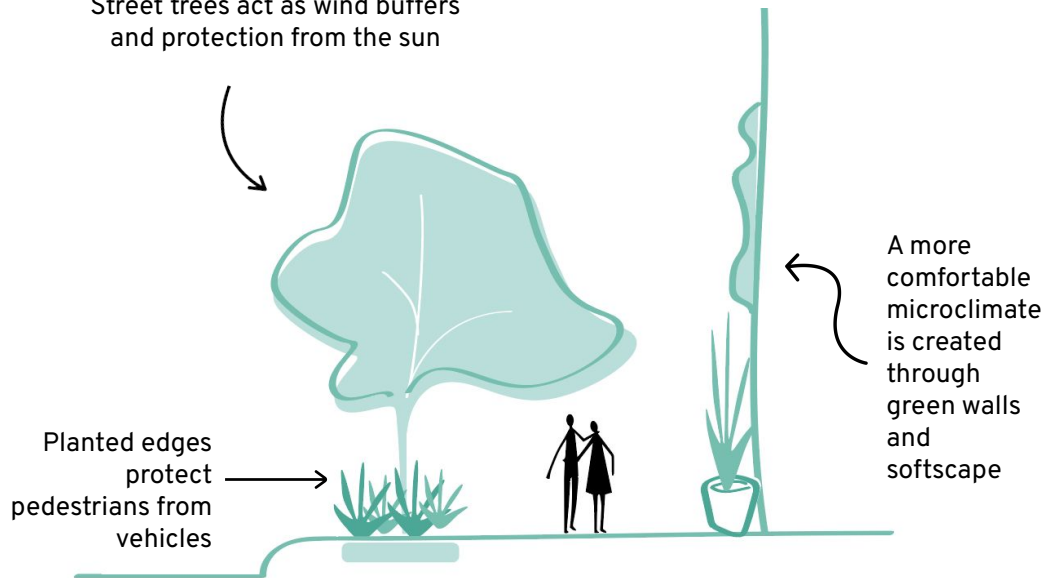
## A More Human Ecosystem

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.



Street trees act as wind buffers and protection from the sun



# The Landscape System

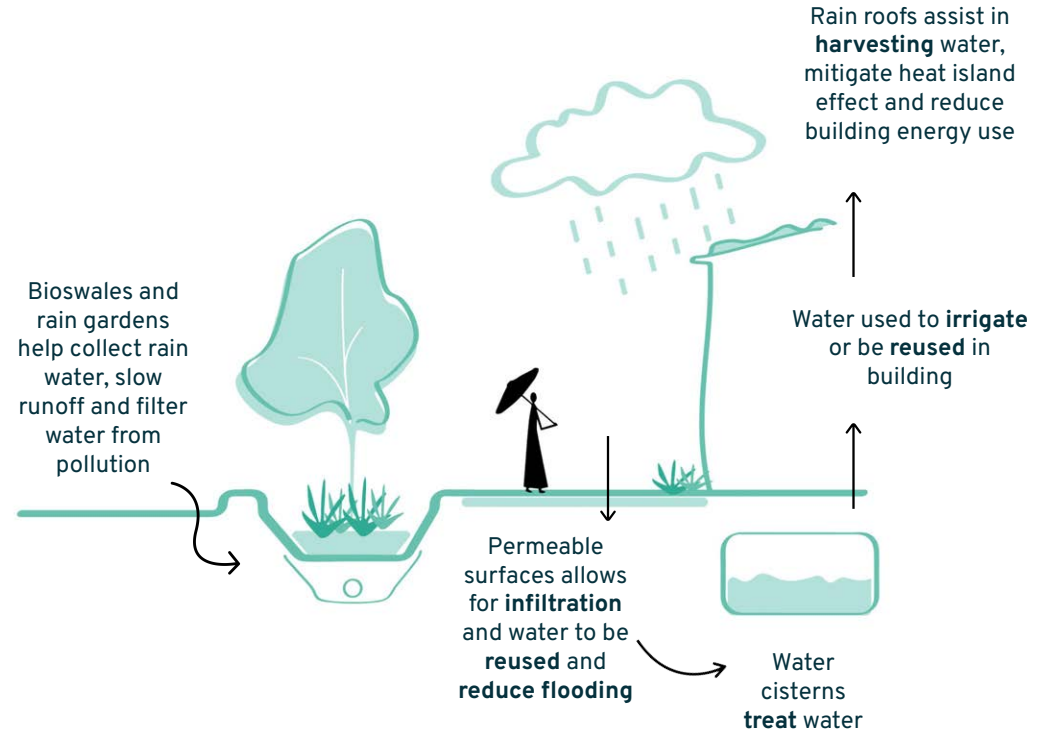
## Water Management as a Resilient System

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

Linden Alley, SF



# 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.

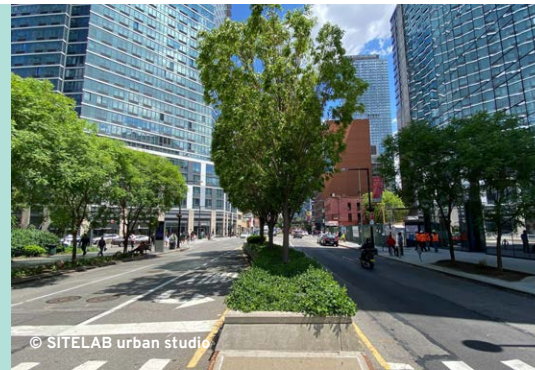


## Major Corridors

### 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.



## 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.

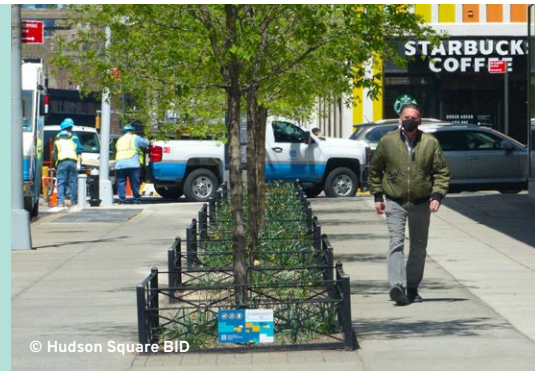


## Sidewalks

### 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

# 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.

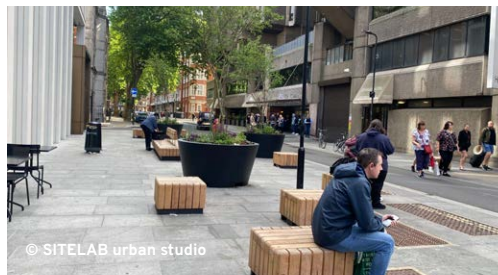
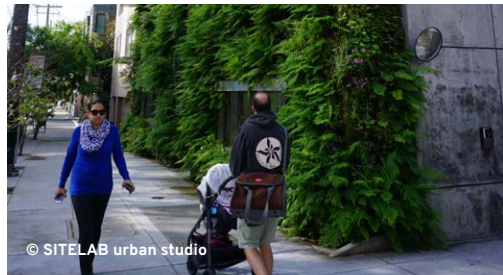
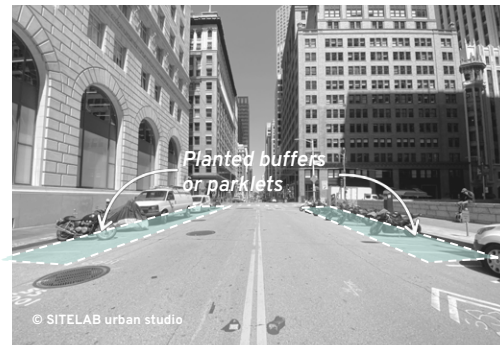
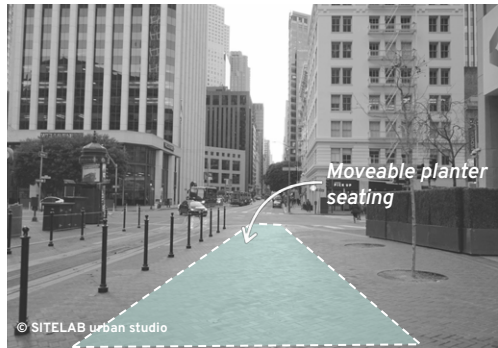
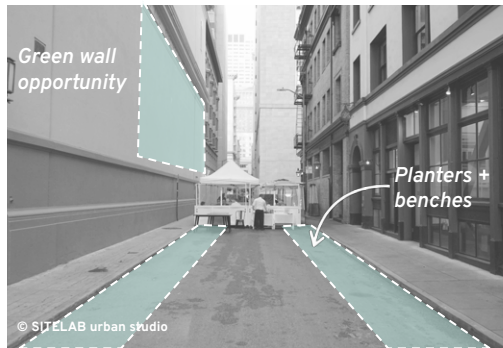


- Emerging Pedestrian Corridors
- Existing Street Trees
- Gaps in Urban Canopy
- POPOS/Plazas

**A** 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

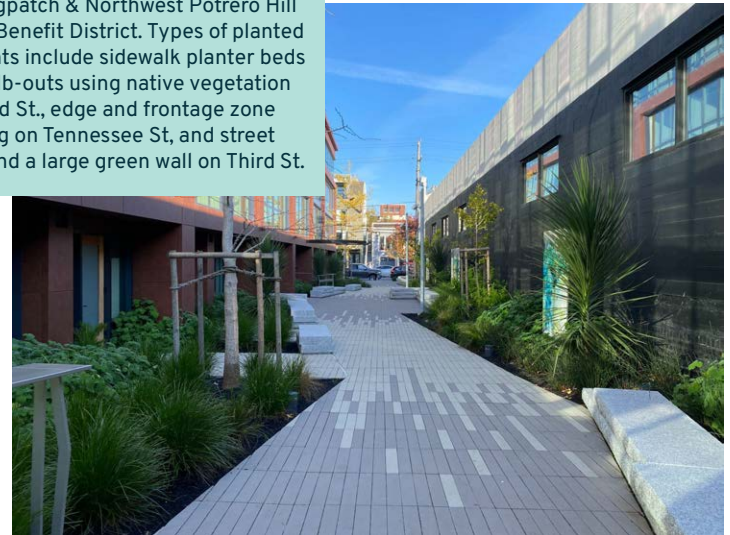


# Next Steps

- \* **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.





