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#PublicSpaceCivicCenter



CIVIC CENTER PUBLIC REALM PLAN OVERVIEW

SPUR PRESENTATION | AUGUST 29, 2017

PLANNING HISTORY

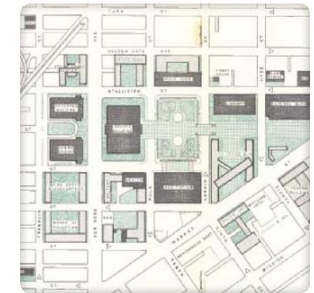
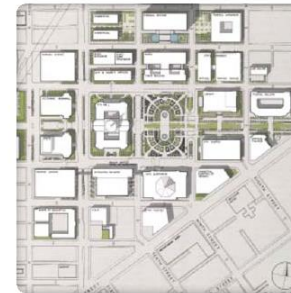


The c. 1912 plan for Civic Center guided the location and design of buildings and public spaces in the area into the 1950s.

1906 Earthquake

1912 Plan

After World War II new plans to expand and modernize the Civic Center were developed.



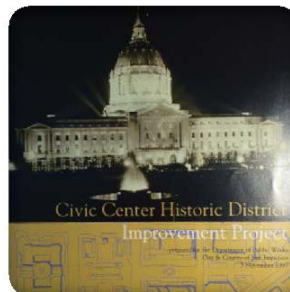
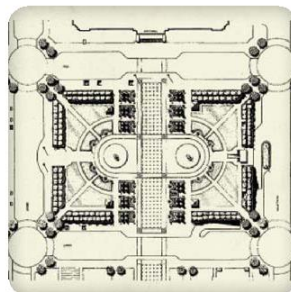
1961 Plaza Rebuild

1958 Plan

1953 Plan



CIVIC CENTER PROPOSAL



In the 1980s a growing interest in historic preservation led to new plans focused on adaptive reuse and restoration.

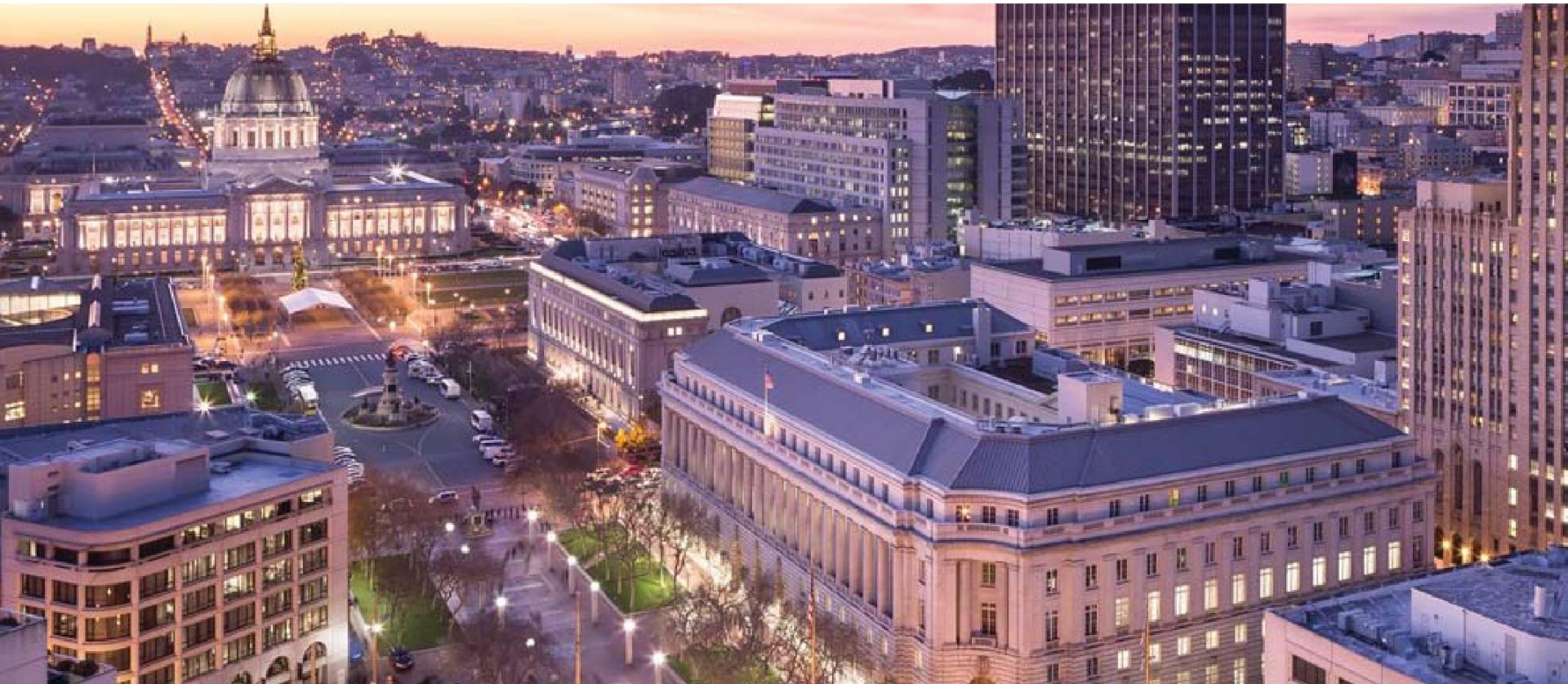
1987 Proposal

1994 Study

1998 Plan

PLANNING HISTORY

Since the 1980s, improving and retrofitting Civic Center's buildings have been a major focus, but major public space improvements have been minimal.



The most recent plan for improvements to Civic Center's public spaces is nearly 20 years old.

Since the 1990s, the Civic Center area has grown as both an arts and culture district and as a residential neighborhood.



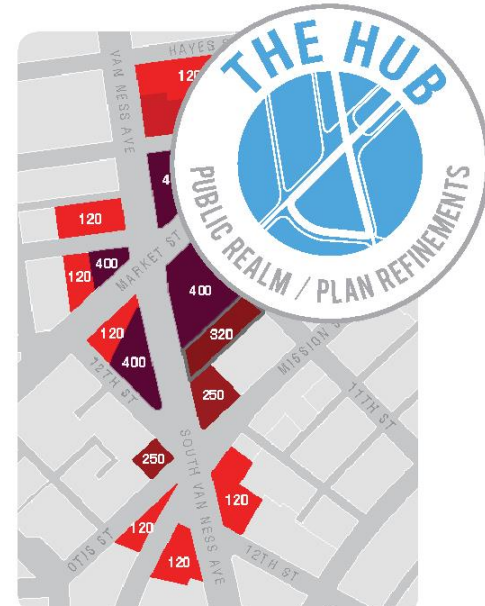
Photo Credit: flickr Ed & Eddie



Photo Credit: SPUR



Photo Credit: TNDC



ACT's Strand Theater is one of a number of new arts venues in Civic Center.

The conversion of 100 Van Ness from office to residential is one example of Civic Center's growing residential population.

New affordable housing, such as the TNDC's Eddy & Taylor Family Housing, will expand the number of people using Civic Center's open space.

Up to 9,000 new housing units are projected in the Market Street Hub Area, near the Market/Van Ness intersection.



2015 CENTENNIAL NEW PLANS & STUDIES FOR CIVIC CENTER AREA



San Francisco Civic Center Historic District Cultural Landscape Inventory

Inventory of Civic Center's
landscape features completed
in 2015.



Central Market/Tenderloin Strategy

Near-term improvement
strategy for area, released in
2015.



Civic Center Playground Renovation

Concept design finalized in
2015, construction began in
Winter 2017.



Civic Center Sustainable Utilities District Plan

SFPUC plan for Civic Center
utilities district released in
2015.



Better Market Street

Environmental review began in
2015.

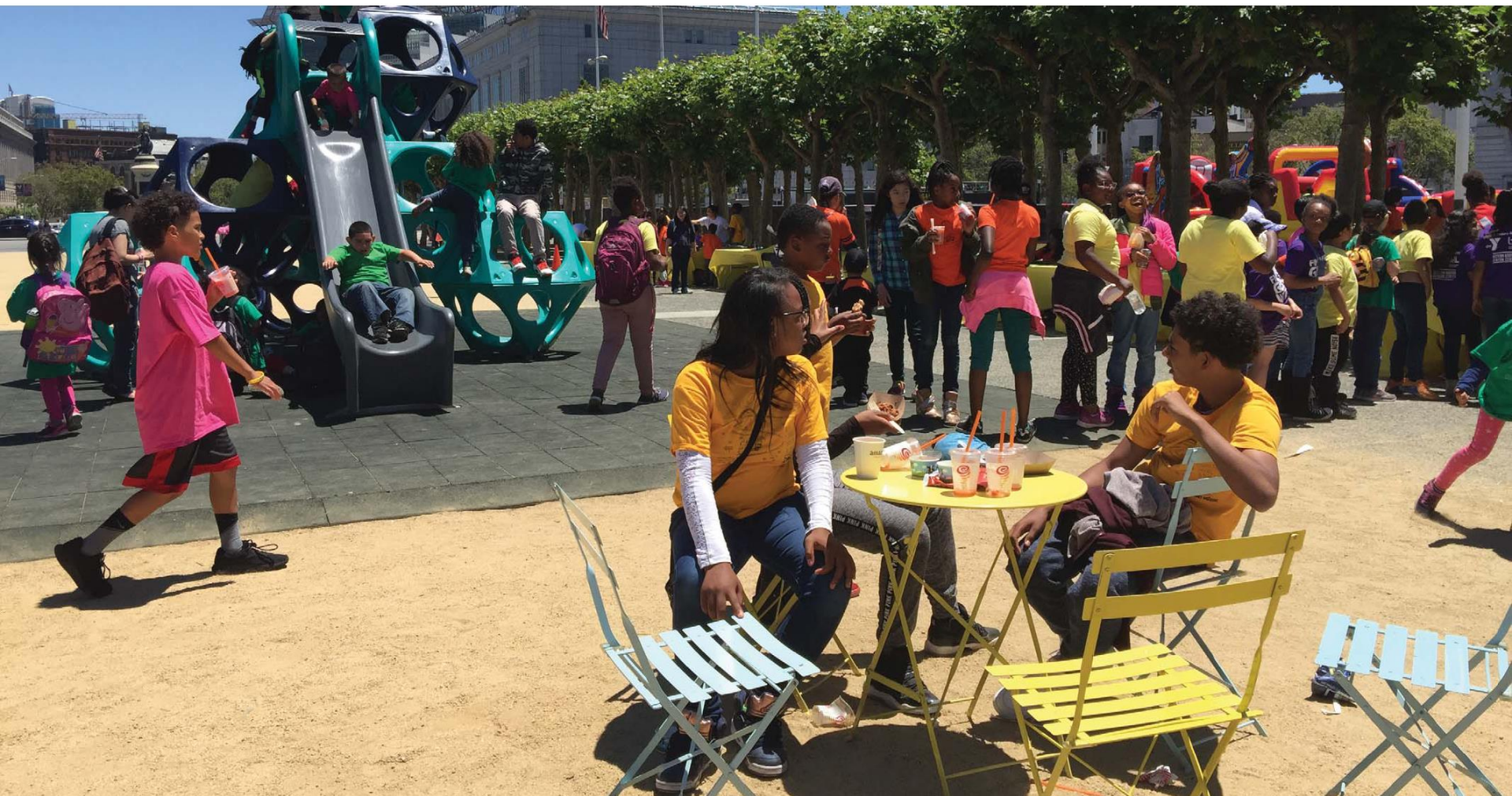


Van Ness Transit Improvement Project

Design finalized in 2015,
construction set to begin in
2016.



A new City initiative led by the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, focused on near-term improvements, activation, stewardship, and management of the public spaces linking Market Street to City Hall.





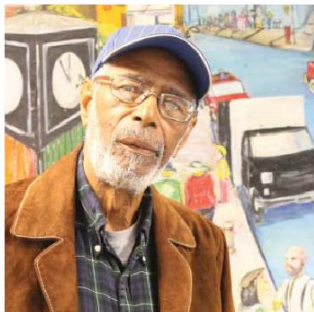
The Civic Center Public Realm Plan will build off recent plans and studies and create one coordinated, interdepartmental plan for long-term improvements to the area's streets, plazas, and other public spaces.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL PROJECT TEAM:



OUTREACH

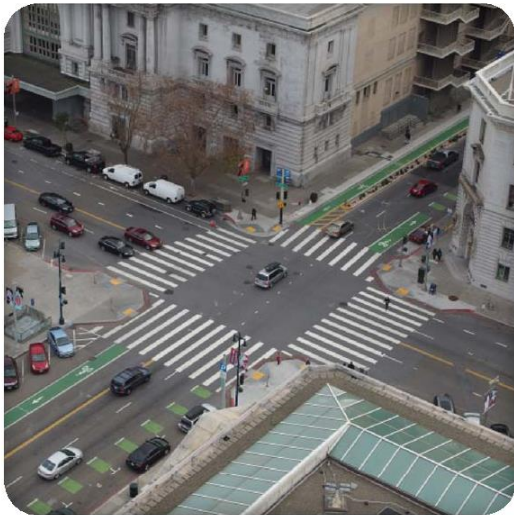
Throughout the plan's development the project team will build partnerships and work closely with Civic Center's many stakeholders.



Portraits of people in Civic Center from SF Planning's "Civic Center Stories" Project

WHAT CONSTITUTES THE CIVIC CENTER'S PUBLIC REALM?

