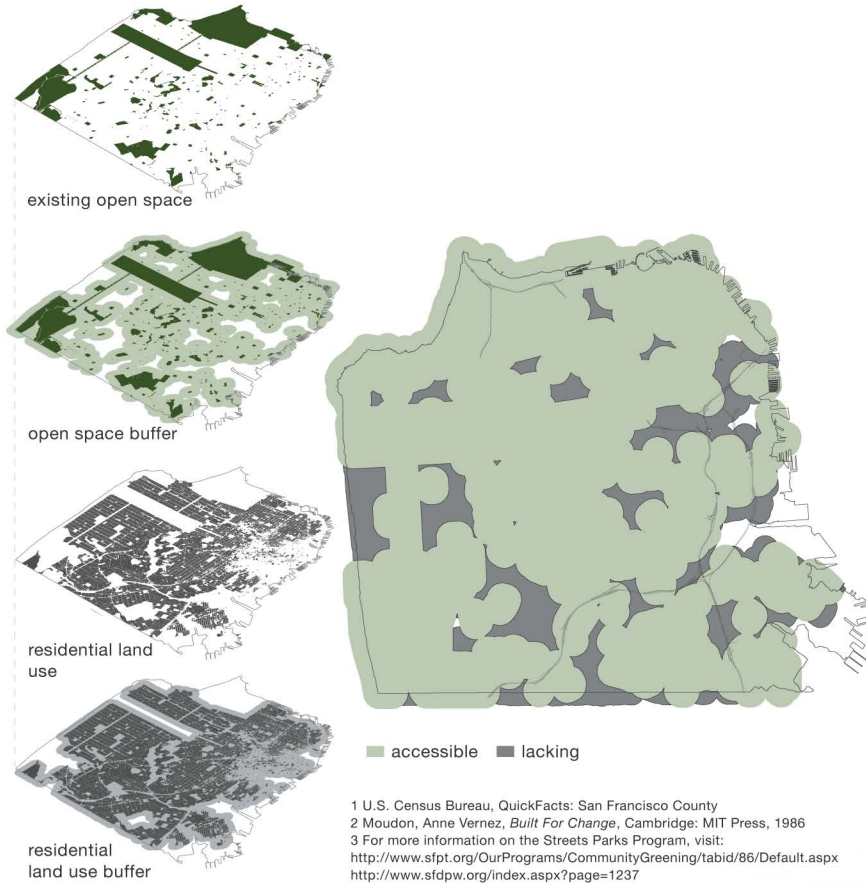




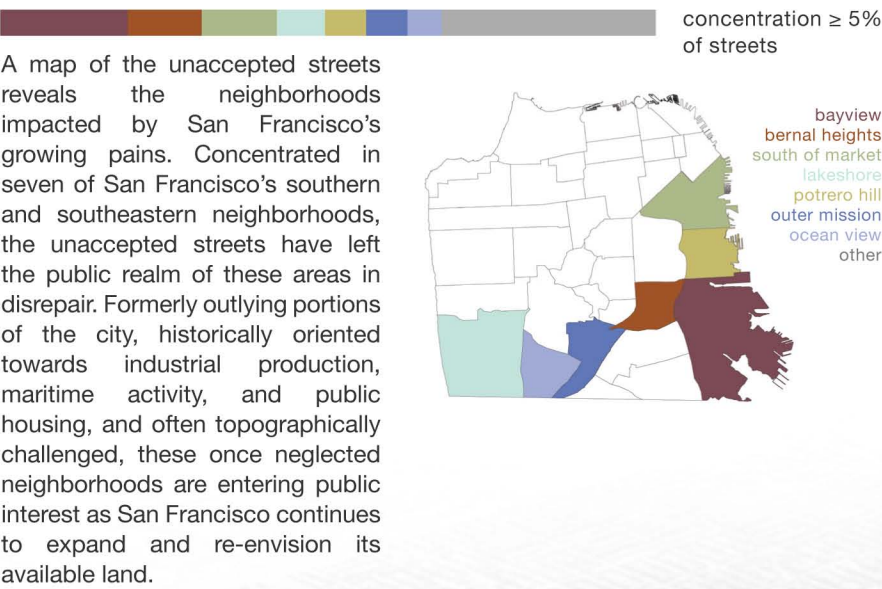
UNACCEPTEDSTREETS:FROM PAPER TO REALITY

San Francisco, CA: an urban metropolitan area spanning 49 square miles, inhabited by 805,235 people, with a corresponding density of 16,433 people per square mile.<sup>1</sup> Roadways cover approximately 25% of land area and park space covers approximately 17% of land area, offering 278.8 square feet of park space per resident. In the US and Canada Green Index, a recent study assessing the environmental performance of 27 major US and Canadian cities, San Francisco ranked first overall. Yet, an analysis of existing open space and residential land use in San Francisco suggests that six square miles of San Francisco is lacking accessible open space: open space that is within a ¼-mile walking distance from all residences in the city.

In these areas, access to existing open space is challenged by the city's natural topography and traversing the city is exacerbated by current unpleasant roadway conditions, including narrow sidewalks, dark alleyways, and littered spaces.