# 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**



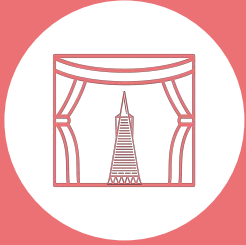
**You are Here**



**Pop into our Public Spaces  
Plazas as Parks**

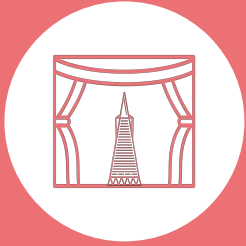


**Targeted Revamp**



# 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.

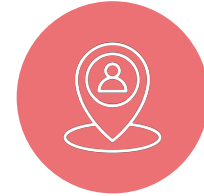
Streets like Market St have historically held parades and special ceremonies, while the district's variety of public open spaces could host a diverse array of events.

# What does this do?



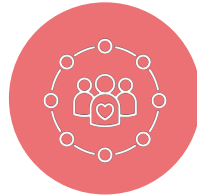
## Attracts New Users

Create invitation to more visitors into the public realm to extend life in the district beyond 9-5 working hours



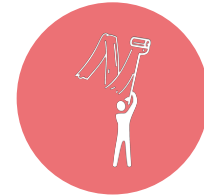
## Connects People to Place

Establish the district as “the place to be” with things to do, rather than a place to pass through



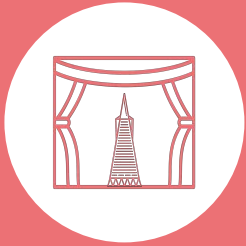
## Fosters a Neighborhood Identity

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

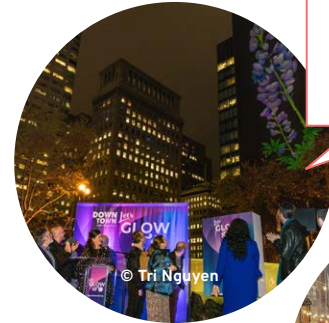
...was spent by the **36,000** visitors in the district during December, 2020's Let's Glow SF event. Such events have a huge ripple effect.

“  
*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.*  
 ”

Online Survey  
 March 2022



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



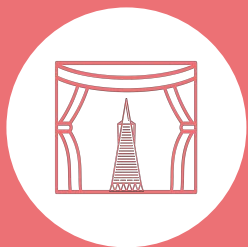
*Let's GLOW SF saw 36,000 visitors who spend \$2.2 million in the district. There were 2-4x more pedestrians because of the event*

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



© SITELAB urban studio





## 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.

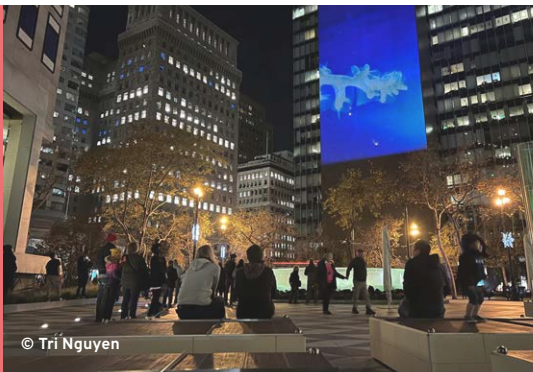


# Opportunity Areas

## 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.

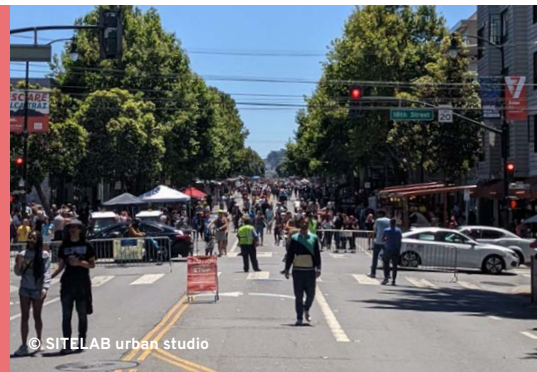


© Tri Nguyen

## 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.



© SITELAB urban studio

## Alleyways

### 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.



© SF Urban Film Fest and Lower Polk CBD's Fern Alley Sidewalk Cinema Event 2019, photo by @jewphotos

## 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.



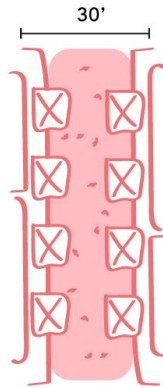
© Photo by Brett Beyer

# Capacity of Events

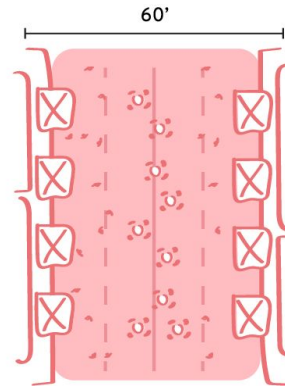
When considering events, it is important to also **plan for capacity**. The public realm has a wide range of spaces of that can host a range of events at different scales, ranging from **small, temporary gatherings to larger congregations**. Events can be held on **night or weekends** to draw bigger 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.



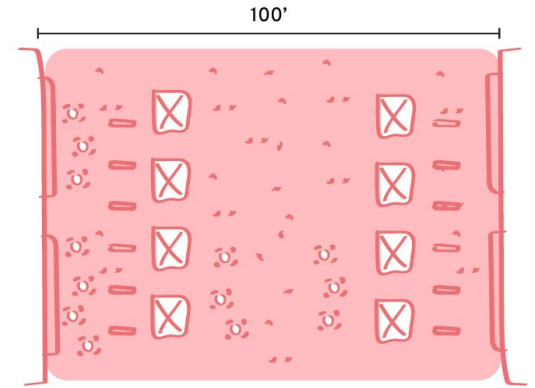
Sidewalk



Alleyway



Street



POPOS / Plaza

Small

Less preparation,  
lower capacity

Large

More preparation,  
high capacity



MAKE DOWNTOWN AN EXPERIENCE

# Connected Opportunities

**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.

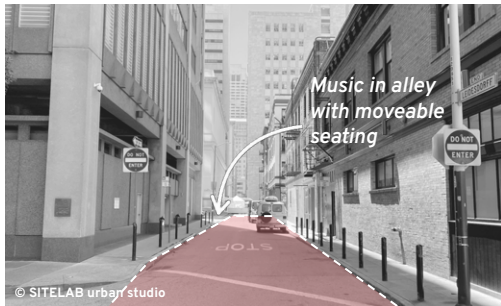
**Streets and Alleyways** are great places for medium to large gatherings, but would work best where there is low traffic and minimal impact on transit networks. Consider street segments with **flexible routes**, and alleyways such as Leidesdorff St, Belden Pl, and Hotaling St, which already have pedestrian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



# Next Steps

- \* **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

© SITELAB urban studio



**First Fridays - Oakland, CA + San Jose, CA**  
 On the first Friday of every month in Oakland, vendors, musicians, artists, residents, and visitors gather to celebrate culture and community. The event is organized by the KONO community benefit district, stemming from a citywide gallery crawl. The streets become an incubator hub for small entrepreneurs, a platform for local performers and artists, and driver of economic activity supporting inclusive communities. Similarly, San Jose hosts South First Fridays Art Walk that invites the neighborhood to a local and curated experience.



# 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 with 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



**Reclaim the Curb  
Street Openings**



**You are Here  
Recall a Layered History**



**Pop into our Public Spaces  
Plazas as Parks**



**Targeted Revamp  
Incentive Programs**





# Continue Downtown's Story







## 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



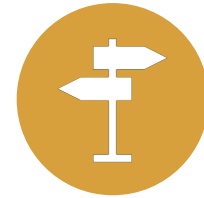
### Create Association to Place

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?

1 in 2

Survey respondents describe Downtown SF as “Historic”

30+  
landmarks

There are many historically significant landmarks and one landmark district

“

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

Online Survey  
March 2022

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

Online Survey  
March 2022



*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

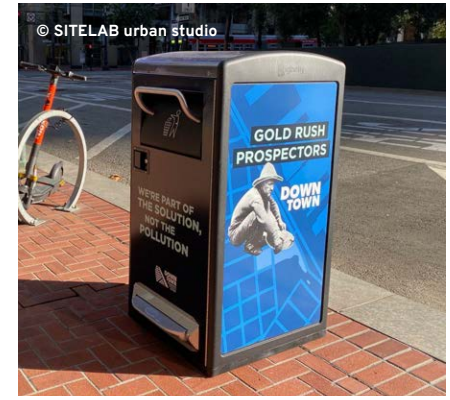
- \* **Create a Downtown SF placemaking toolkit**
  - Create a specific palette of street furniture, lighting, and color applications for Downtown SF
  - Engage an environmental graphic design consultant to lead effort
- \* **Implement toolkit district-wide in tiered phases:**
  - Tier 1: Short-term 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



© Downtown SF Partnership

### Downtown SF Partnership

The Partnership has several branded elements in the district today. Its “Trash Talk” campaign adds historic fun to trash receptacles - making it memorable and visible around the city.



© SITELAB urban studio



### 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.

© MNLA

# 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**





# 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



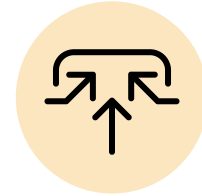
## Foster New and Intentional Places

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?

**62%**

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

*Of the active frontages, there are constrained opportunities to sit/gather outside*



**21.7%**

**Office vacancy**

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%

*There are vacancies in key intersections with high visibility and foot traffic*



“

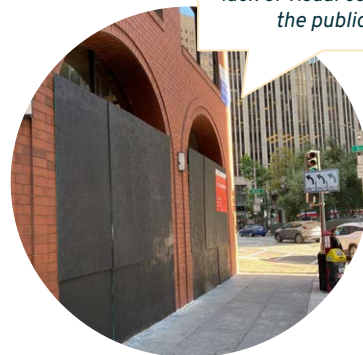
*Would love to see downtown become a more vibrant place outside of business hours. Need **more ground floor life** in the evenings and weekends!*

Online Survey  
March 2022

*Some areas in Downtown have very few “spill out” moments or lack of visual connections to the public realm*

*Break up large lease spaces into **smaller units so small businesses** (Etsy makers, mom and pop) can afford to try **brick and mortar***

”





## Re-energize from Ground up

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.