Streets



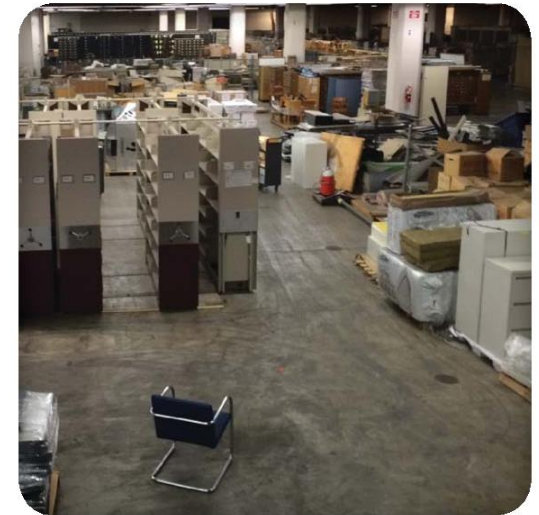
Polk & Grove Intersection

Plazas & Parks



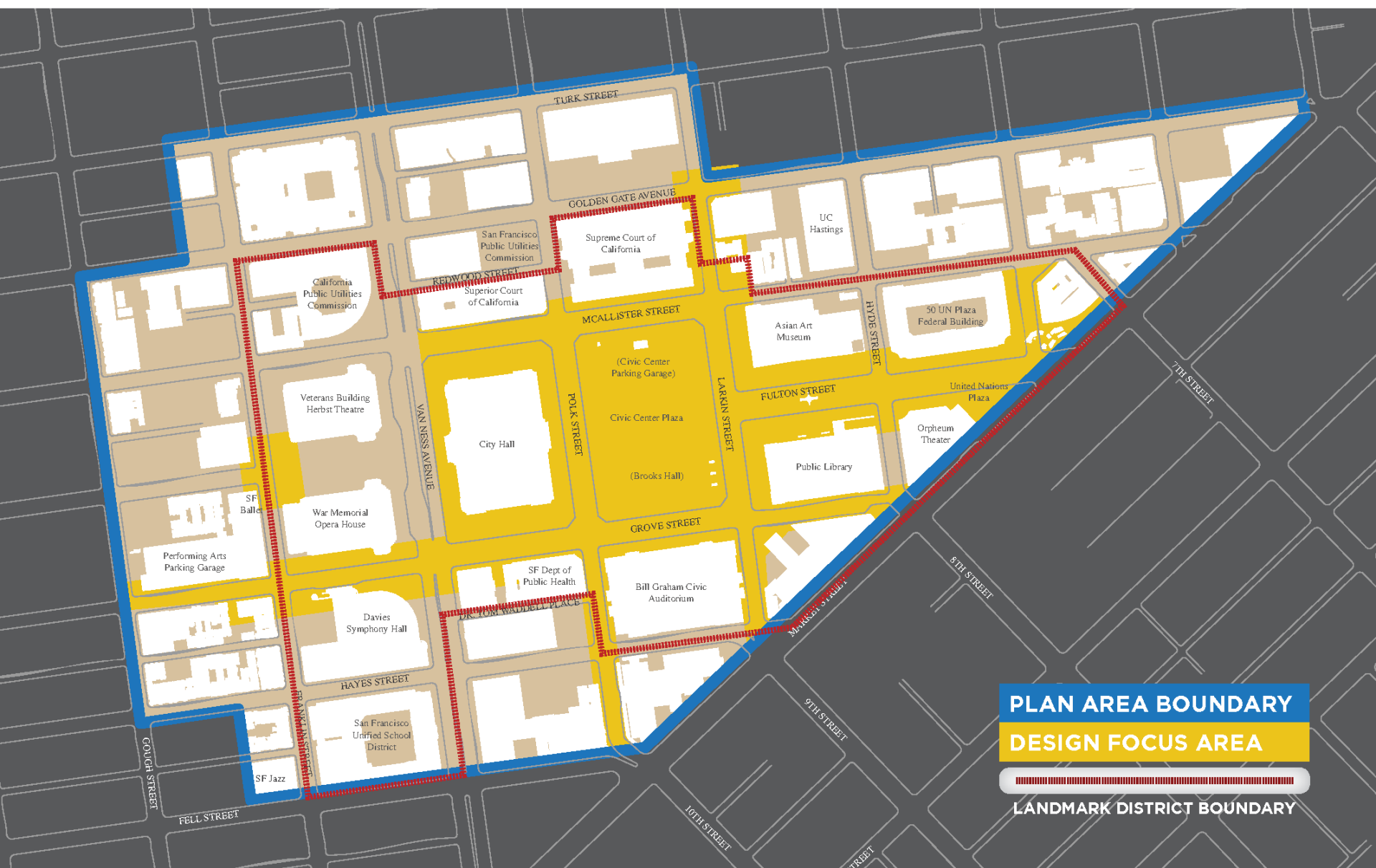
War Memorial Courtyard

Other Public Spaces



Brooks Hall

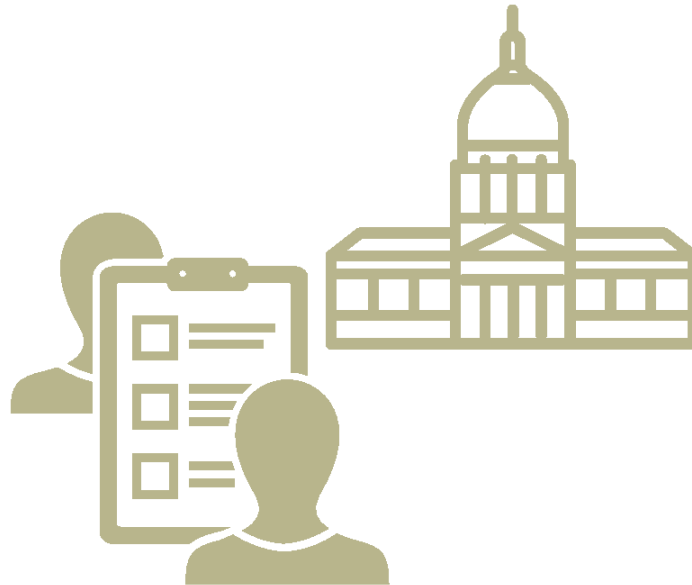
PROPOSED PLAN AREA



PLAN AREA BOUNDARY
DESIGN FOCUS AREA

LANDMARK DISTRICT BOUNDARY

PLAN COMPONENTS



Public Life Study

In-depth analysis of how people use, move through, and perceive public space in Civic Center.

Prime Consultant:

Gehl

PLAN COMPONENTS



Focus Area Conceptual
Designs



Transportation Infrastructure
Plan



Reuse & Activation Strategy

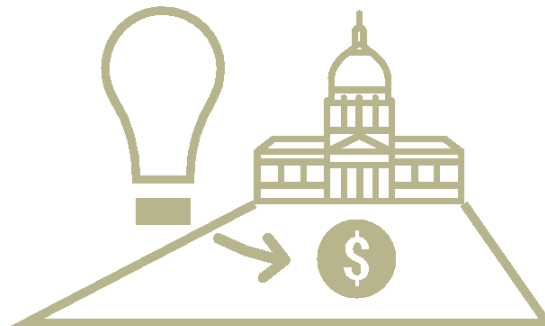
Prime Consultant:

CMG

Landscape Architecture



Streetscape Design
Standards



Implementation &
Management Strategy



Environmental Review

PLAN TIMELINE

Subject to change

Existing Conditions Analysis & Public Life Study	NOW – SEPT. 2017
Plan Development & Community Engagement	AUG. 2017 – AUG. 2018
Environmental Analysis	APR. 2018 – APR. 2020
Plan Adoption Hearings	APR. 2020– JULY 2020

Community outreach will be on-going throughout the Plan’s development, with major outreach events anticipated to begin Fall 2017.



Contact Information:

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Website: www.civiccentersf.org

THANK YOU!

Civic Center
PSPL
2017

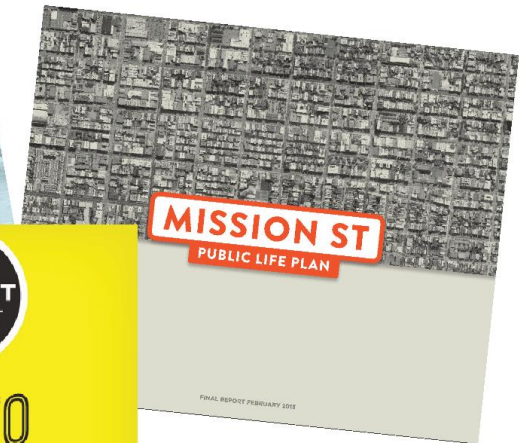
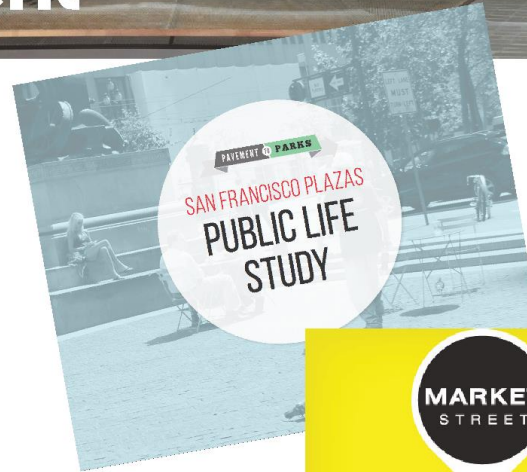
Public Life + Public Space Key Findings

Gehl + **San Francisco
Planning**

John Bela, Partner, Director
Anna Muessig, Project Manager, MCP

Team

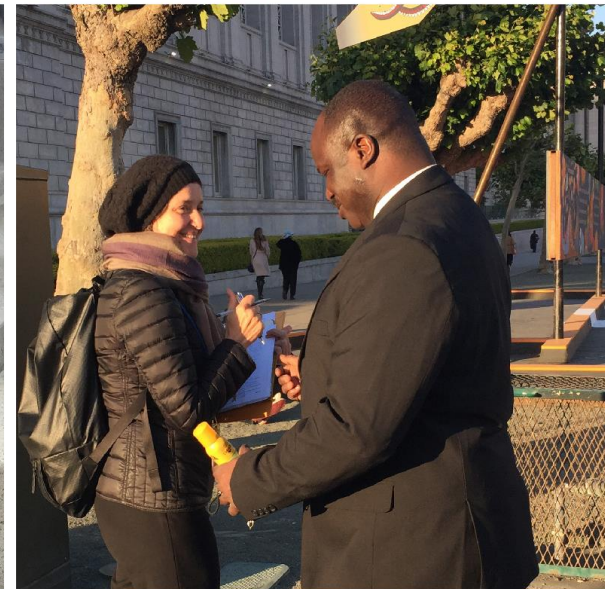
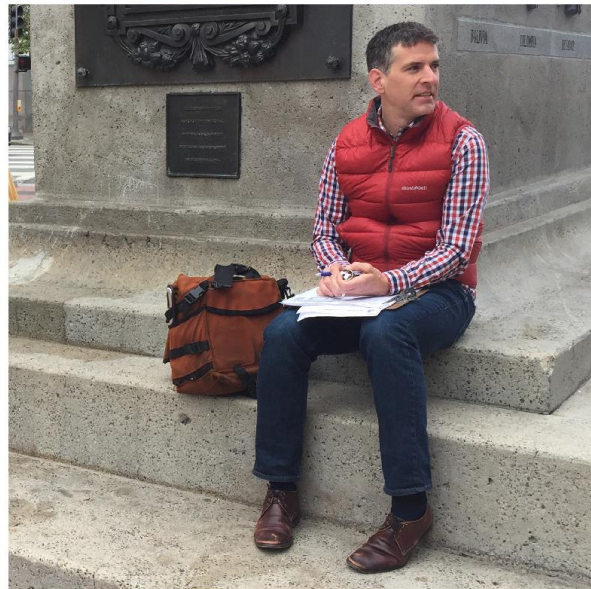
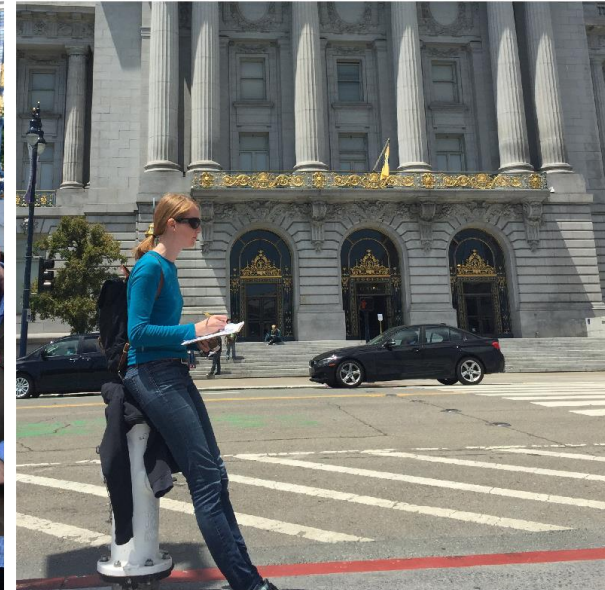
An evaluation of the public space and public life of Civic Center was led by Gehl, San Francisco City Planning and nearly 100 volunteers from numerous city agencies, Department of Human Services, Another Planet Entertainment, volunteers from the Symphony, Stanford, Berkeley, and other educational institutions. It was a citywide affair!