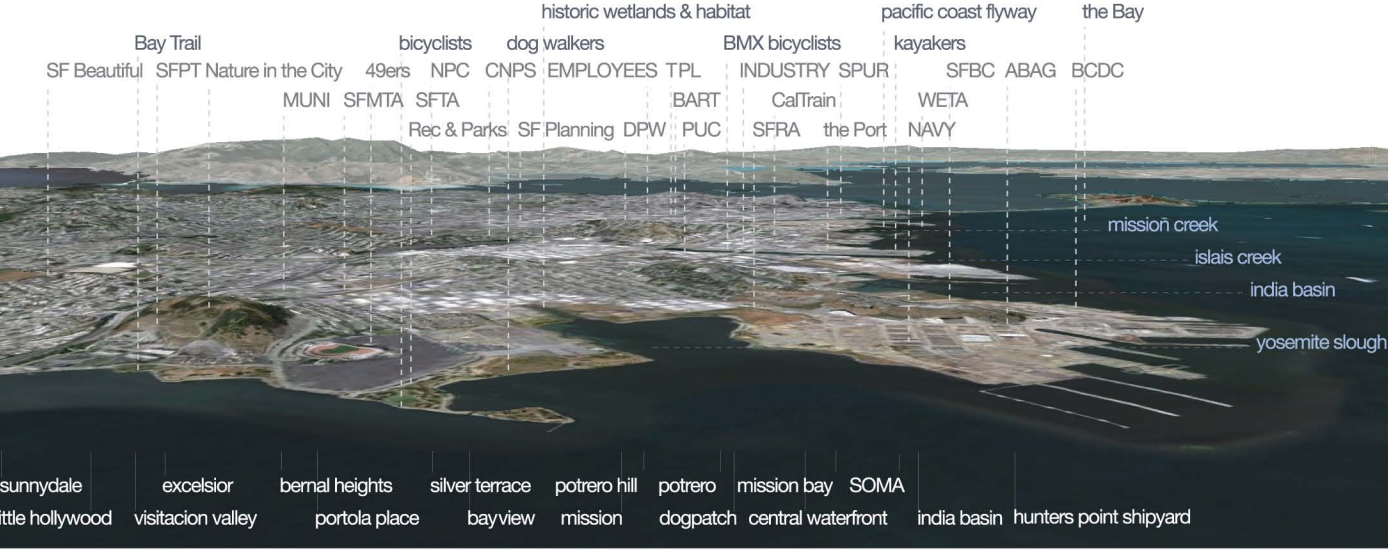


An average unaccepted street equates to 0.4 Acres. Together, the city's unaccepted streets approach the size of Golden Gate Park in area. DPW oversees the unaccepted street database, which is in constant flux as urban transformations occur. First platted under a grid system in 1839 by Jean-Jacques Voiget, San Francisco's street grid has expanded and matured, responding to topographic challenges and the needs of a rapidly growing city.<sup>2</sup> As San Francisco introduced new layers of infrastructure to the urban fabric—culverting natural creeks, constructing freeways and rail lines, and infilling for industrial and residential growth—a palimpsestic street grid emerged. Today, remnants of erased and abandoned thoroughfares, decommissioned rail lines, and halted Bay-fill developments remain articulated in the urban landscape through the unaccepted streets.



San Francisco hosts 2,224 unaccepted streets: any public right-of-way not accepted by the city for maintenance. Most of these unimproved streets are not built to city standards, lacking sewer, gas, and water piping, and exist as underutilized fragments within the city fabric. The San Francisco Department of Public Works (DPW) has specified seven categories of unaccepted streets, which this study has defined as:

- 1,242 Streets a paved, yet unimproved, public thoroughfare
- 323 Paper Streets an unimproved street demarcated on a map and legislated as a public right-of-way, but often not fully articulated in the landscape or existing in reality
- 260 Private Streets a public right-of-way under private jurisdiction for maintenance
- 239 Uprows an unimproved utility and public right-of-way
- 150 Pedestrian Streets a street designated for pedestrian-only use
- 9 Private Parking Streets a street being used for parking and under private jurisdiction for maintenance
- 1 Pseudo Street Guerrero Park – a Pavement to Parks project