# How do we get there?



## 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.

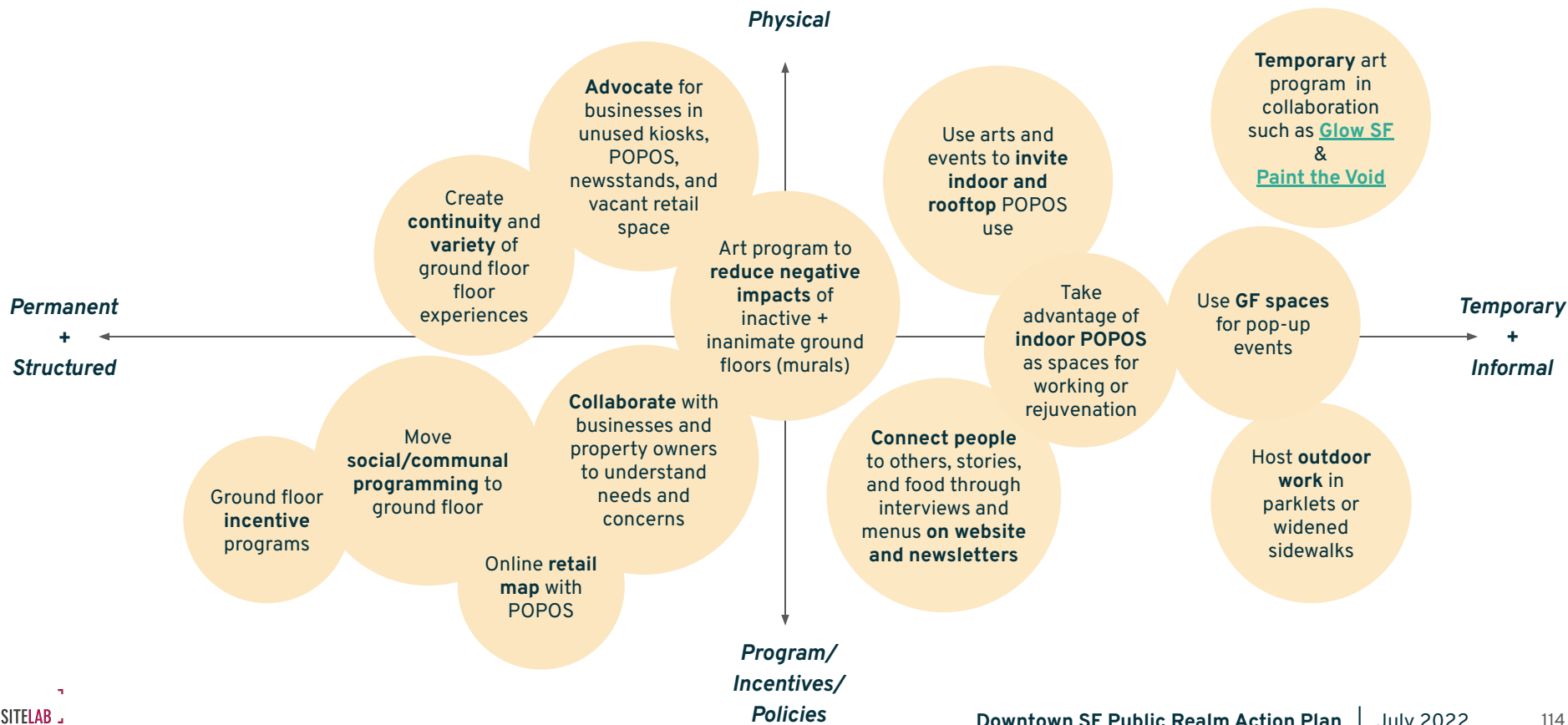


# The Roadmap to Targeted Revamp





# Finding Opportunities to Bridge Public and Private Space



# Connected Opportunities

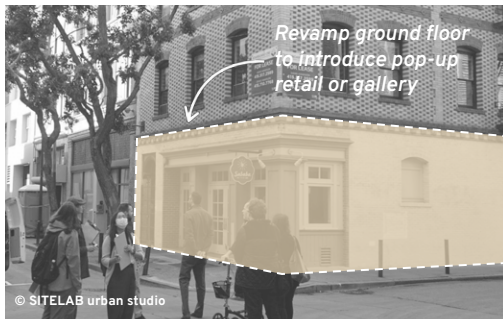
There are areas in the district that have a lot of **pedestrian activity** compared to others, and areas that have more **active ground floors**. Identifying areas already with ground floor activity can help **target “zones”** that could use a revamp or build on existing momentum.

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 speciality 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

### 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.



Photographs from LA Más



# Considerations

## 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/challenges 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

# 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



Leidesdorff St



Leidesdorff St + California St



Leidesdorff St



Leidesdorff St + Sacramento St

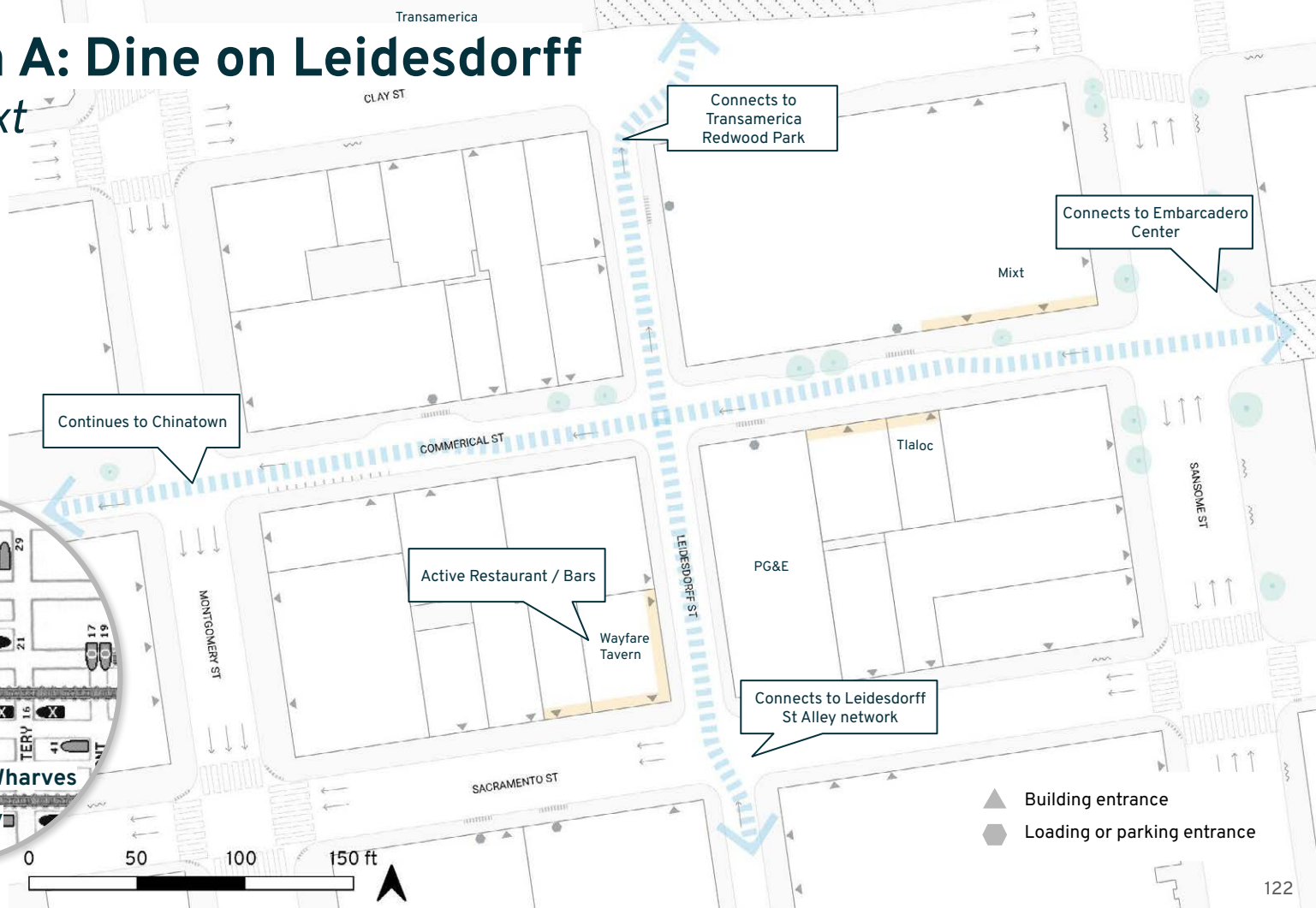
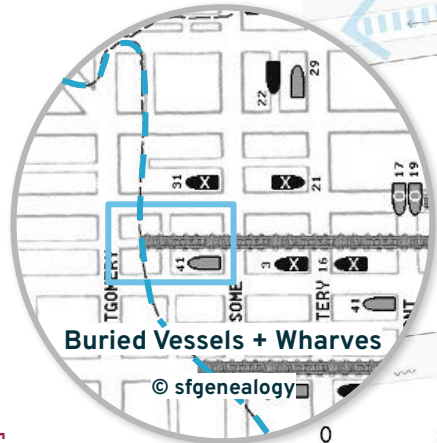
All images © SITELAB urban studio



# Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

## Existing Context

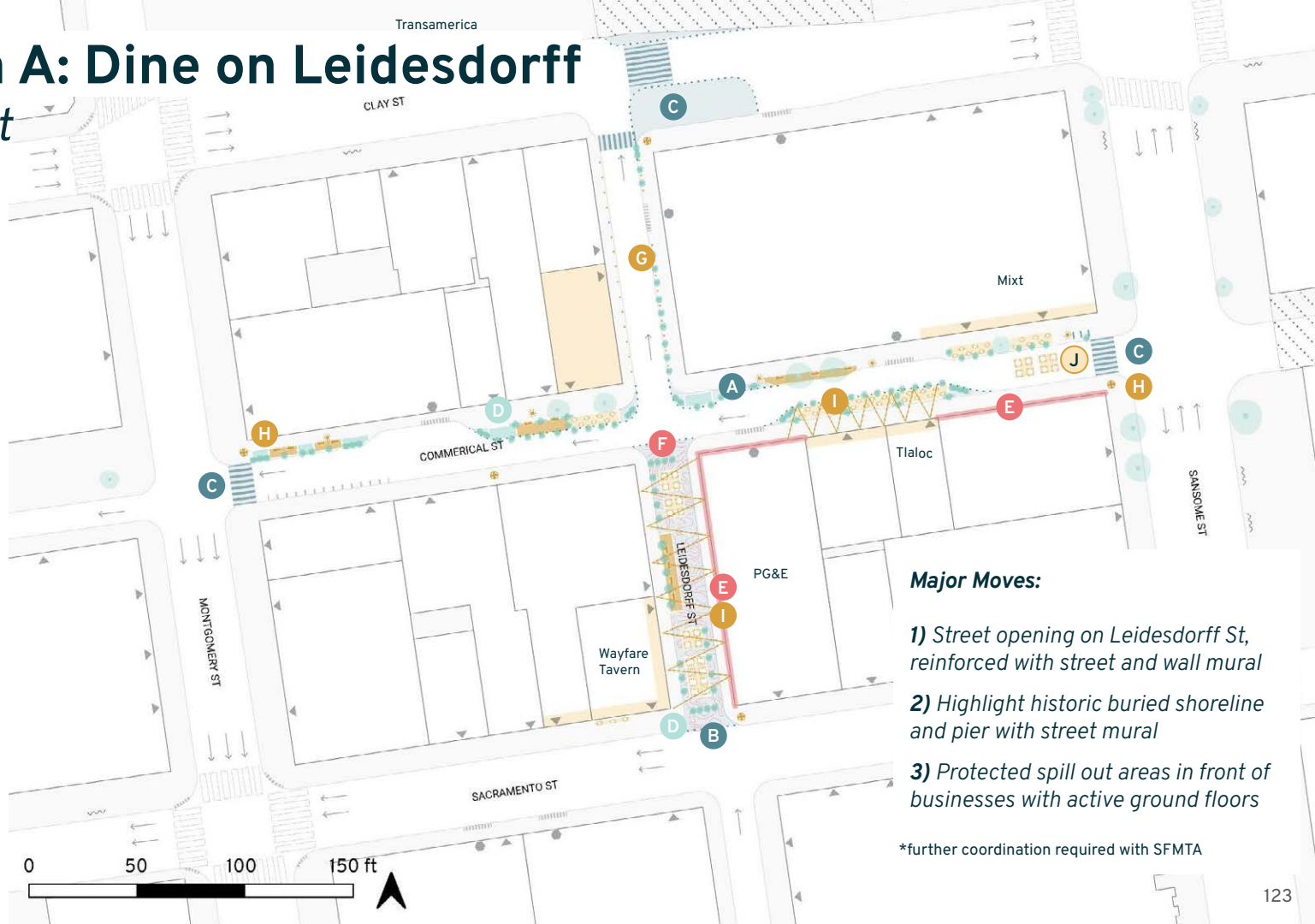
The historic alleyways where Leidesdorff St and Commercial St meet are ripe for activation through food and storytelling of its past. It sits at a key crossroad between Transamerica Park, the Embarcadero Center, and Chinatown.



# Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

## Near-term Pilot

- A** Bulb out shortens crossing distance and makes space for amenities
- B** Street opening on Leidesdorff St from Commercial to Sacramento, activated by restaurant dining
- C** Crosswalks reinforce connections to Leidesdorff St alleyway network + across Commercial St\*
- D** Planters protect new outdoor dining area
- E** Mural or projection on facades activates alleyways, working within historic constraints
- F** Ground mural and signage describes previous shoreline and history of Commercial St as a pier
- G** Historic hitching posts highlighted with signage
- H** Wayfinding signage and lighting draw activity at entries
- I** String lighting creates sense of enclosure over staying areas
- J** Continue lunchtime Street Opening with seating on Commercial Street



### Major Moves:

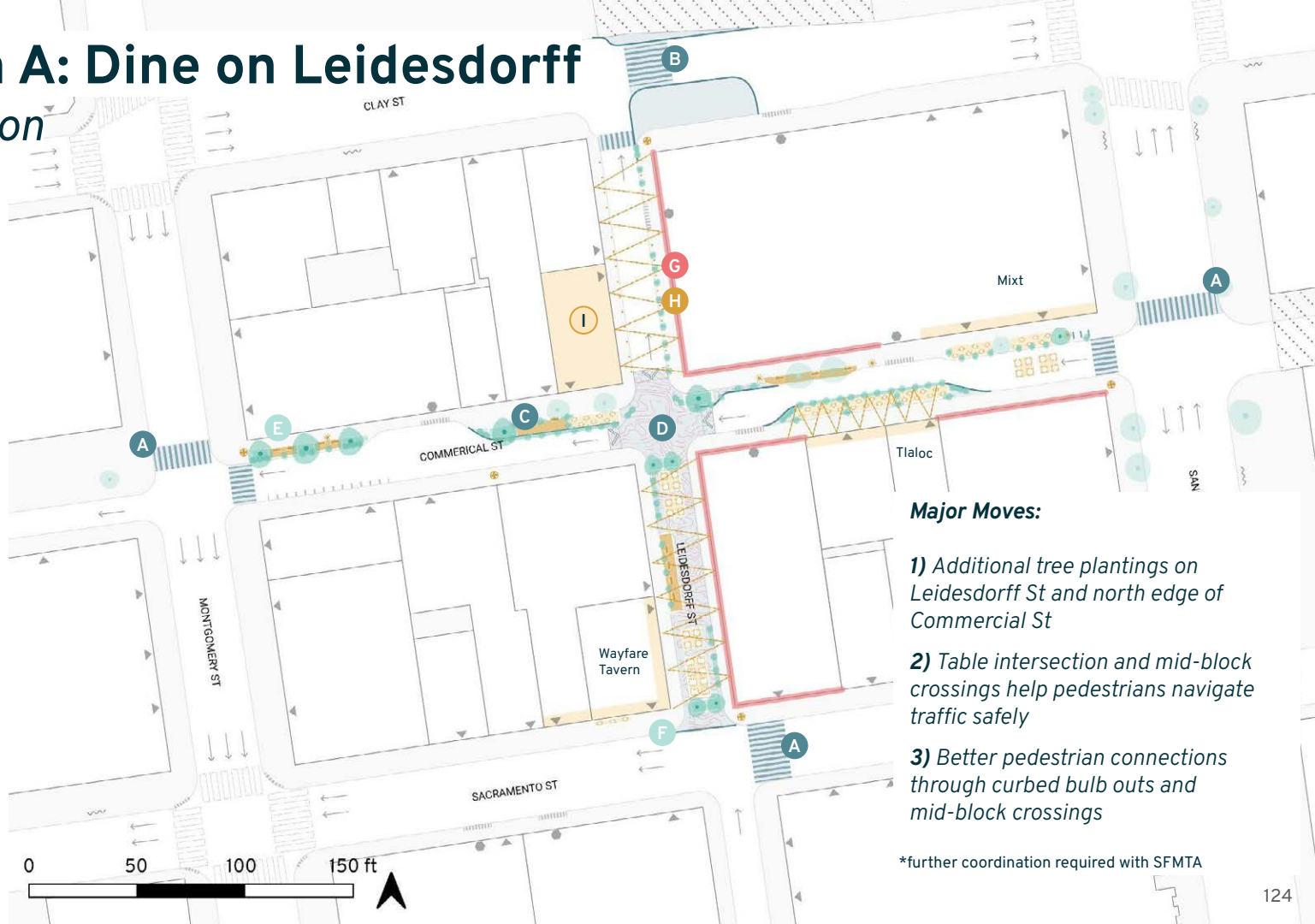
- 1) Street opening on Leidesdorff St, reinforced with street and wall mural
- 2) Highlight historic buried shoreline and pier with street mural
- 3) Protected spill out areas in front of businesses with active ground floors

\*further coordination required with SFMTA

# Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

## Long-term Vision

- A** Safer crosswalks to Kearny St + Chinatown to the east, Embarcadero Center to the west, and Leidesdorff St to the south\*
- B** Shorten crossing distance to Transamerica Park\*
- C** Capital improvement to make safer crossing to Transamerica Redwood Park
- D** Table intersection creates safer, more comfortable pedestrian crossing
- E** Generous trees and in-ground plantings
- F** Trees reduce wind tunnel effect and create more comfortable staying space into the evening
- G** Mural strategy continued on north segment of Leidesdorff St
- H** Lighting activation is continued on north segment of Leidesdorff St
- I** Target revamp of restaurant space



### Major Moves:

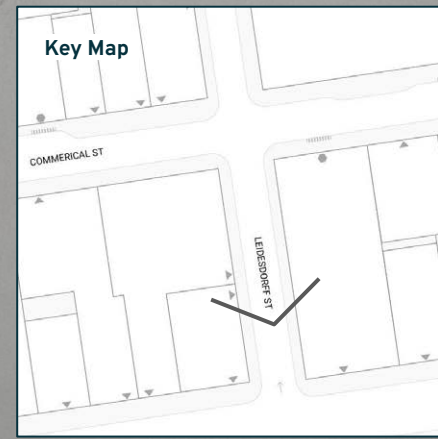
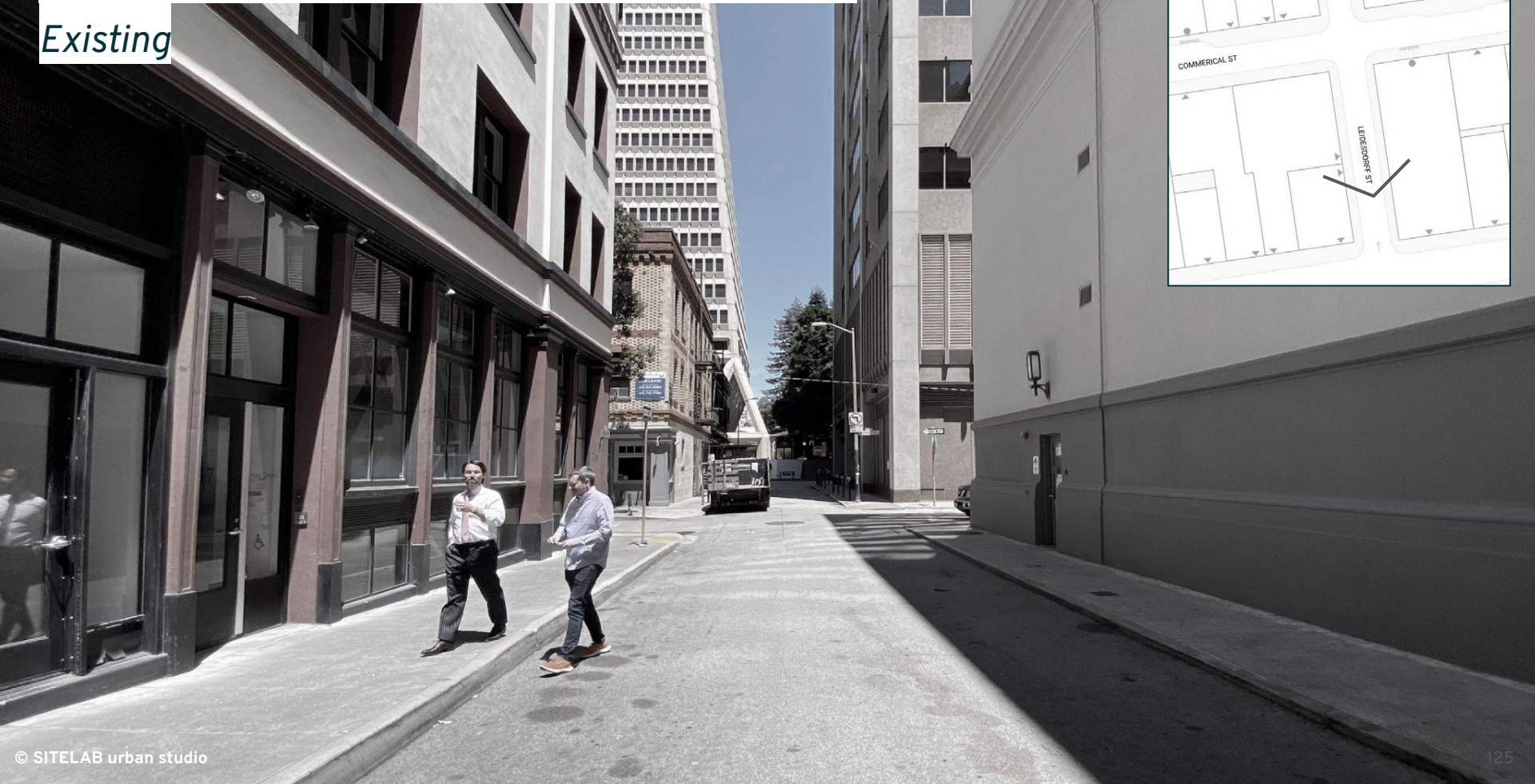
- 1)** Additional tree plantings on Leidesdorff St and north edge of Commercial St
- 2)** Table intersection and mid-block crossings help pedestrians navigate traffic safely
- 3)** Better pedestrian connections through curbed bulb outs and mid-block crossings