San Francisco
Planning

Team

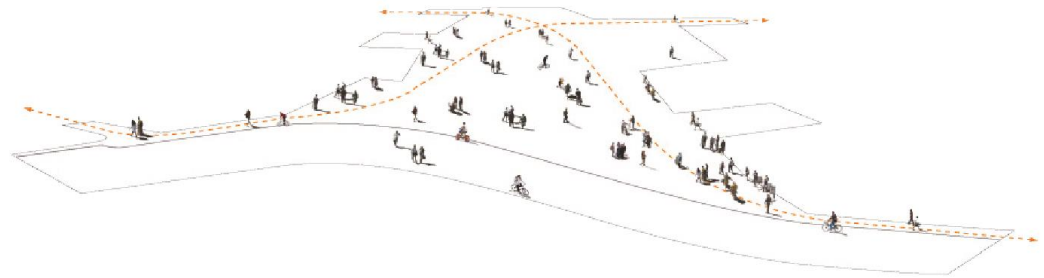
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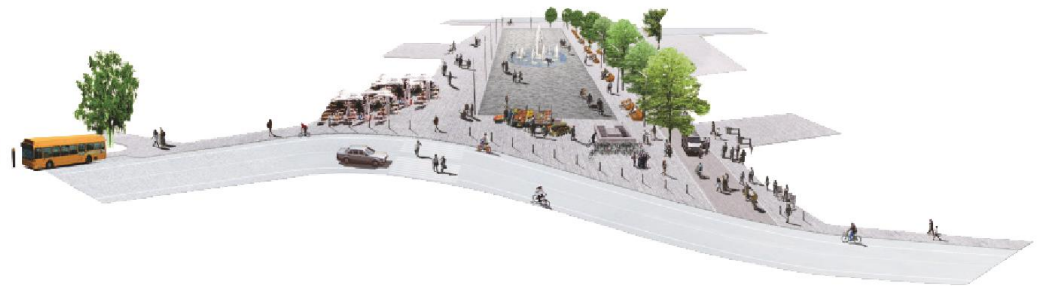
Gehl

We always begin with how a space is being used by people now - what is working, what could work better? This understanding informs design for space and the broader built environment.

1 Life



2 Space



3 Buildings



Gehl

Global practice, local projects.



Decode the Everyday

Why do a Public Space Public Life (PSPL) study?

- To find **human stories**
- To inform **strategy and design**
- To provide **evidence** to make **objective choices**
- To **benchmark** progress
- To discover **new opportunities**
- To create **urgency for change**



Guiding Question:

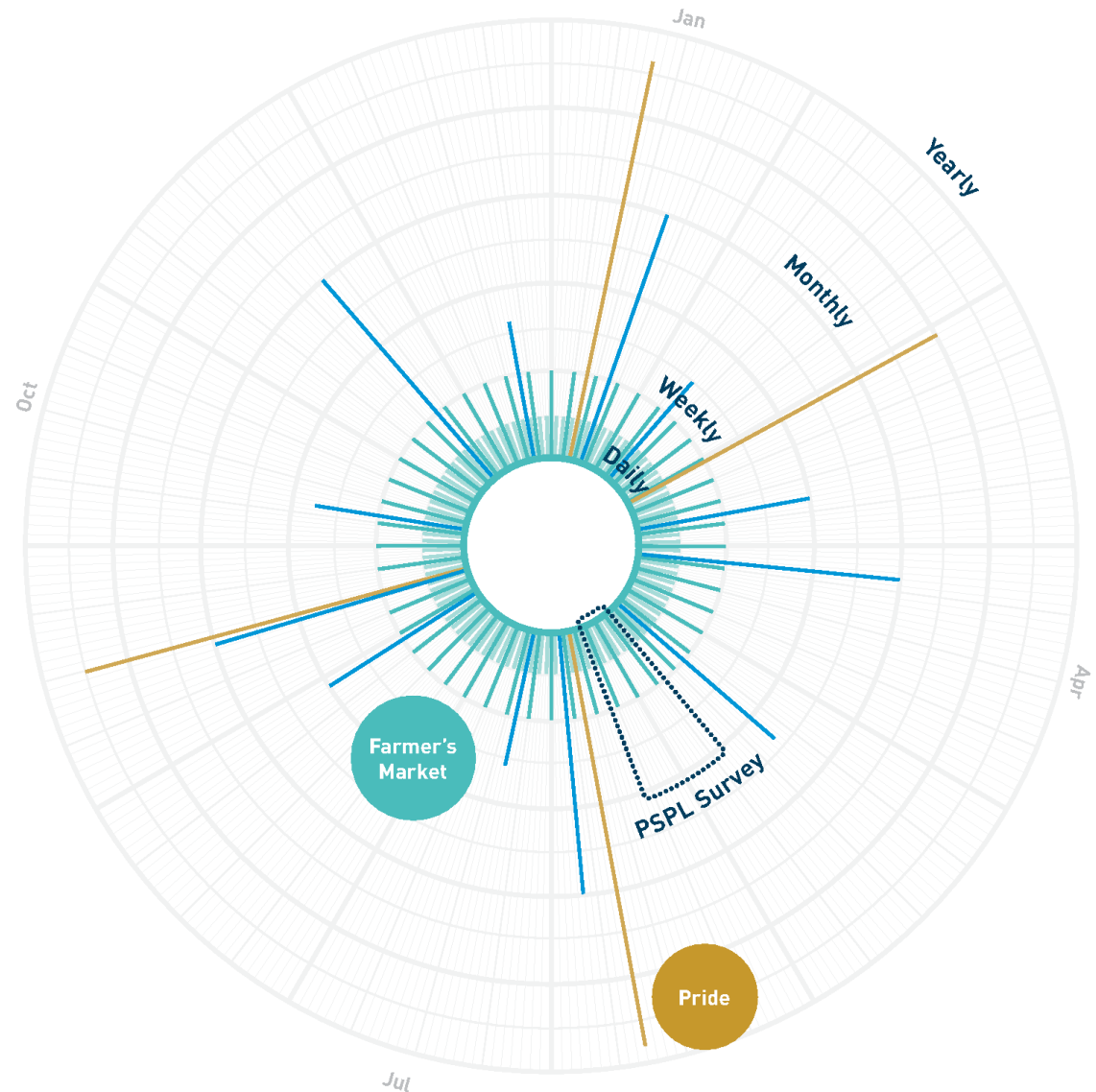
How can Civic Center continue to serve its role as one of the primary **civic and ceremonial gathering places** while providing a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment for **everyday users**?



There is no typical day in Civic Center

From daily weddings and civic business to weekly farmer's markets to annual regional gatherings like Pride and protests, Civic Center has many facets of its public life.

Our Public Life Study focused on events that happen frequently in the daily and weekly rhythm.



4 Snapshot Days

There is no typical day at Civic Center. We selected four days that represented different common activity profiles.

The survey ran from 8:00am to 8:00pm on each day.

Our Intercept Survey was taken by 419 people / 966 declined the survey.

“Quiet” Weekday

Thursday, May 25

Cloudy until around noon
Min 54°F Max 61°F Wind 2m/s



“Quiet” Weekend

Saturday, June 10

Min 54°F Max 63°F Wind 4m/s



“Busy” Weekday

Thursday, June 7

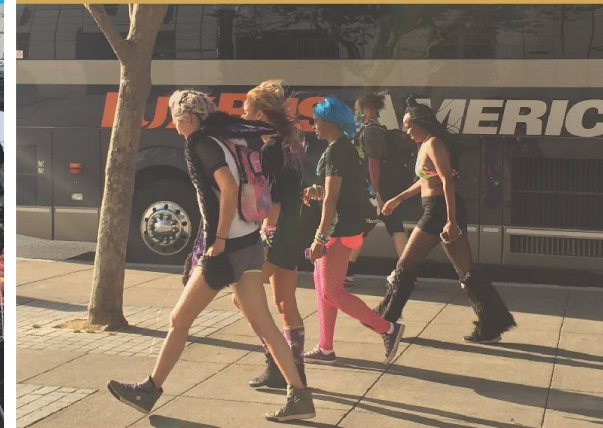
Farmers' Market @ UN Plaza, Warriors game @ Civic Center
Min 52°F Max 59°F Wind 4m/s



“Busy” Weekend

Saturday, May 27

Concert @ Bill Graham + Prom
Min 54°F Max 61°F Wind 2m/s



**We observed
people moving
and people
staying out in
public**



**Age &
Gender**



**Pedestrians
& Cyclists**

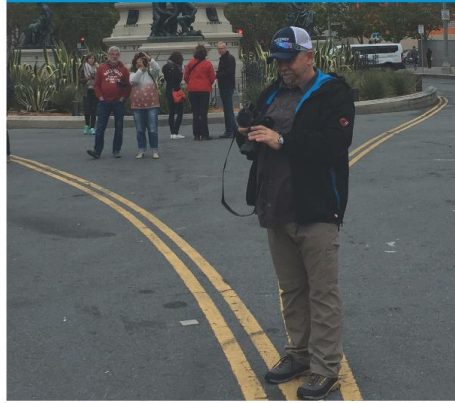


**Stationary
Mapping**

Stationary Mapping:

Measuring
how the space
invites different
body postures

Standing



Lying



Sitting - Private



Sitting - Improvised



Sitting - Public



Measuring how the space invites different **activities**

Eating / Drinking



Exercise / Play / Recreation



Cultural / Performance



Waiting for Transit



Commerce



Civic Work



Accompanied by Pets



Political / Religious Activity



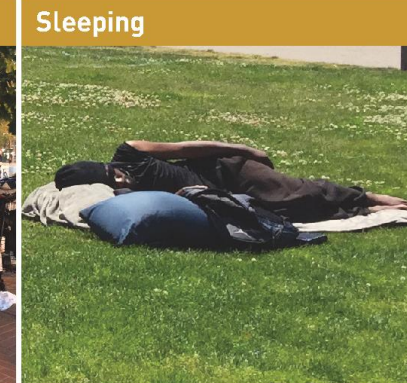
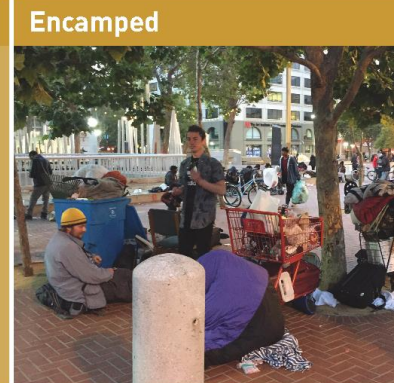
Smoking



Measuring how the space invites activities like **sleeping,** **drug use, and** **encampments**

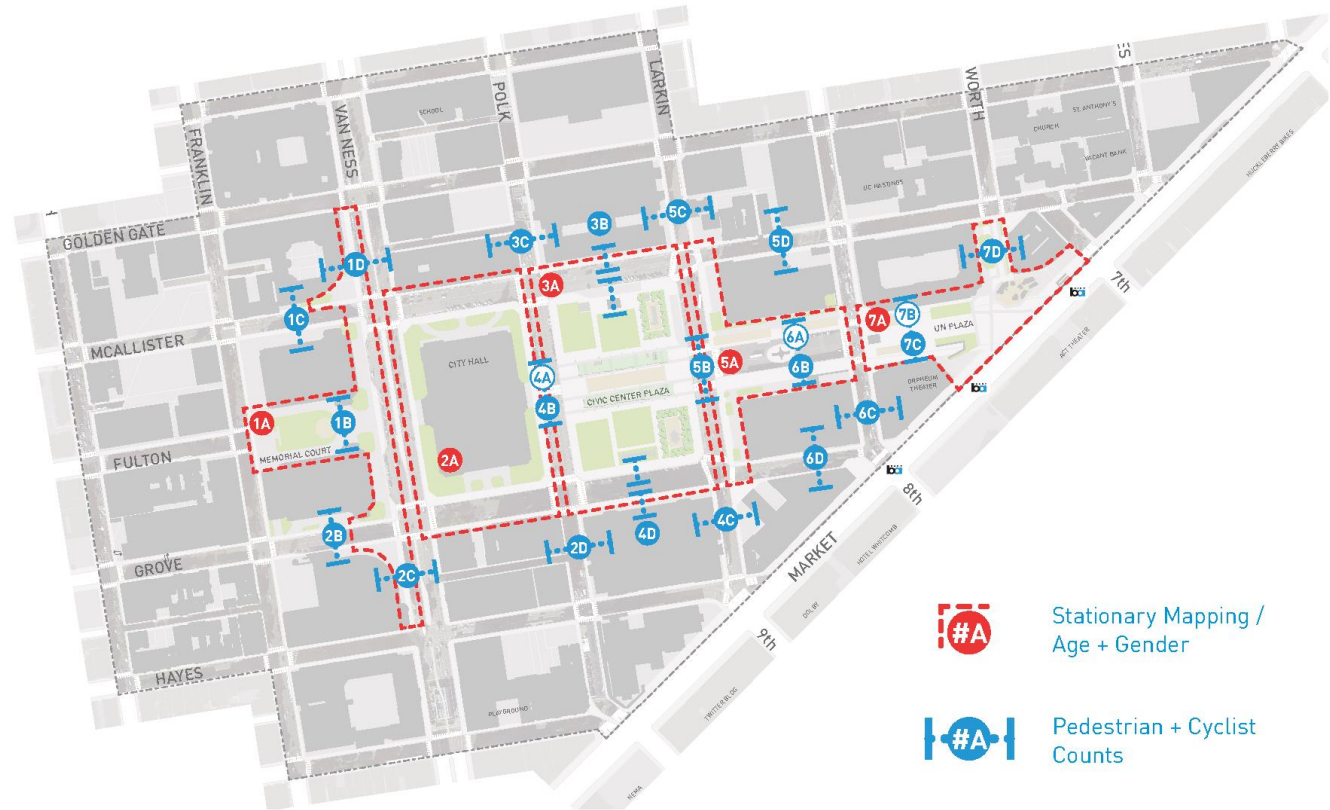
Everyone is welcome in Civic Center. It is our city's common space and should feel welcoming to people from all walks of life - from tourists to patrons of the arts, as well as to people experiencing homelessness of living in SROs.

Some activities that occur in Civic Center have the effect of deterring other activities. This categorization is not perfect, but it will allow us to have a conversation about these uses of the space based on common information.



Survey Locations

Our Public Life survey count locations were selected to capture the ebb and flow of the public life of Civic Center, focused around its central public spaces.