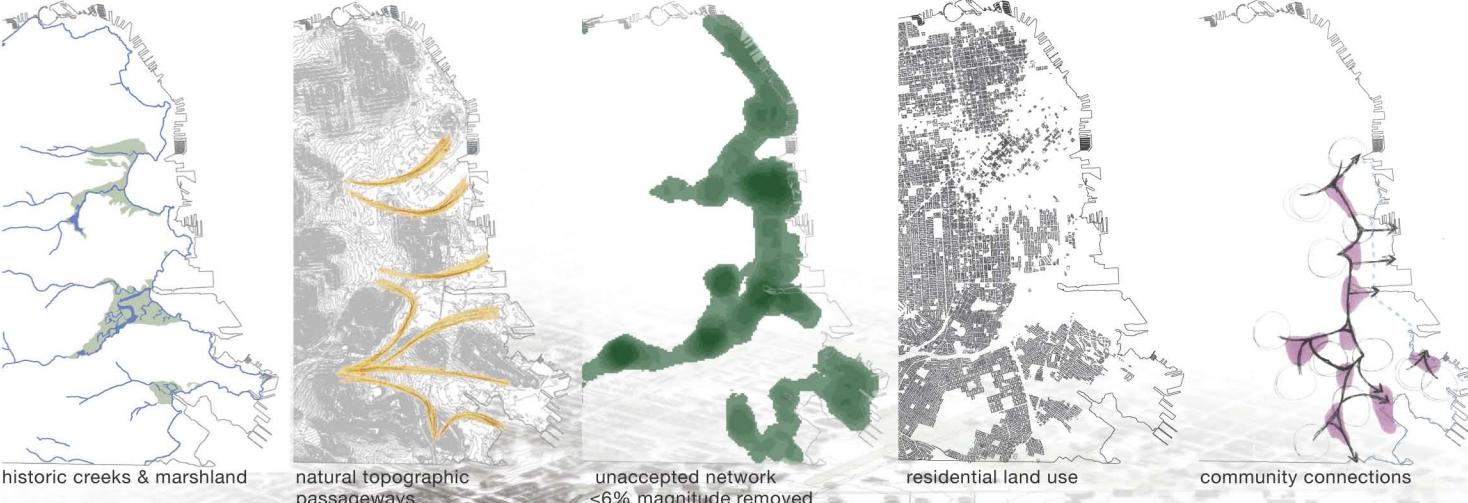
Stakeholders throughout San Francisco are actively envisioning methods for improving the public realm of the city, specifically street conditions in the southeastern neighborhoods. Combined, their visions advocate improving the pedestrian experience of San Francisco through three main goals:

- 1 ESTABLISH OPEN SPACE
- 2 CREATE CONNECTIVITY & ACCESS
- 3 PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY & NATURAL HABITAT

Applied to the unaccepted streets of San Francisco, these goals question how we use our public rights-of-way. The goals suggest a transformation from an unimproved streetscape to a new form of urban open space, one that capitalizes on underutilized fragments and strategically pieces them together into pedestrian-friendly passageways permeating the city.

Available as a geographic informational database, the unaccepted streets can be analyzed and interpreted using digital mapping (GIS) to identify spatial conditions and strategic networking opportunities. A set of 13 spatial attributes critical to achieving the three main goals of San Francisco were overlaid with both unaccepted streets, to identify a macro-scale network, and with paper streets, to identify micro-scale sites. Synthesizing where the streets either intersect with or exist in proximity to each attribute, generated a composite density analysis that identifies the areas within the city most opportune for developing and achieving San Francisco's three main goals.

When compared to historic maps of San Francisco, a parallel alignment is apparent between historic waterways, natural passageways, and the identified network. The identified network also reflects the inverse of residential land use, suggesting the prospect of connecting residential communities to San Francisco's waterfront, to the Blue Greenway, and to each other along a pedestrian-oriented, urban open space network of unaccepted streets.



By researching existing conditions throughout the neighborhoods, including the Blue Greenway, open spaces, neighborhood centers, schools, current community- and city-led improvement projects, and transit stations, and by conducting an on-site analysis, 502 streets, both unaccepted and accepted, and 462 spaces were selected for the network. Underutilized spaces alongside and in-between the unaccepted streets, as well as connector streets linking the fragmented unaccepted streets were included to form a complete linear network traversable by foot. The full network covers 388 acres, increasing usable open space to 300 square feet per San Francisco resident.



new Unaccepted Network

new Day-lit Creeks

new Urban Forest Growth

the Blue Greenway

unaccepted streets

existing open space

current improvement initiatives

schools

transit stations

roadway infrastructure

Because the network spans neighborhoods, varies in jurisdiction, and hosts a variety of adjacent land uses, it will require the synergistic participation of all stakeholders on improvement projects for network evolution and full realization.

As a strategy to identify the scale of each improvement project possible and the stakeholders crucial for managing and stewarding each project, the network can be divided into 3 infrastructural elements: individual streets and spaces, complexes, and connectors.

Communities and local groups would lead the transformation of 518 individual streets and spaces that function at a micro-scale neighborhood level. Local groups, organizations, city agencies, and private affiliates would collaboratively acquire, fund, manage, and steward 9 mid-scale complexes (concentrations of the remaining 446 streets and spaces that together, possess footprints greater than that of a single unaccepted street). And city agencies would dominate the improvement of 26 macro-scale connectors that link together the fragmented pieces of the network.



The Streets Parks Program, an established partnership between the San Francisco Parks Trust (SFPT) and DPW supporting community-led initiatives to transform unaccepted streets and other parcels owned by DPW into open spaces, is the primary existing process in San Francisco for transforming unaccepted streets.<sup>3</sup> It will be crucial to promote and utilize the Streets Parks Program, as well as other processes including Parklets, Pavement to Parks, land acquisition and endowment, street closures, and planning policies to actively pursue and transform each element of the network: organically, yet strategically bringing the network to reality.