\*further coordination required with SFMTA



# Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

Existing





# 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*



**Green the Streets**  
*Planters and trees line the streets*



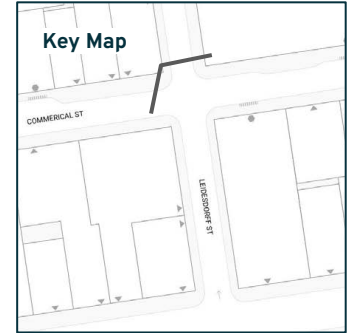
**Street Opening**  
*Pedestrianize Leidesdorff St*



**Targeted Revamp**  
*Seating for outdoor dining*

# Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

*Existing*



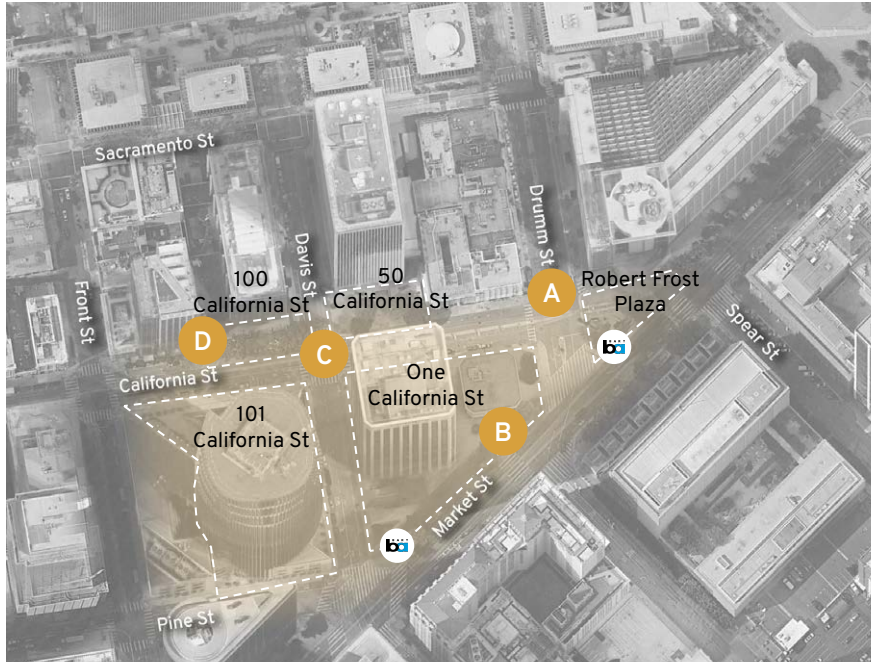
# Action Area A: Dine on Leidesdorff

*Proposed*





# Action Area B: Downtown Gateway



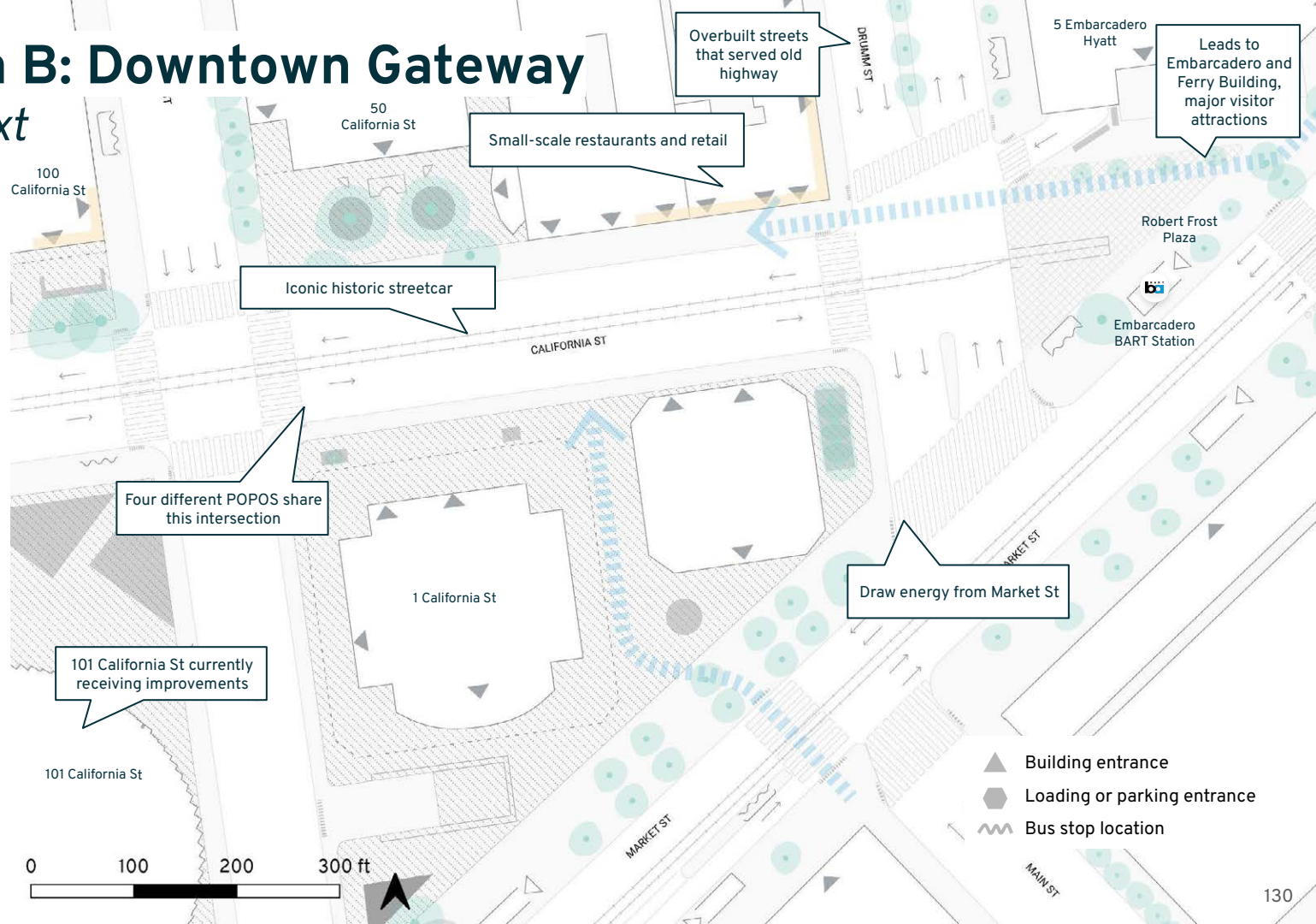
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# Action Area B: Downtown Gateway

## Existing Context

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.



Leads to Ebarcadero and Ferry Building, major visitor attractions

Overbuilt streets that served old highway

Small-scale restaurants and retail

Iconic historic streetcar

Four different POPOS share this intersection

101 California St currently receiving improvements

Draw energy from Market St

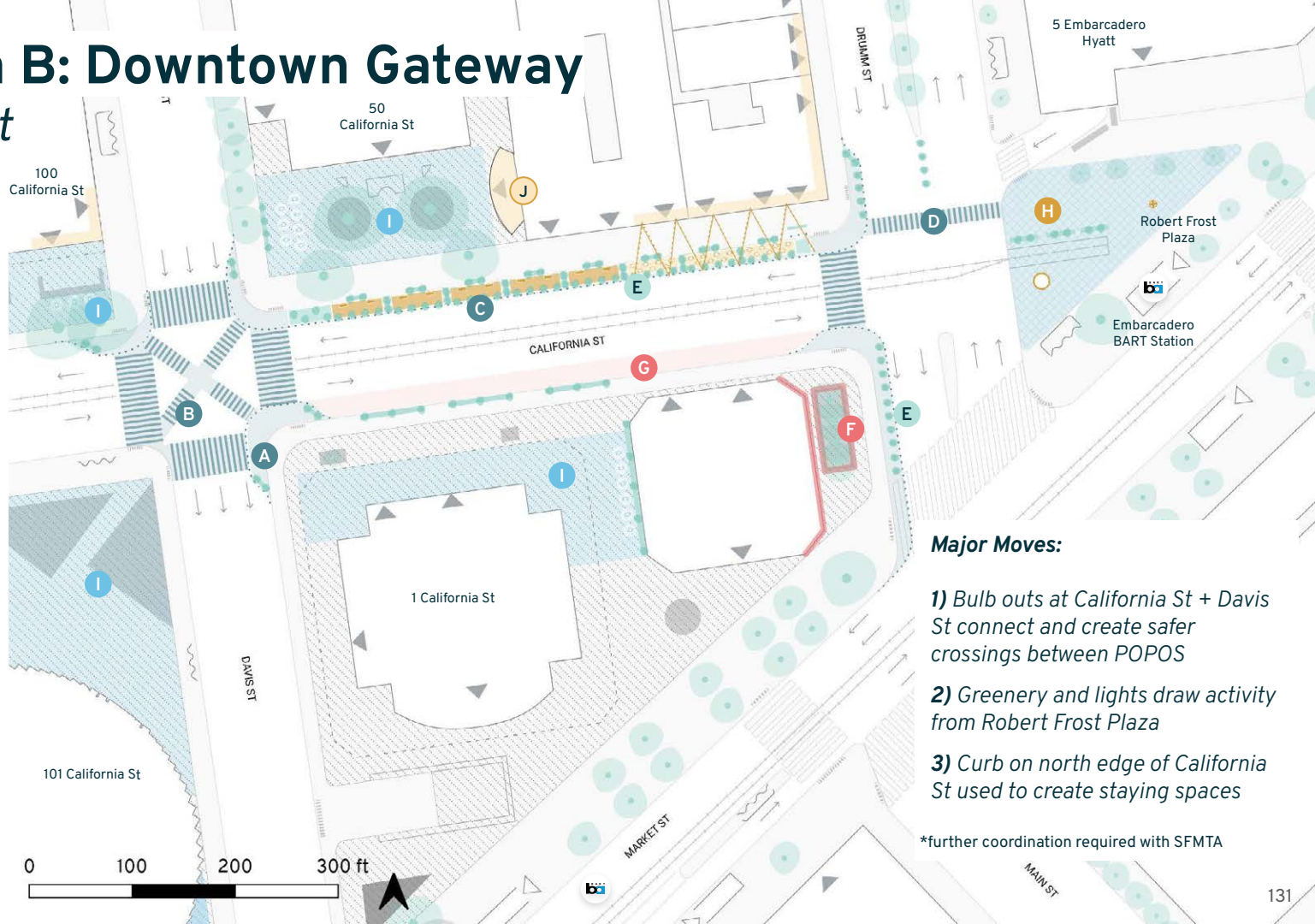
- ▲ Building entrance
- ⬡ Loading or parking entrance
- ⋈ Bus stop location