Public Space Analysis

To understand the relationship between public life and public space we performed the following analysis.

- 12 Urban Quality Criteria analysis
- Facade Quality Analysis
- Landuse Analysis
- Neighborhood Amenity Mapping
- Public Space Amenity Mapping
- Test walks





Public Space Key Findings

Civic Center is a powerful symbol of San Francisco



Striking architecture makes Civic Center a successful San Francisco Icon

Civic Center, like the Ferry Building, Twin Peaks, Lombard Street, Golden Gate Bridge, and other destinations, are central associations with San Francisco.



Among the iconic Civic Centers and major squares of the world

Its peers around the world are the Campo de Sienna in Italy, Trafalger Square in London, Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, Swanston Street in Melbourne, Place de la Republique Paris, Grand Park in LA. Our Civic Center's iconic buildings deserve an iconic public realm.

Trafalgar Square, London



Zócalo, Mexico City



Grand Park, LA



Rådhuspladsen, Copenhagen City Hall



With a public life profile centered around the seasons of life

Civic Center hosts all rhythms of civic, public, and private life: weddings, war memorial, world-class arts, daily civic and neighborhood business, moments of civic togetherness and civic unrest. People move to San Francisco to celebrate the dignity and diversity of human life. It is the place where the passions of our city are manifest in public space.



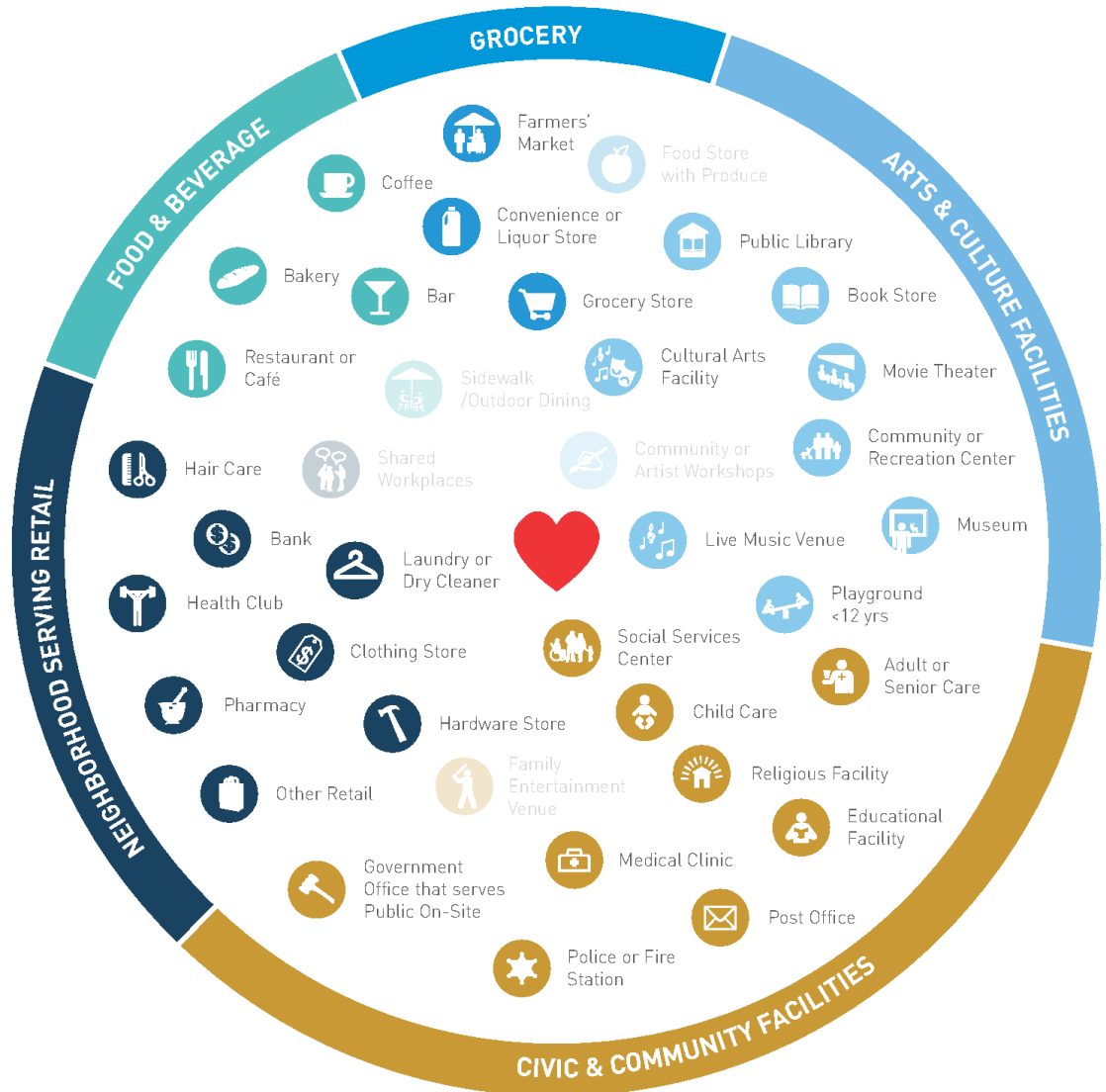
There's no center in Civic Center

2

●●○○○ There's no center in Civic Center

Civic Center has many of the elements of a complete neighborhood...

Does this iconic
architecture also support
the everyday activities of a
neighborhood district?

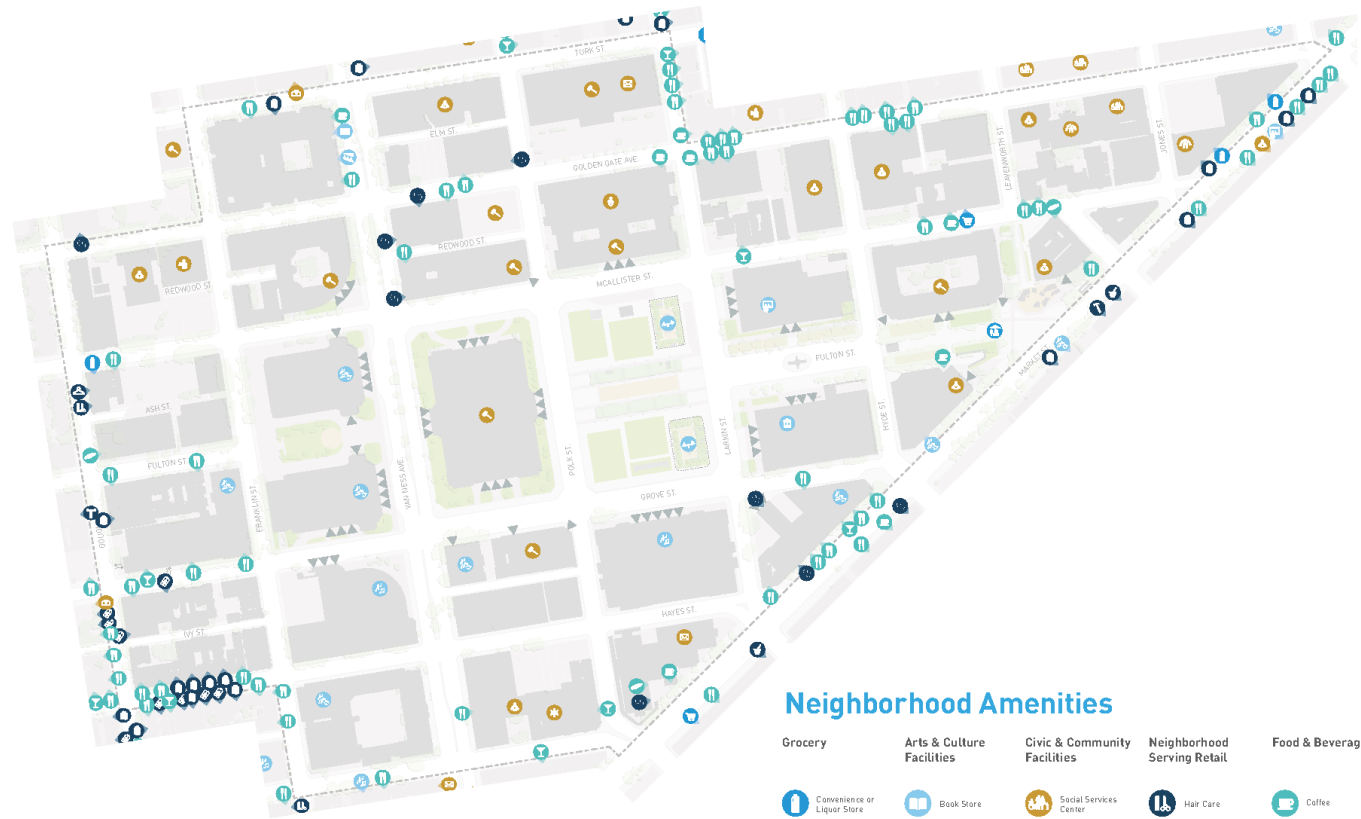


○●○○○○ There's no center in Civic Center

...But they are clustered on the periphery

Civic Center has most of the amenities of a complete neighborhood - but they are clustered on the periphery.

Many of the opening hours of these amenities cater strictly to office workers, not neighborhood patrons or visitors.

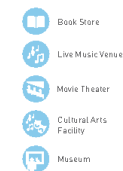


Neighborhood Amenities

Grocery



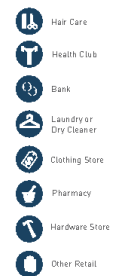
Arts & Culture Facilities



Civic & Community Facilities



Neighborhood Serving Retail



Food & Beverage



●●○○○○ There's no center in Civic Center

Civic Centers can be active

Ratskeller
/ˈraːtskeler/

noun 1. the cellar
of a town hall, esp
one used as a beer
hall or restaurant

Word Origin German:
from *Rat* (haus) town
hall + *Keller* cellar

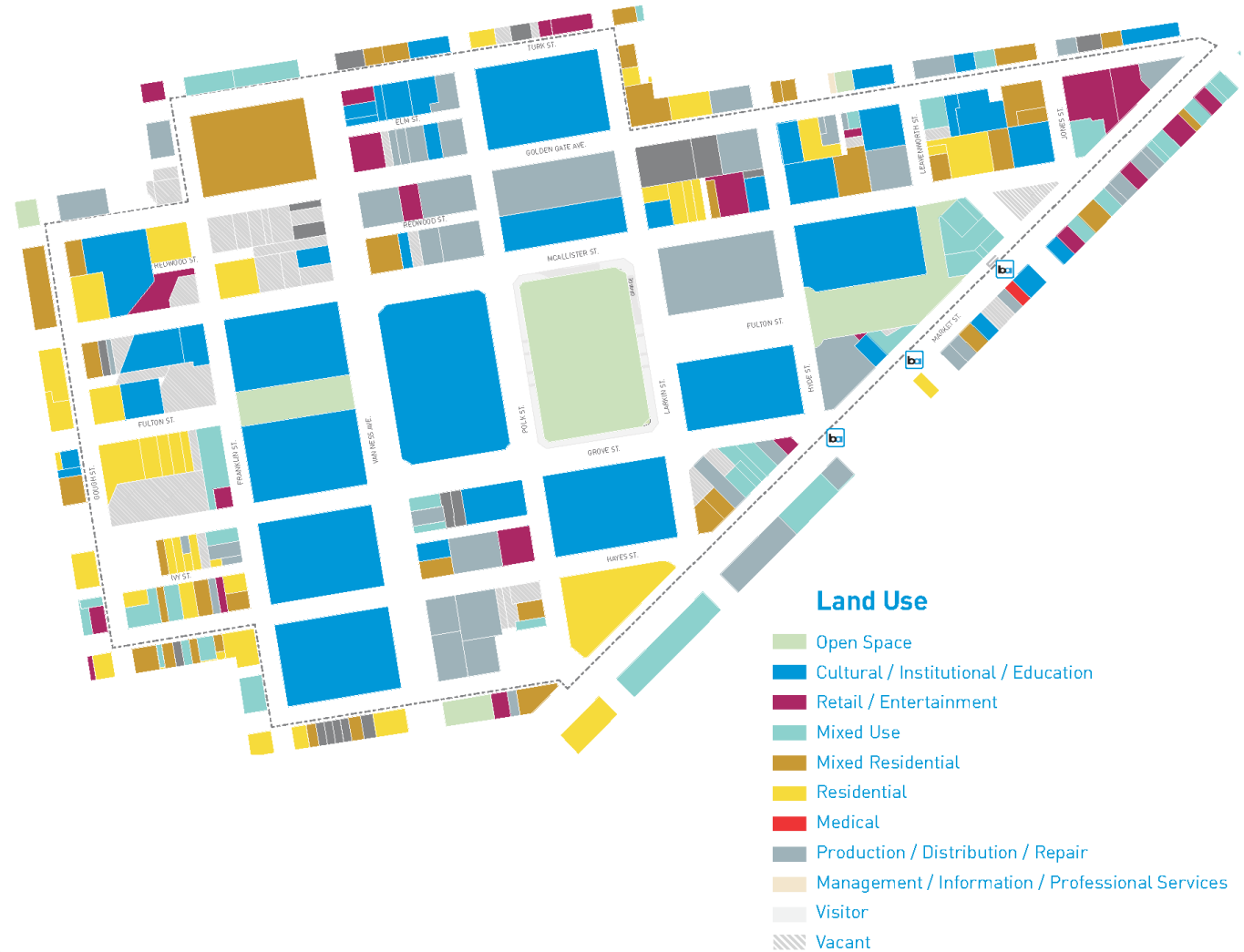
**Munich City Hall
with restaurant**



●●○○○○ There's no center in Civic Center

Large Institutions at the core of Civic Center...