# Action Area B: Downtown Gateway

## Near-term Pilot

- A** Bulb outs shorten crossing distance
- B** Unique scramble design and/or ground mural to unite four corner POPOS\*
- C** Sunny north side of California St expanded for dining and seating
- D** Improved, more direct connection from Robert Frost Plaza
- E** Planters along curb create green buffer separating vehicle and pedestrian spaces
- F** Art or mural on east edge of 1 California St draws visitors arriving from Market St
- G** Pop-up parklet opportunities along southern curb to activate POPOS
- H** Wayfinding elements in Robert Frost plaza orient visitors and draws attention to California St
- I** POPOS seating and landscaping improvements create more generous spaces
- J** Activate ground floor commercial space with public-facing temporary use



### 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

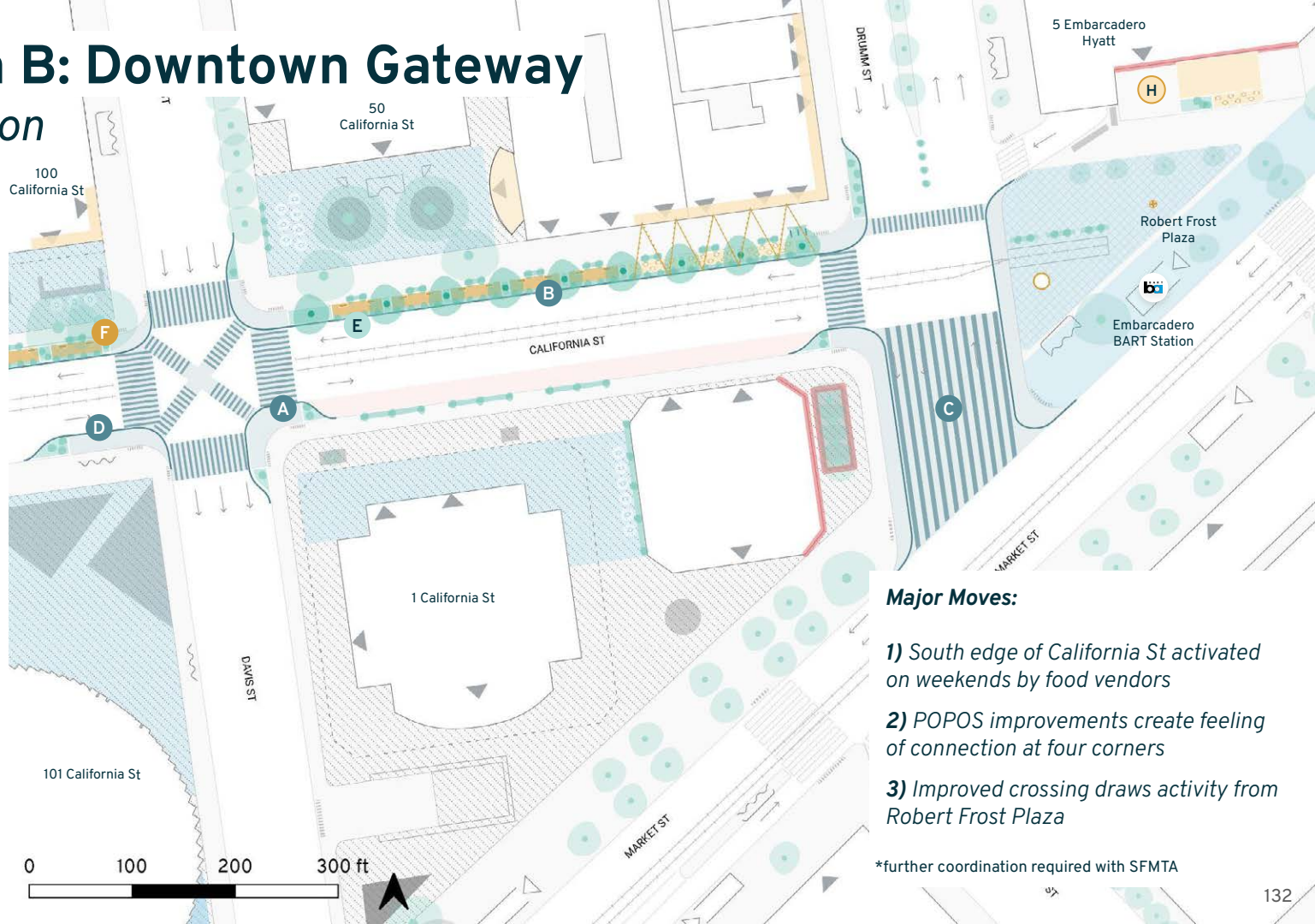
\*further coordination required with SFMTA



# Action Area B: Downtown Gateway

## Long-term Vision

- A** Temporary bulb-outs improved as permanent curb extensions
- B** Permanently expanded accessible pedestrian area with space for both public benches and restaurant seating
- C** Drumm St median at crossing removed and the crossing area edges are expanded\*
- D** Additional bulb-out created to complete pedestrian scramble with incorporated bus stop design
- E** Green improvements expanded with in-ground tree plantings
- F** Seating on curb expansion continues down California St
- G** Redesign competing street elements at Robert Frost Plaza and Market St edge to make pedestrian experience less cluttered and more comfortable.
- H** Add a retail frontage as integrated edge adjacent to Hyatt and Robert Frost Plaza



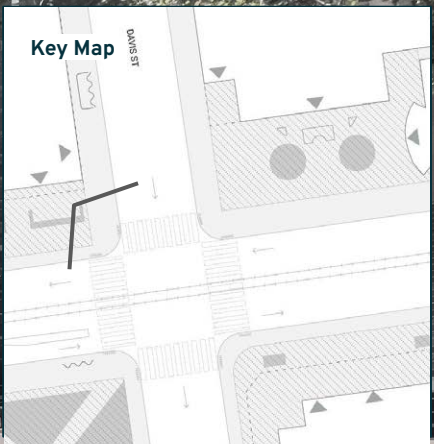
### Major Moves:

- 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





# Action Area B: Downtown Gateway

Proposed

## Reclaim the Curb

Safer crossings with expansions



**Make Downtown an Experience**  
*Partner w/ POPOS owners to program*



## Build Better Connections

*Pedestrian scramble connection*



## You are Here

*Signature crosswalks for branding*



## Curate a Downtown Canvas

*Mural opportunity*



## Green the Streets

*Increase vegetated spaces*

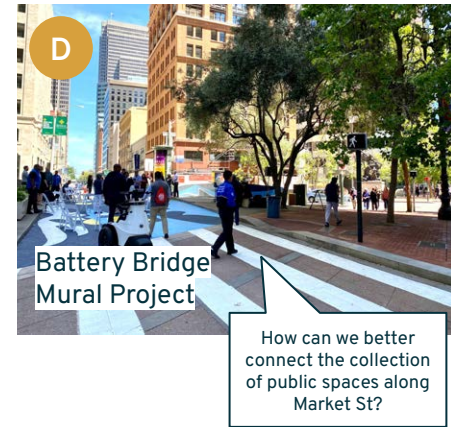
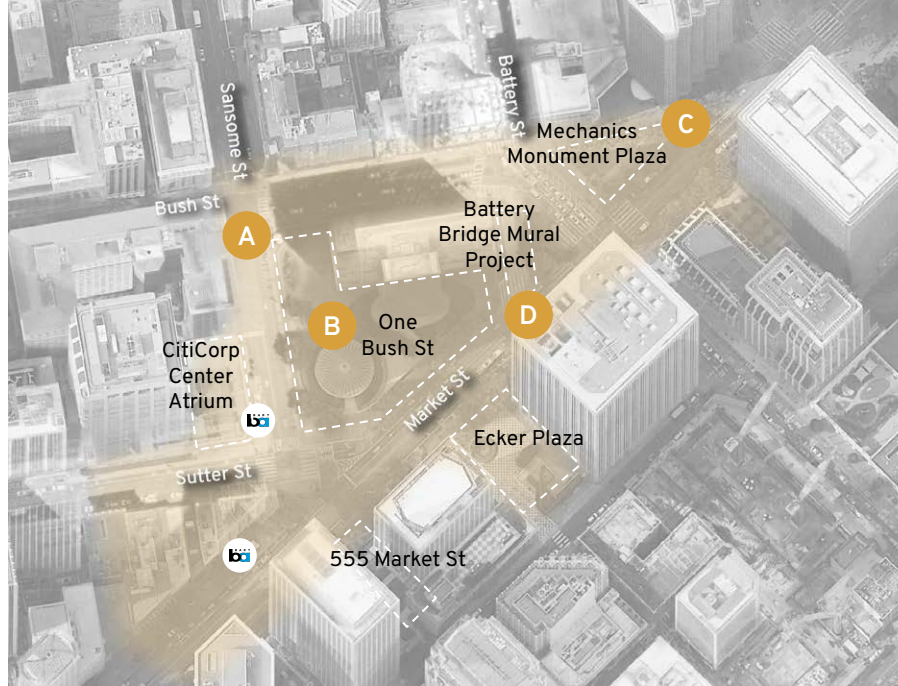