Civic Center is dominated by institutional uses



Mono-function buildings create a dull core

The experience at the ground floor on Civic Center streets are defined by long, inactive facades with few openings and very little transparency. Vibrant and active facades are only experienced at the periphery.



Facade Quality

● Vibrant

- Small units with many doors
- High transparency
- No vacant or passive units
- Lots of character
- Good articulation, materials and details

● Active

- Relatively small units
- Some transparency
- Few passive units
- Some articulation and detail

● Dull

- Large units with few doors
- Low transparency
- Some Passive Units
- Few or no details

● Inactive

- Large units with few doors
- Very little or no transparency
- Uniform facades with no details or nothing to look at
- Parking or vacant lot

Mono-function buildings create a dull and inactive core

The experience at the ground floor on Civic Center streets are defined by long, inactive facades with few openings and very little transparency. Vibrant and active facades are only experienced at the periphery.

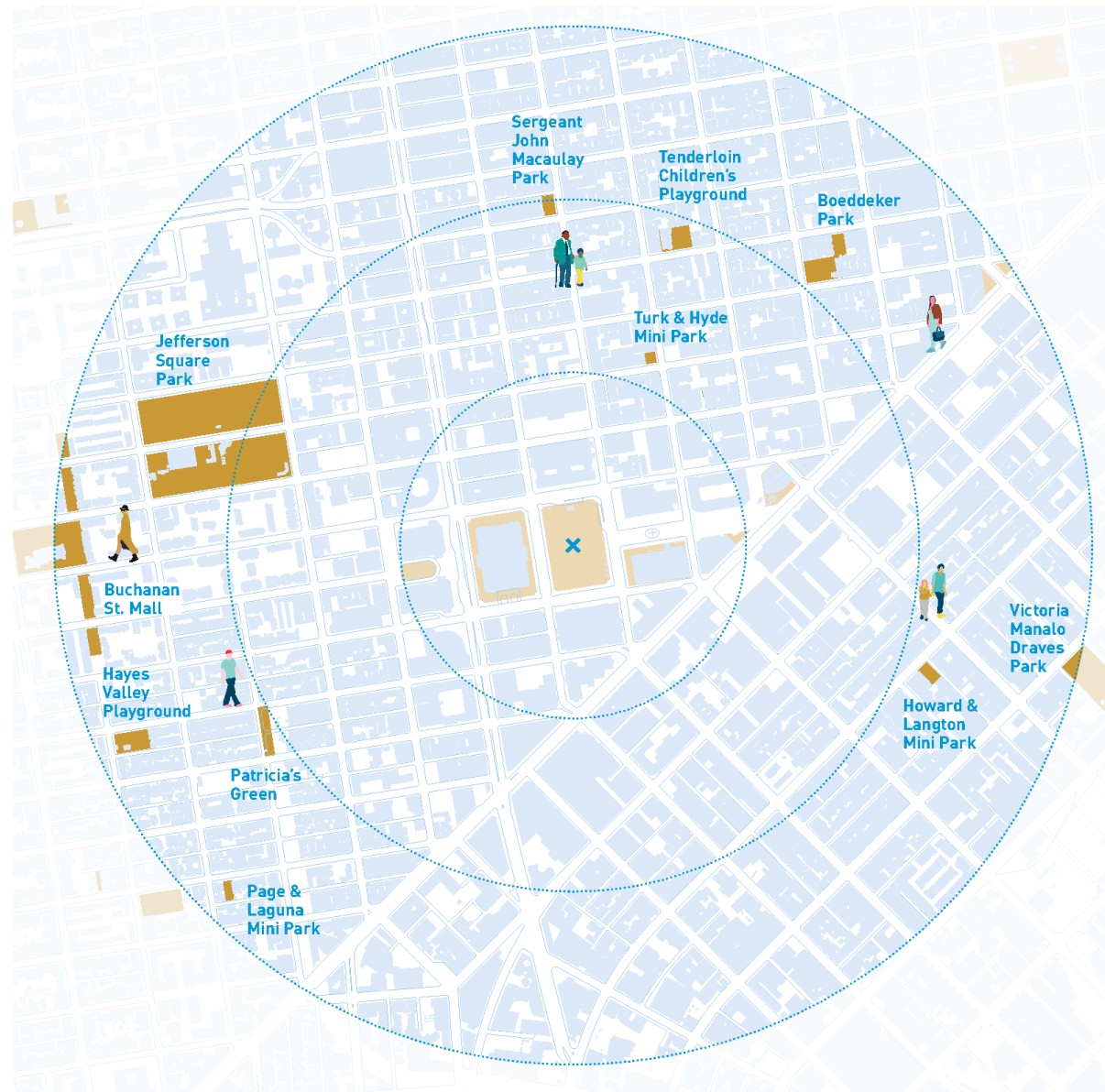


●●○○○○ There's no center in Civic Center

Civic Center is not living up to it's full potential to support the neighborhood public realm network

Open Spaces within 15 minutes walking.

5 min



The civic axis is broken

3

○○●○○○ The civic axis is broken

Strong visual axis from Market Street to City Hall

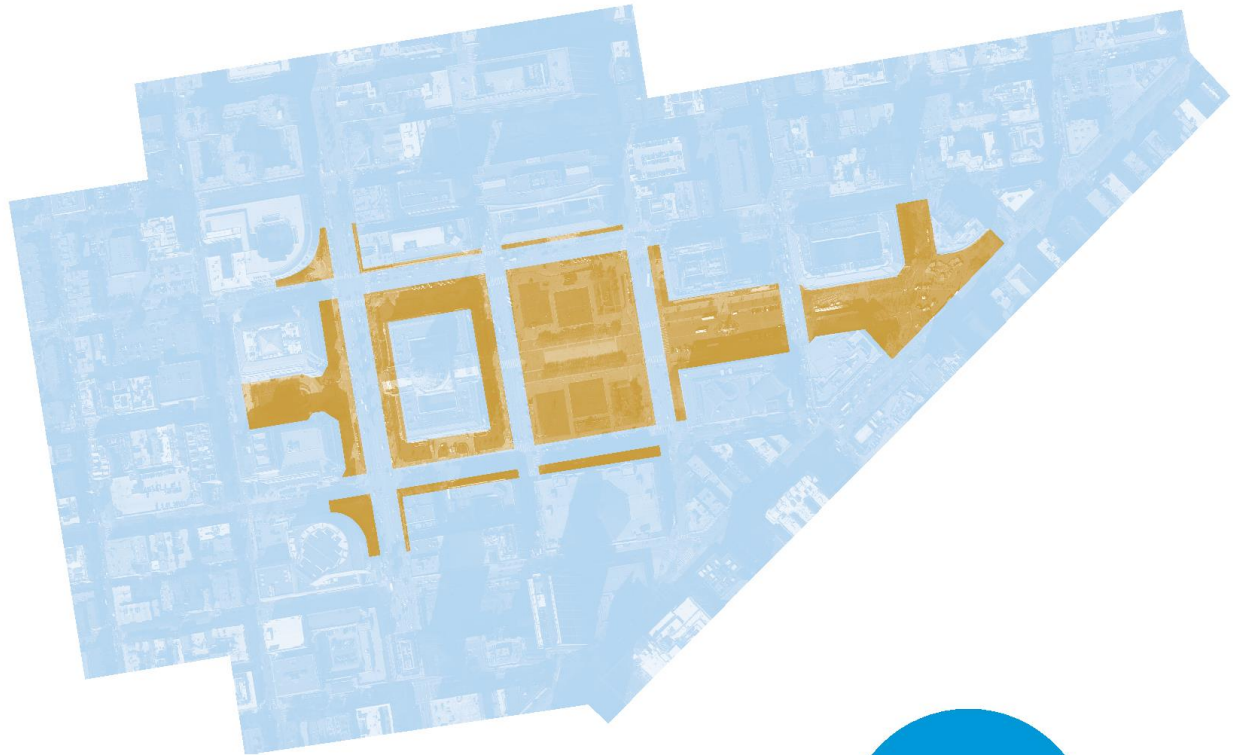
Civic Center reads as one space from Market Street.



○○●○○○ The civic axis is broken

Strong visual
axis from Market
Street to City Hall

**But it is
disconnected
by high-traffic
streets**



More
than **15,000**
vehicles move
through Civic
Center!

○○●○○○ The civic axis is broken

Strong visual
axis from Market
Street to City Hall

But it is
disconnected
by high-traffic
streets

**And a dull
public realm**



Look but don't touch



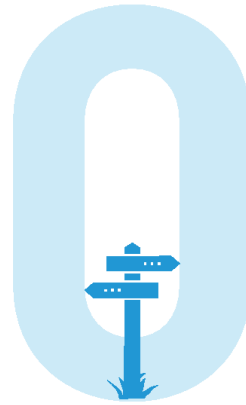
Little to delight the 5 senses

In **730,000** square feet of public open space...few invitations to touch, smell, taste Civic Center.

Successful public spaces appeal to all of the senses - not only the delight of beautiful architecture, but also touch, smell, and taste.



Drinking Fountains



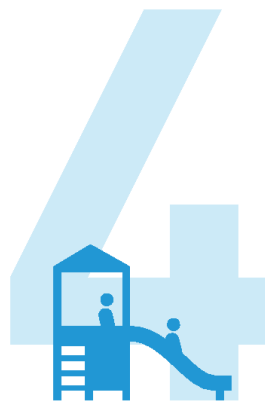
Wayfinding



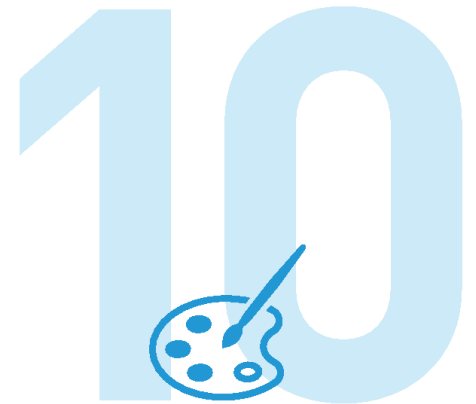
Chairs/benches
not including Civic Center commons



Restrooms



Play Areas



Public Art

○○●○○ Look but don't touch

Protection

These three themes can be thought of as a hierarchy of needs in a space. Without basic protection from cars, noise, rain, and wind, people will avoid spending time in a space. Protection from these things is mandatory for a place to be used.

Protection
against
traffic &
accidents
— feeling safe

Protection
against
crime & violence
— feeling
secure

Protection
against
unpleasant
sensory
experiences



○○○●○○ Look but don't touch

Comfort

Without elements that make walking, standing, sitting, seeing, and conversing comfortable, a place won't invite people to spend time there.

Opportunities
to walk/cycle

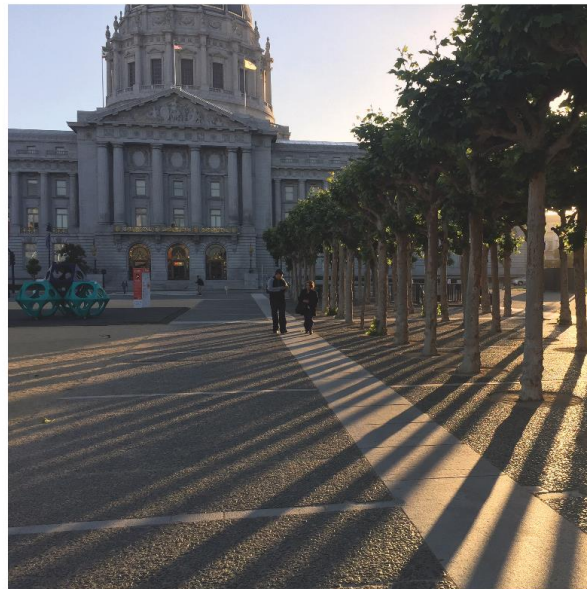
Opportunities
to stop & stay

Opportunities
to sit

Opportunities
to see

Opportunities
to talk & listen

Opportunities for
play & exercise



○○○●○○ Look but don't touch

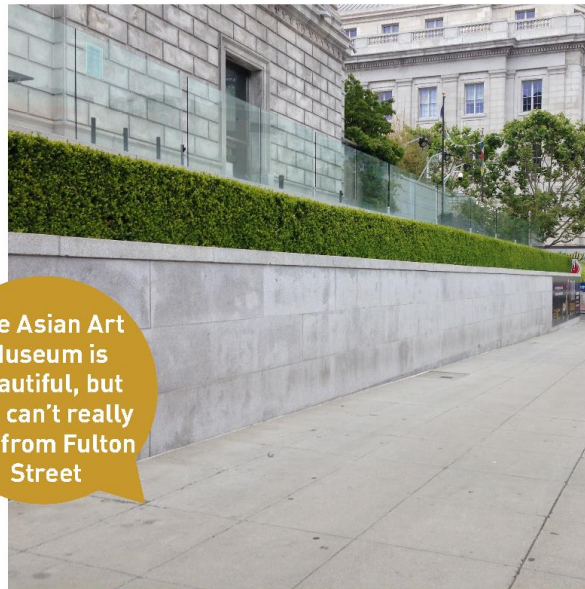
Enjoyment

A great place distinguishes itself from a good place by including elements that invite people to be active and make use of the positive aspects of microclimate and human scale.

Dimensioned at human scale

Opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of climate

Aesthetic qualities + positive sensory experience



○○○●○○ Look but don't touch

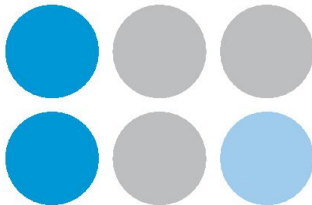
Civic Center Overall

Qualities of seeing and looking are strong in Civic Center, as is aesthetic beauty. But it is falling short on fundamental qualities that make a space inviting for people.

Protection



Comfort



Enjoyment



○○●○○ Look but don't touch

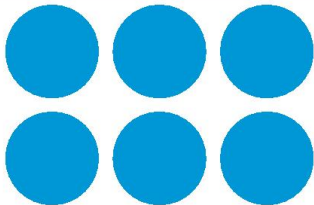
It can be so much better!

Bryant Park provides adequate protection from unpleasant elements, comfort, as well as elements of the human scale, culture, and activation that makes it a delightful place.

Protection



Comfort



Enjoyment



Civic Center
is working
exactly as it
is currently
designed

5

○○○○●○ Civic Center is working exactly as it's designed

Today, Civic Center, is a place to pass through

Is this our highest ambition for our Civic Center? The social issues at play are 'wicked', serious problems - but is the answer to make the space unfriendly to everyone?

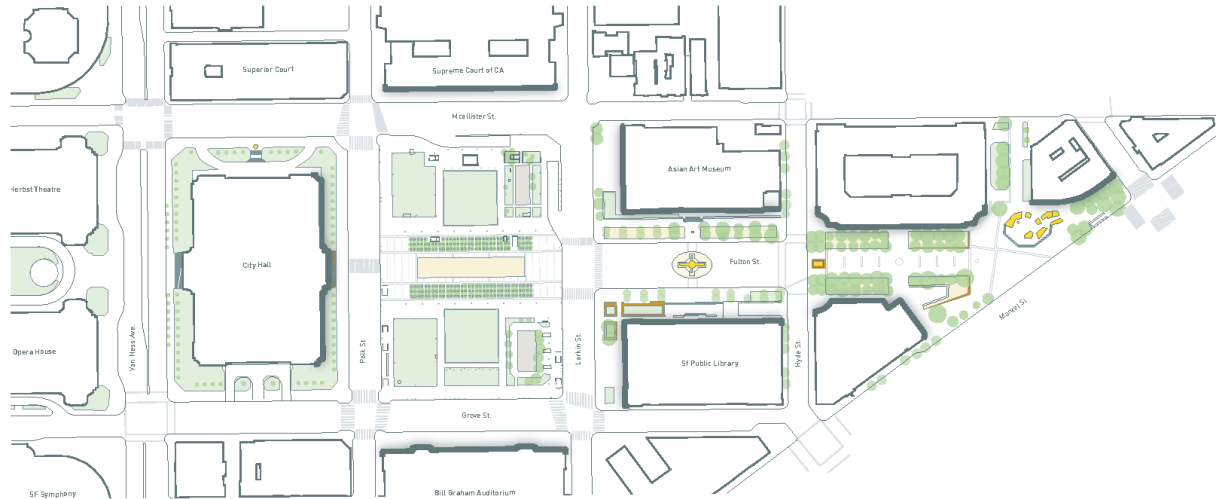


There's room for so much more!

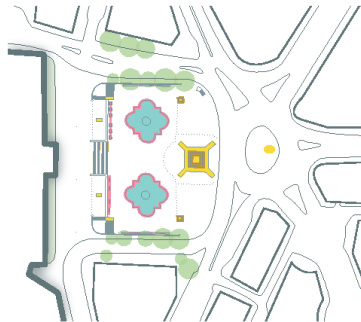


○○○○● There's room for so much more!

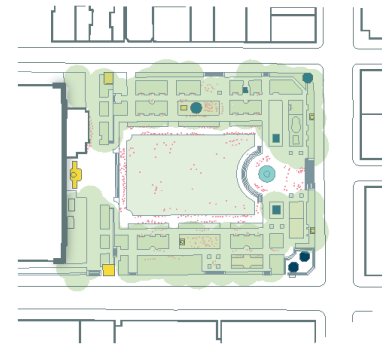
Civic Center



Trafalgar Square



Bryant Park





Public Life Key Findings

**Lots of people
are moving
through Civic
Center**



●○○○○○ Lots of people are moving through Civic Center

In 2016 there were:

15,120 weddings at City Hall

14,148 people on City Hall tours

44,240 people living in the district

1.7 million visiting the Main Library

268,800 people visiting Davies Symphony Hall

269,261 people visiting the Opera House

51,611 people visiting Herbst Theatre

27 street closures

●○○○○○ Lots of people are moving through Civic Center

There are some outstanding peaks

Civic Center Farmer's Market is one of the largest in the city

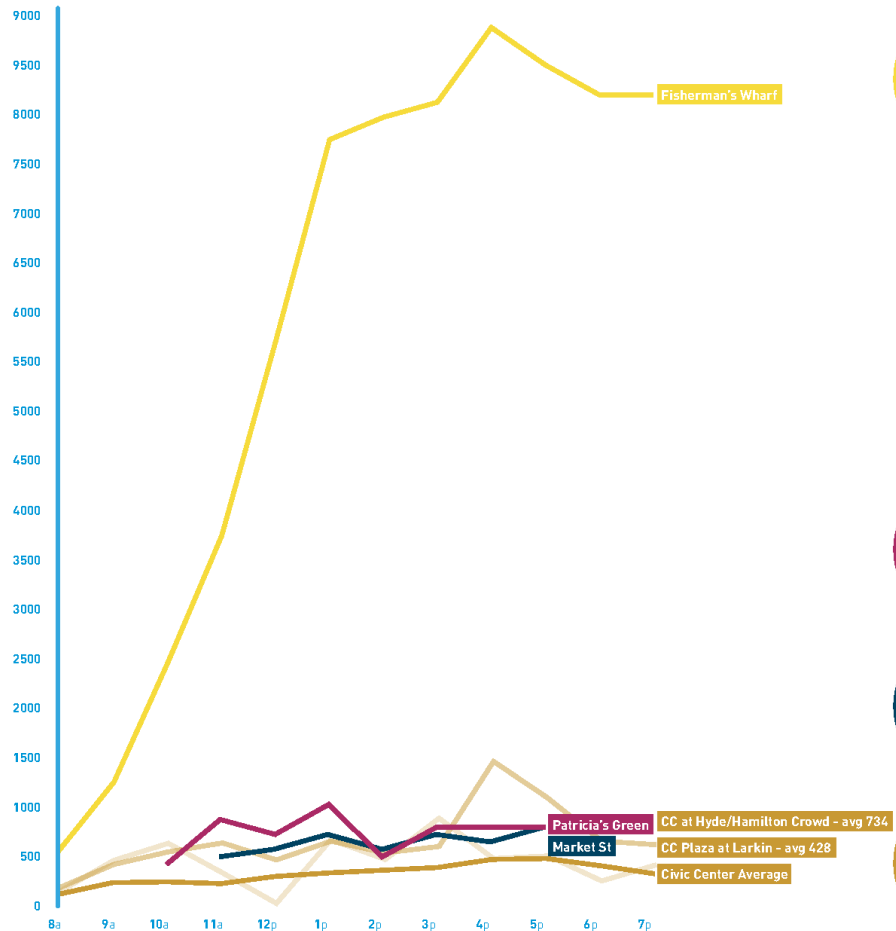


●○○○○○ Lots of people are moving through Civic Center

Still, overall
numbers
of people
moving are
**relatively
low**

Average Pedestrians Moving
per Hour on the Weekend

Average Pedestrians Moving per Hour



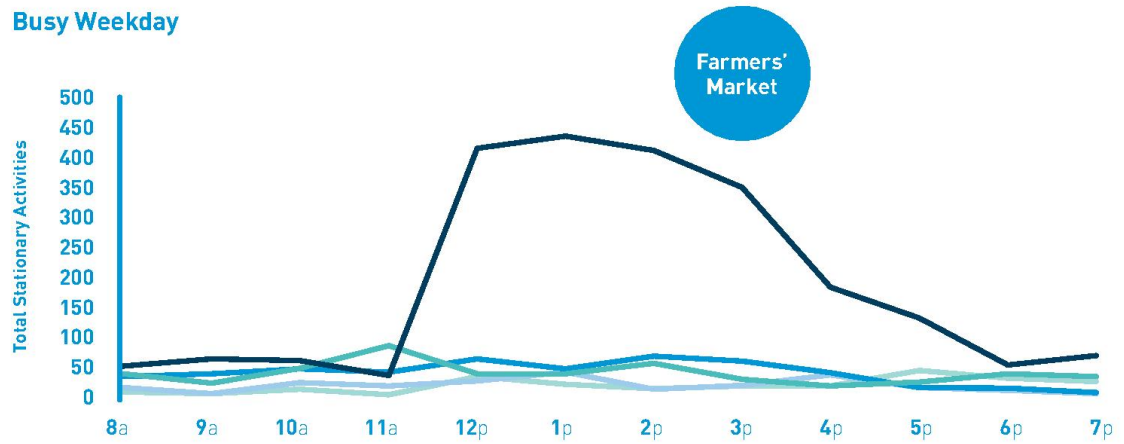
**Big peaks in
activity do
not generate
'spillover'
impacts**

2

●●○○○○ No 'spillover' impacts

There are lots of people coming to the market - but they don't explore or stay longer

Busy Weekday



●●○○○○ No 'spillover' impacts

There are
41 weddings
a day!

...but little
activity in Civic
Center Plaza



●●●●● No 'spillover' impacts

**Big events at
area cultural
institutions
don't activate
the district's
public spaces
outside of
coming and
going.**



○●○○○○ No 'spillover' impacts

A normal weekday is busier than a 'busy' weekend

Average Pedestrian Counts



Each space in
Civic Center
has its own
public life
heartbeat

3

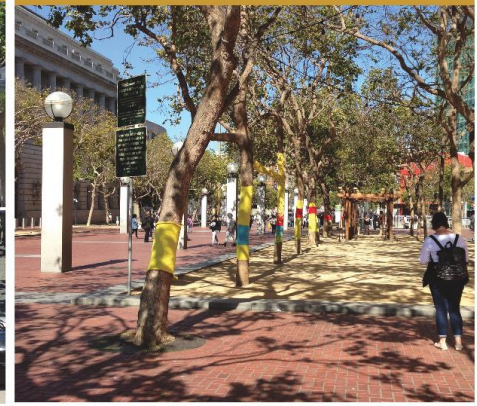
○○●○○○ Each space in Civic Center has its own heart beat

Each space has
its own unique
public life profile

Fulton Street



UN Plaza



Civic Center



Memorial Court + Van Ness

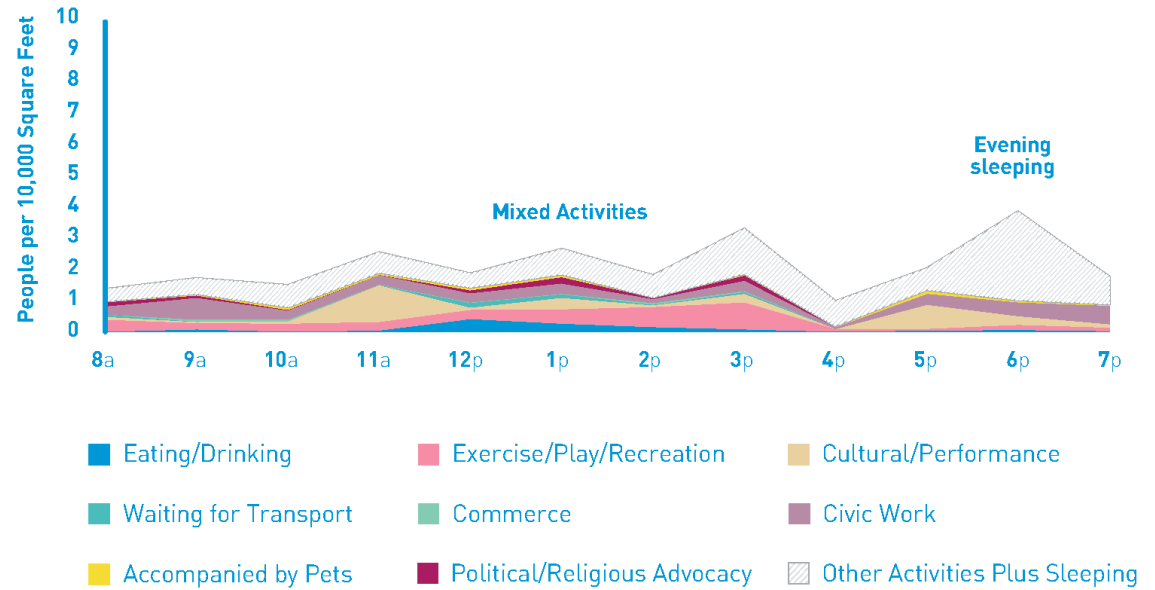


City Hall



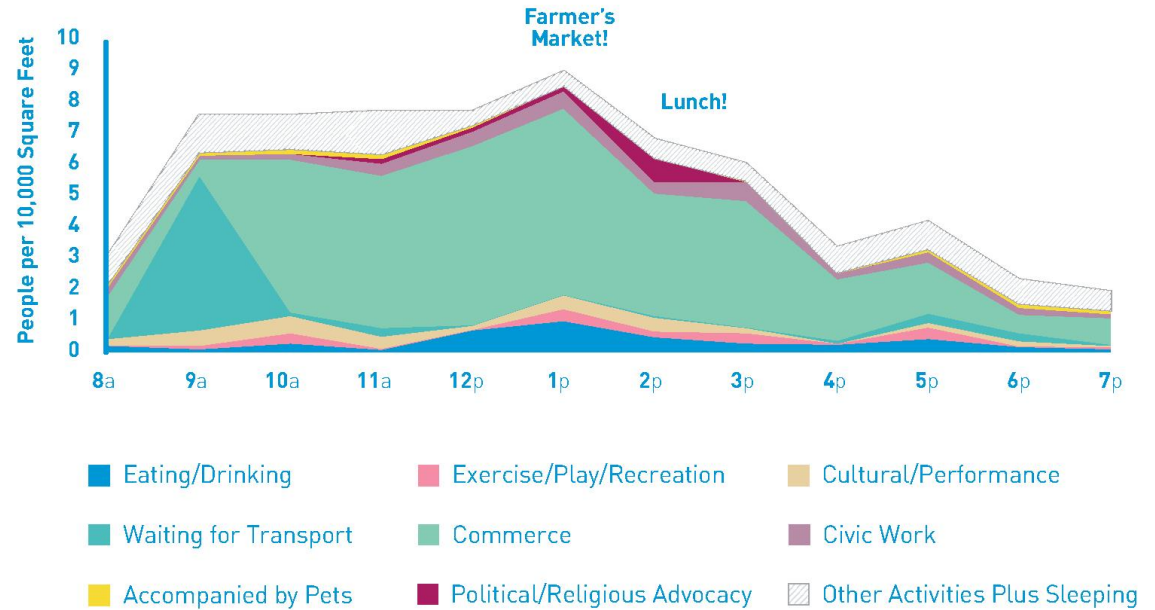
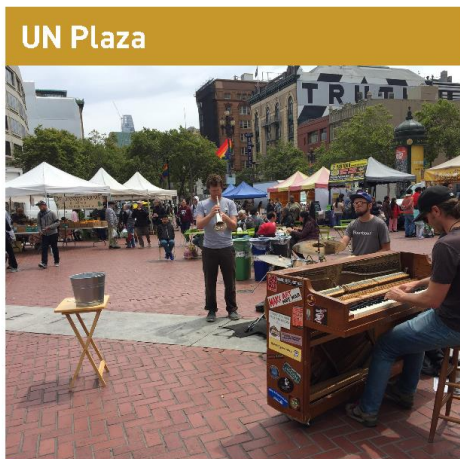
○○●○○○ Each space in Civic Center has its own heart beat

Each space has its own unique public life profile



○○●○○○ Each space in Civic Center has its own heart beat

Each space has its own unique public life profile



Few people sitting in Civic Center



○○●○○ Few people sitting in Civic Center

How are people positioning their bodies?