## Pop into our Public Spaces

*Quick refresh of existing POPOS*



# Action Area C: Market Oasis



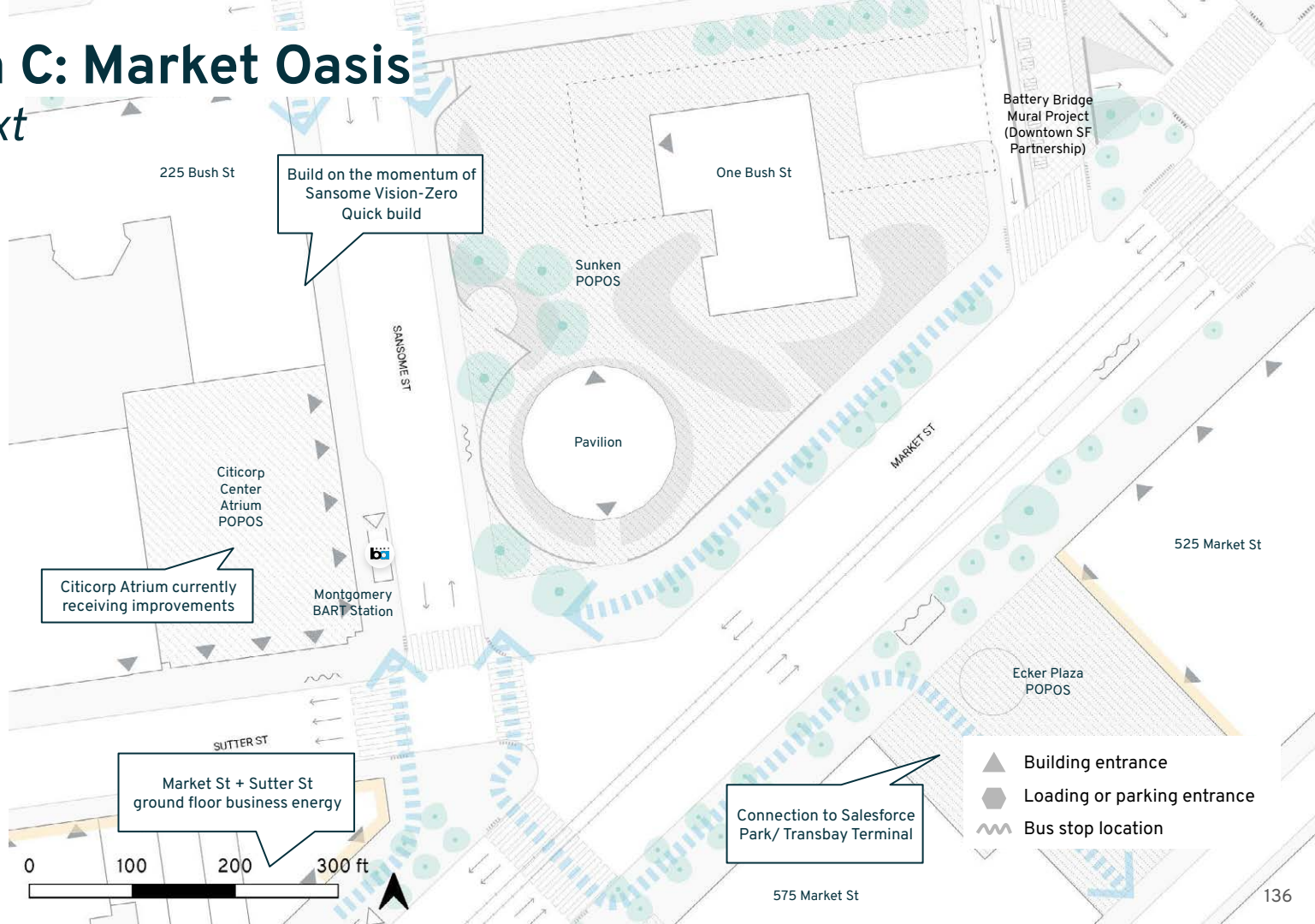
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# Action Area C: Market Oasis

## Existing Context

*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.*

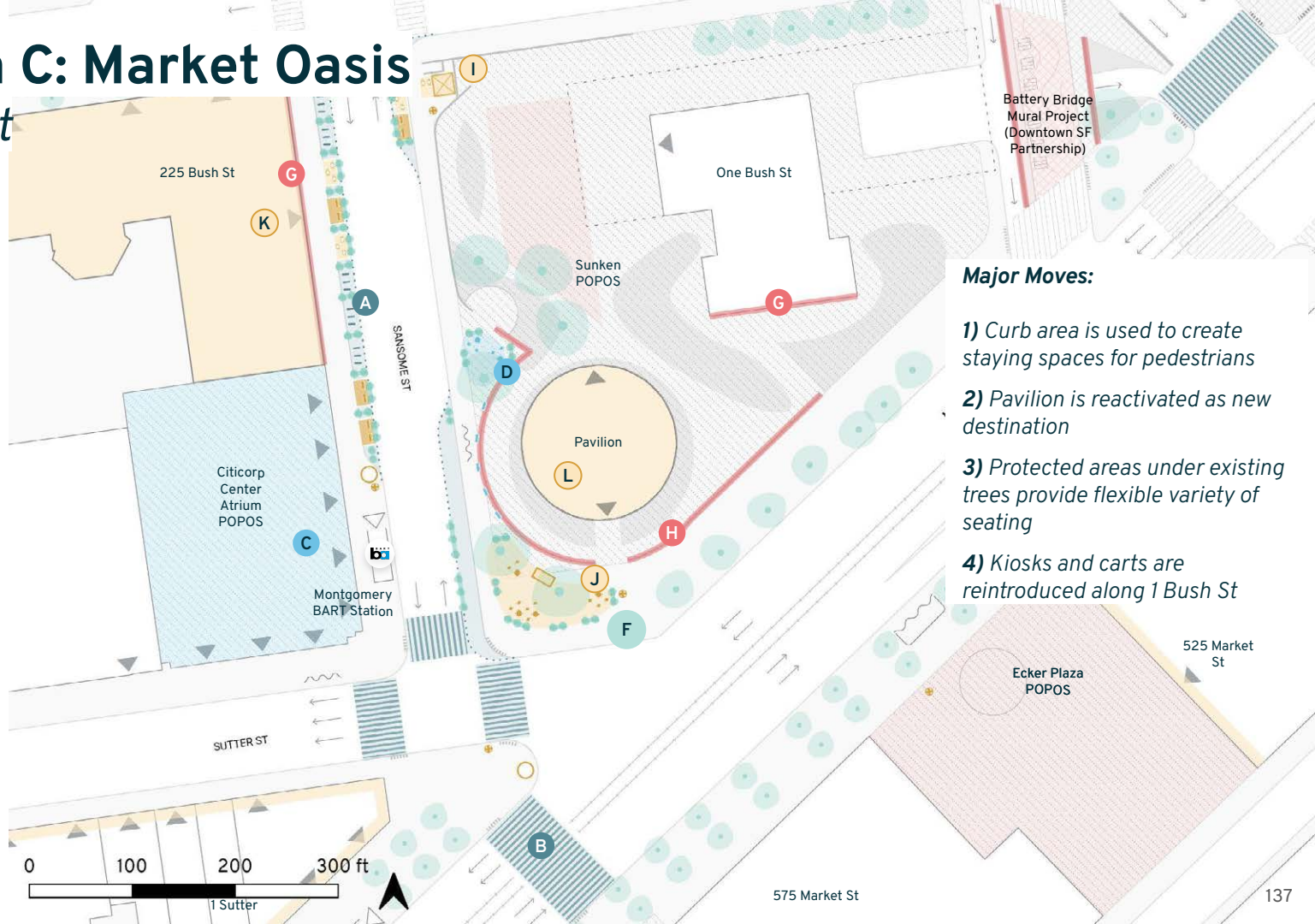




# Action Area C: Market Oasis

## 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
- F** Planters added to reinforce staying space
- G** Facades to be used in light projection display
- H** Mural draws attention to Pavilion
- I** Reintroduce kiosk stall
- J** Staying space created with planters and seating and activated with food cart
- K** Activate the ground floor with collection of short-term pop-ups
- L** Activate as a new, highly-visible downtown destination



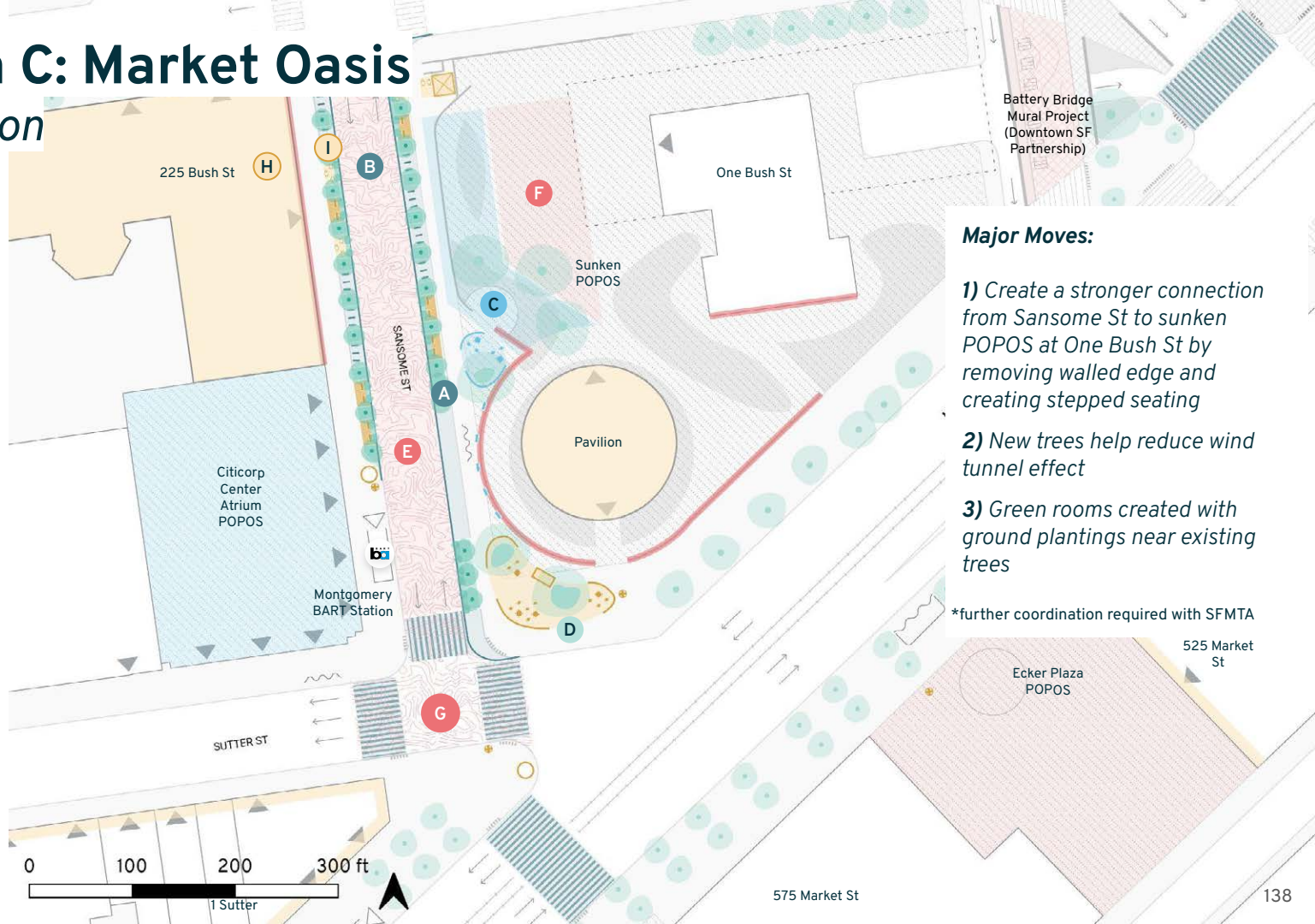
### Major Moves:

- 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

575 Market St

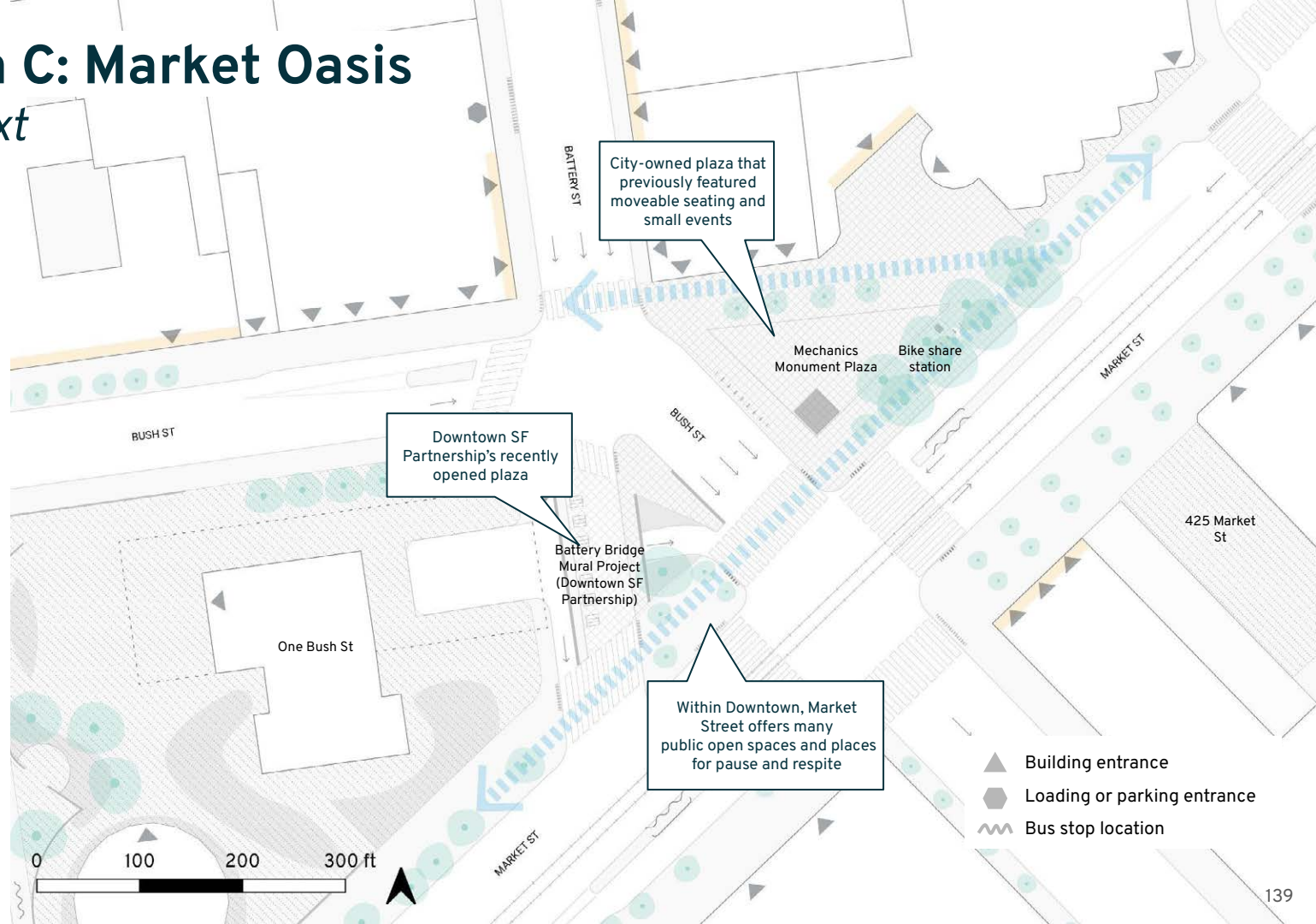
138



# Action Area C: Market Oasis

## Existing Context

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".

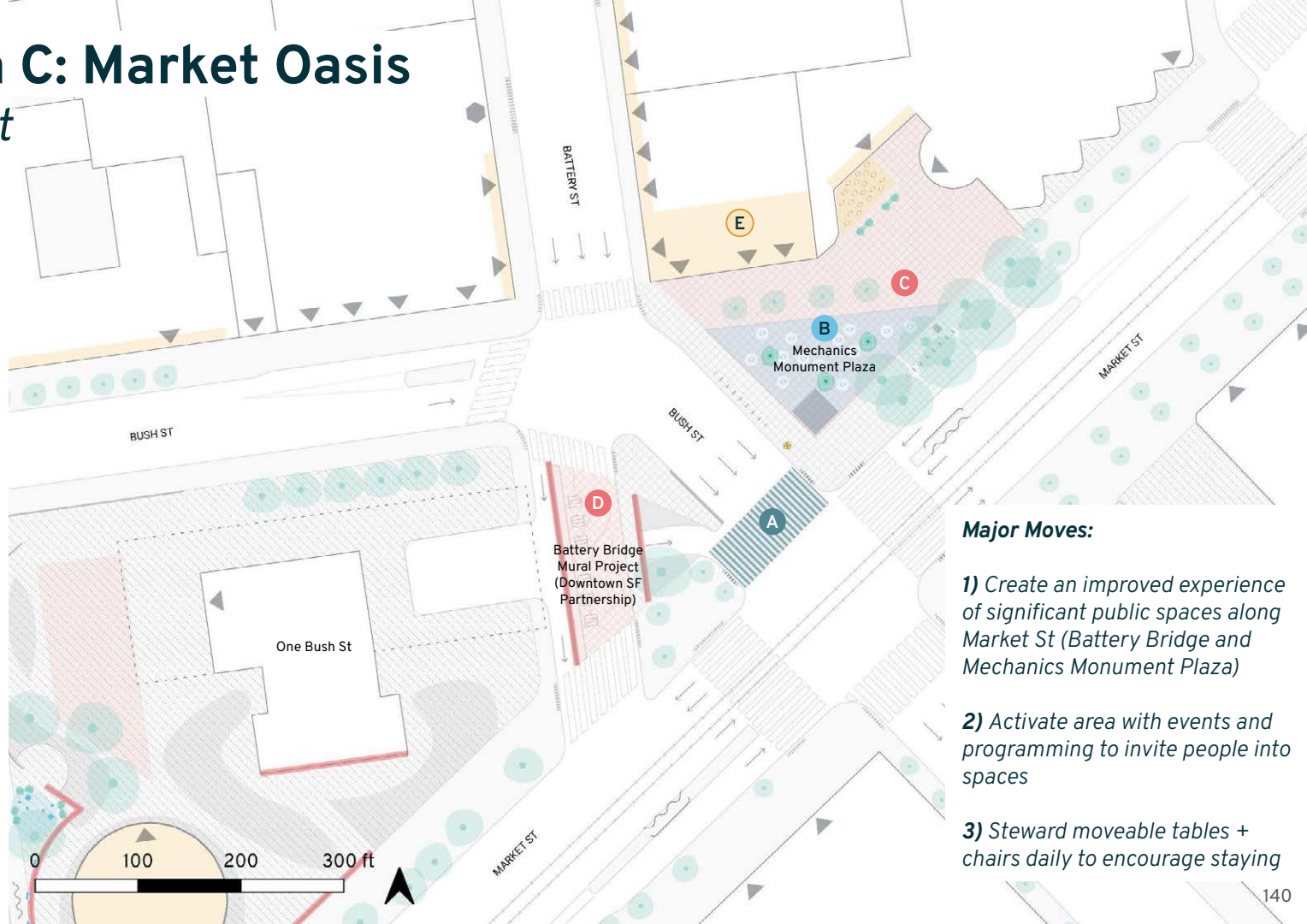




# Action Area C: Market Oasis

## Near-term Pilot

- A** Signature crossing to connect Battery Bridge Mural Project and Mechanics Monument Plaza
- B** Light furnishings, such as moveable chairs and tables, to be distributed daily
- C** Activate with lunchtime or evening programming /events
- D** Build upon energy of recently opened Battery Bridge Mural Project (street segment closed to vehicles in 2020 and transformed into a pedestrian plaza)
- E** Activate the ground floor with pop-up retail, buzzy lunch spot, or an after hours destination

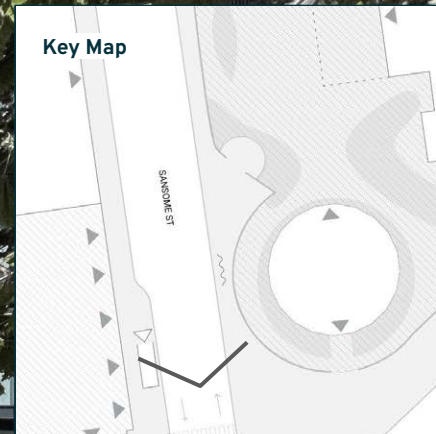


### Major Moves:

- 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*



## You are Here

*Signature furnishings + wayfinding*



## Reclaim the Curb

*Expand space along curb*



**Make Downtown an Experience**  
*Platform for special events or mural*



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



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



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





**Downtown SF has a strong foundation  
– it's time to build on the momentum.**

**What role will you play?**