67%

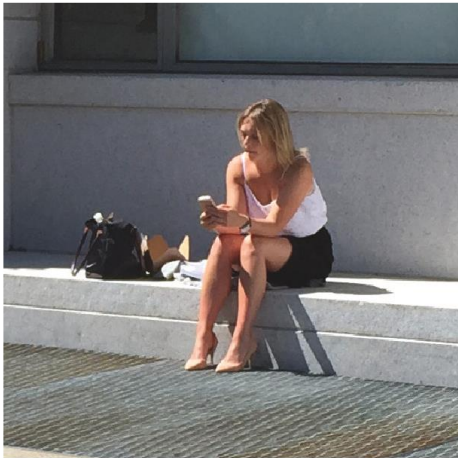
of people were **standing**

22%

of people
were
**sitting on an
improvised
seat**

○○●○○ Few people sitting in Civic Center

an ode to improvised seating



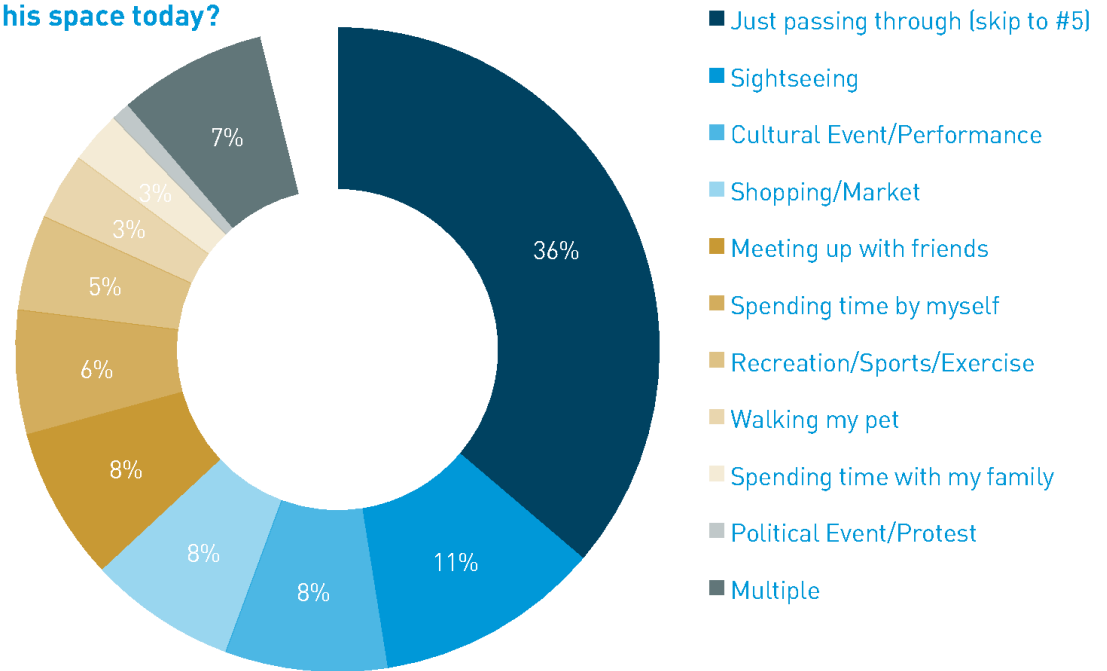
Few people are spending time in Civic Center

5

○○○○●○ Few people are spending time in Civic Center

Most people
are **just
passing
through**

What brings you to
this space today?



**36% of users are
just passing through**

*Intercept Survey

○○○○●○ Few people are spending time in Civic Center

Few people choose to stay

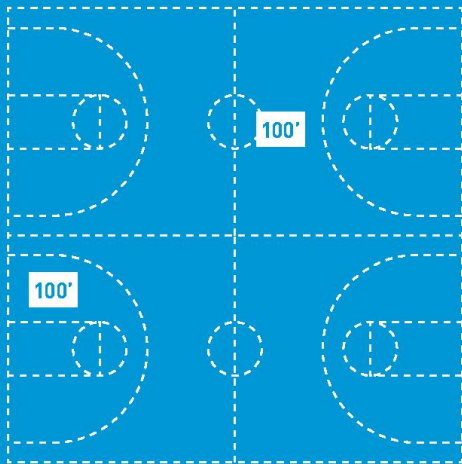
Civic Center has relatively few people moving through the space compared to similar sites - compounding this emptiness, we found that only a small fraction of those moving through decided to stop and stay.

Out of 44 people moving through Civic Center, **only 1 stays.**

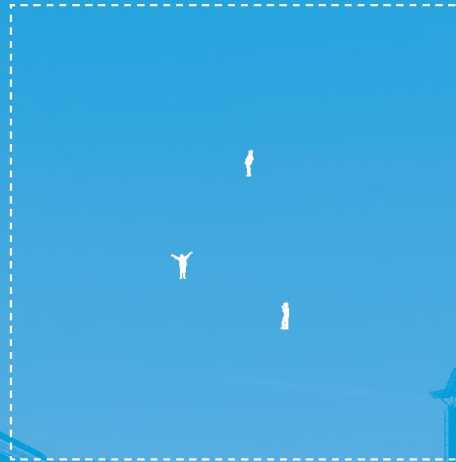
○○○○●○ Few people are spending time in Civic Center

...this feels
very empty

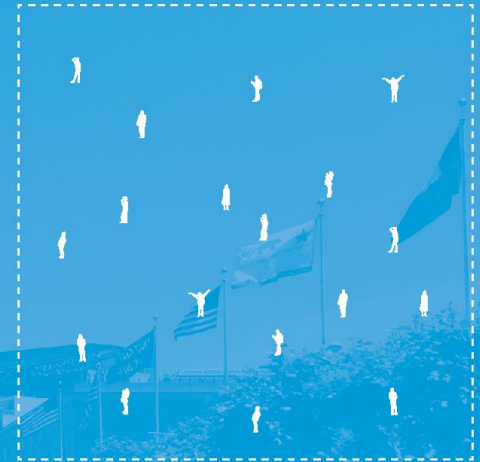
Scale comparison: two basketball courts



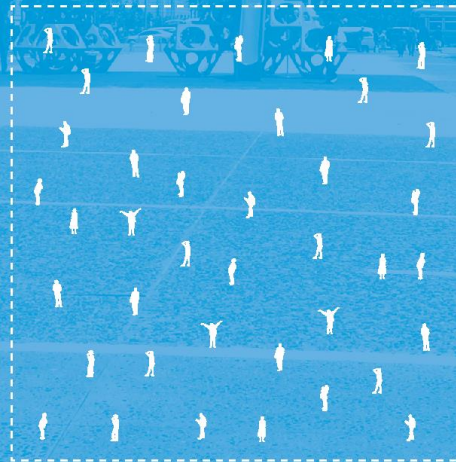
Civic Center ~ 3 per 10ksf



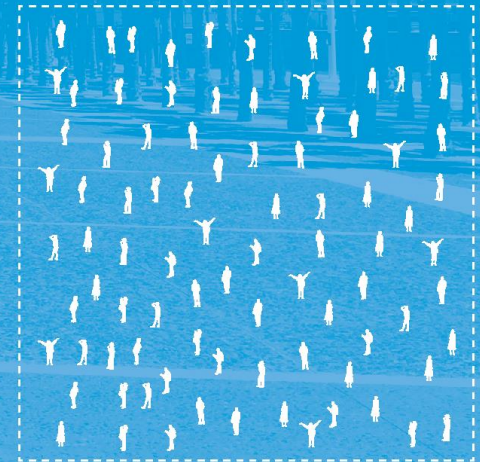
Patricia's Green ~ 18 per 10ksf



Trafalgar Square ~ 39 per 10ksf



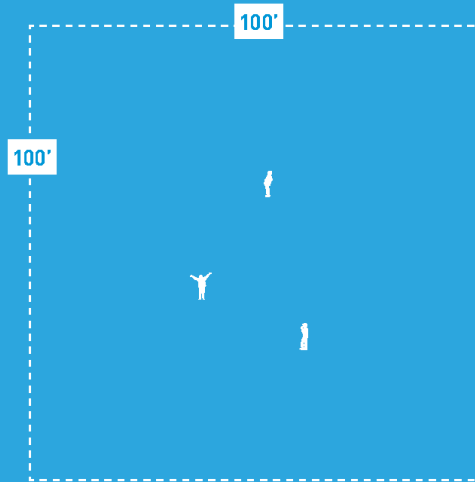
Pier 39 ~ 88 per 10ksf



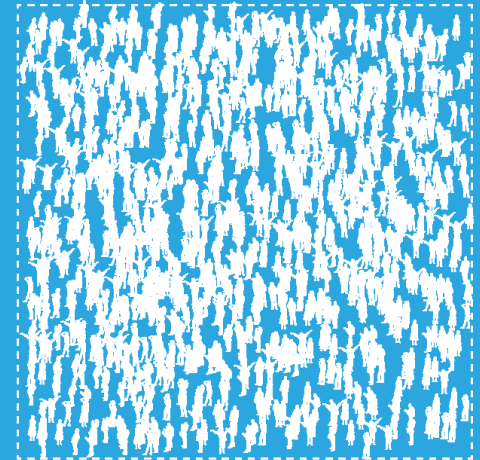
○○○○●○ Few people are spending time in Civic Center

The design
works well
**a few times
per year**

Civic Center - weekday
~ 3 per 10ksf



Civic Center - protest
~ 1,000 per 10ksf

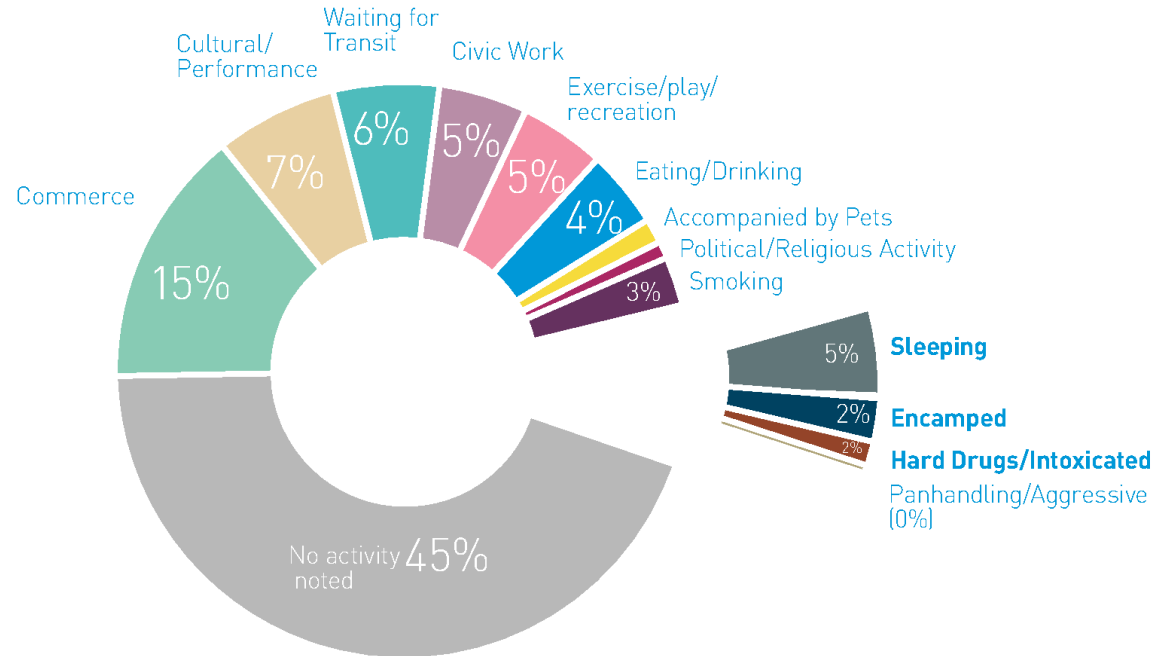


**Activities like
sleeping and
encampments are
not overwhelming
in number, but
have a ripple effect**



Activities like sleeping and encampments are not overwhelming in numbers, but have a **ripple effect**.

9% of all people in the space were **Sleeping, Encamped, doing drugs or intoxicated in public, or panhandling or exhibiting aggressive behavior**



...but they don't have to dominate

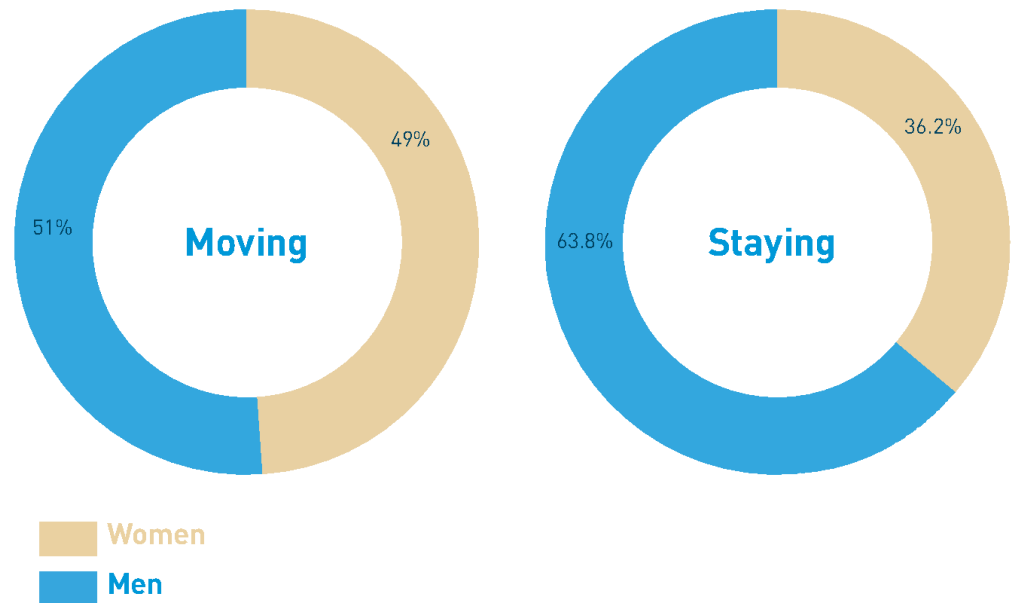
Many successful civic and neighborhood spaces, like Times Square, contain a wide spectrum of public life.

If there are enough invitations for a variety of different people around, these activities don't dominate.



Women do not choose to stay in Civic Center

Civic Center has the raw material for a vibrant public life: Although people moving through Civic Center represent area demographics, Current public life profile **favors men.**



Public Life Highlights

1

Lots of people are moving through Civic Center

2

Big peaks in activity do not generate 'spillover' impacts

3

Each space in Civic Center has its own public life heartbeat

4

Few people sitting in Civic Center

5

Few people spending time in Civic Center

6

Activities like sleeping and encampments are not overwhelming in numbers, but have a ripple effect

Perceptions of the Civic Center Public Realm by its users

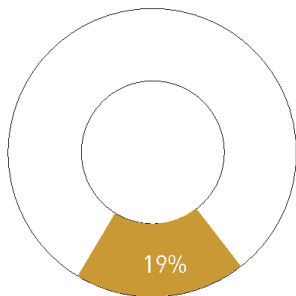
Different users of Civic Center experience the same spaces differently.

In some cases, we found statistically significant differences in the way people perceived the public spaces of Civic Center.



Civic Center as experienced by an Employee

Employees rated Civic Center most negatively compared to other groups. They wanted more ways to spend time in civic center during the day, especially a place to sit at lunch. They focused on positive architectural qualities of the space and often associated homeless with “dirty,” “drugs,” and “unsafe.”



“beautiful but a magnet for drug use; I am not so much neutral but conflicted

“Mixed, Microcosm, Public

“community, lost souls, platform for change

A. What things would you **like to do** in the public spaces of Civic Center that you can't do now?

sit in peace

eat lunch

hang out

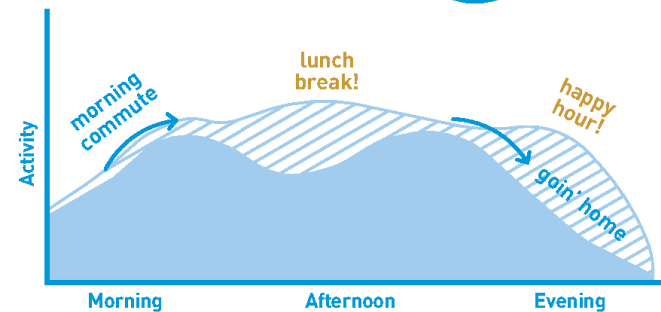
Drink wine, sit

B. What would make you **feel more safe** in this place?

less drugs

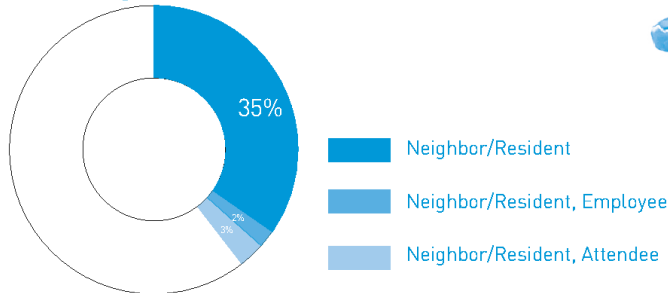
less homeless

cleaner



Civic Center as experienced by a Neighbor

Neighbors, including unhoused people, tended to want more recreational activities. They mentioned the word clean often as well as 'homeless' but not as much in association with 'drugs' or 'unsafe'.



1/4 recognized a person they did not plan to meet

” Neighbors of civic center tended to rate the space more positively



A. What things would you like to do in the public spaces of Civic Center that you can't do now?

play basketball
picnic
art show

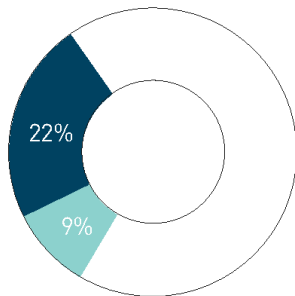
B. What would make you feel more safe in this place?

more people
drugs off the street
bring activities



Civic Center as experienced by a Tourist

Tourists felt the most positively about Civic Center compared to other user groups. They had more positive than negative comments. Special events are 58% tourists.*



Attendee (cultural event or institution)

Tourist



“
By day,
resplendent; by
night, unnerving;
architecturally
stimulating.”

A. What things would you **like to do** in the public spaces of Civic Center that you can't do now?

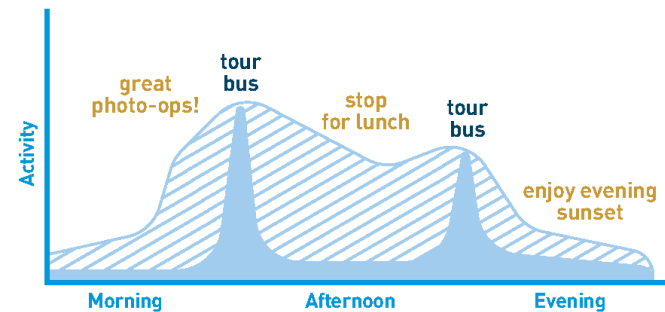
Bath-
room

Festival

More
culture

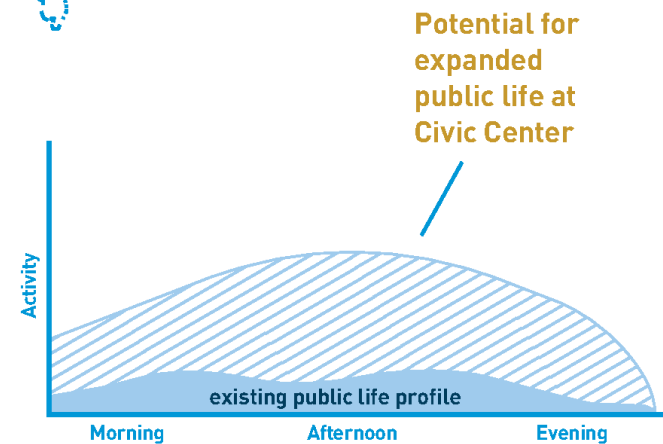
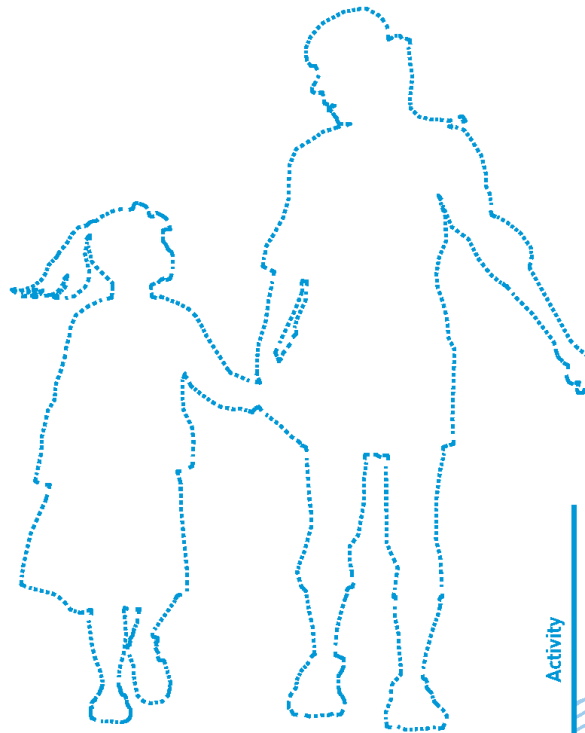
Sit with
wind
break

see more
green,
have food
carts

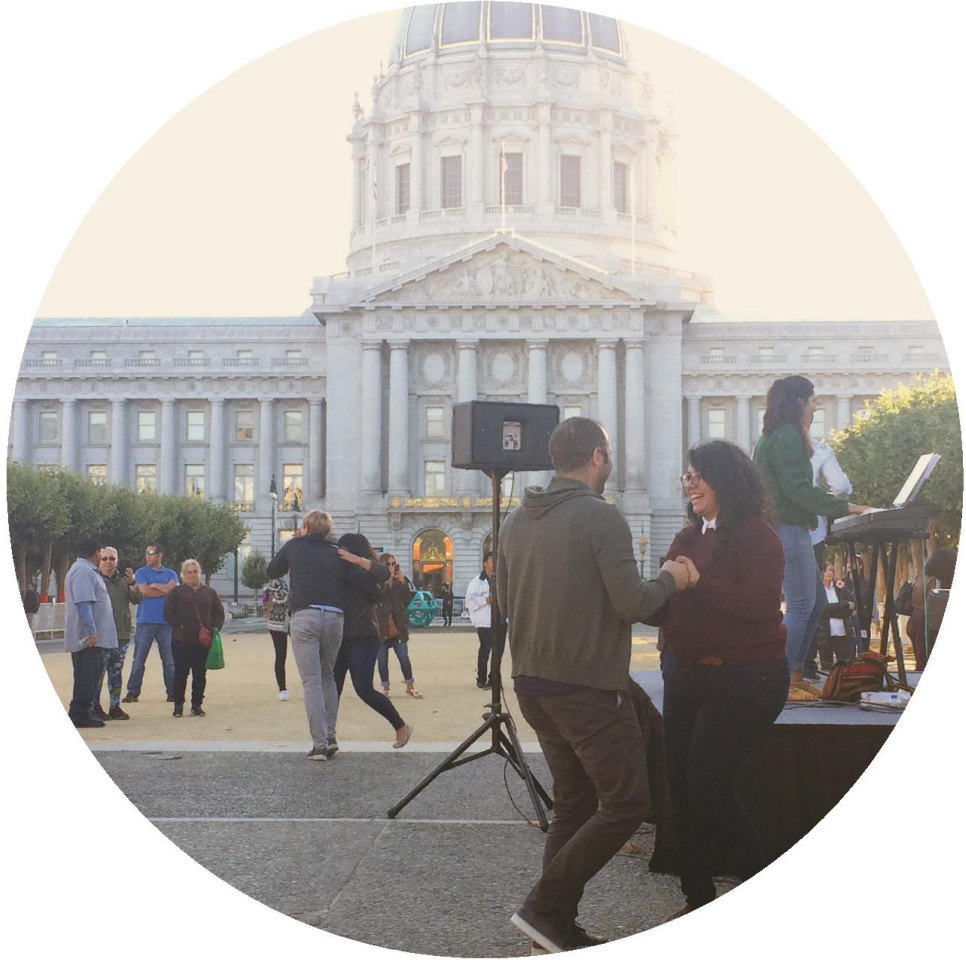


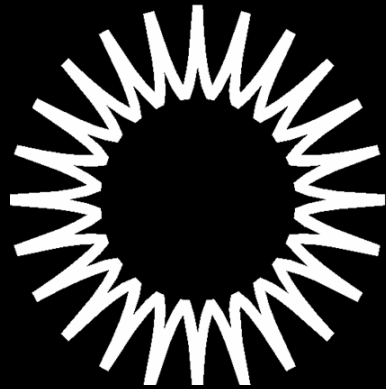
Civic Center as experienced by a **Potential User**

Most of the potential users
of civic center are already
in the district - they just
need to spend more time.



What kind of life do we want to invite in Civic Center?





SPUR

Ideas + Action for a Better City

learn more at SPUR.org

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@SPUR_Urbanist
#PublicSpaceCivicCenter*