

INTERNATIONAL PARKLET SYMPOSIUM

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

April 10 - 12, 2025

LETTER OF WELCOME

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California State Senate

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BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW
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JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET
CHAIR
LEGISLATIVE ETHICS
CHAIR
HEALTH
JUDICIARY
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
PUBLIC SAFETY
JOINT RULES

April 10, 2025

Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2025 International Parklet Symposium hosted in our beautiful city of San Francisco.

This symposium offers a unique opportunity to exchange ideas and learn from one another as we work collaboratively to create public spaces that are inclusive and accessible. Parklets have been a longstanding priority of mine and I am thrilled that this convening is taking place today. I am excited for the showcase of groundbreaking and innovative spaces that San Francisco has implemented, many of which you have played a key role in championing.

Now more than ever, we must strive continually to fulfill the goal of making the Bay Area and our urban centers livable places for all. This work starts right here in the city of San Francisco with gatherings like this symposium. I am deeply grateful for the commitment you have all made to our community. Congratulations to the organizing committee and all participants!

Sincerely,

Scott Wiener

Scott Wiener
Senator, 11th District



City streets have evolved over the last two decades to meet new challenges and complexities. Parklets, pedestrian plazas, open streets celebrations and other interventions have been at the forefront sparking joy and imaginging possibilities for transforming urban places.

***The International Parklet Symposium, California**, held in San Francisco in April 10-12 2025, gathers experts from across North America to exchange ideas for adapting streets to the challenges in the decade to come.*

Parklets and open streets are vital to the future of public space policies, design, implementation, and impact. The Symposium brings together inter-disciplinary and multi-sector experts such as architects and designers, urban planners, policymakers, and community leaders to showcase case studies, host panel discussions and interactive workshops, and foster dialogue around sustainable urbanism and placemaking.

In addition to Proceedings from the program, the Symposium will publish a California Parklet White Paper; which outlines imperatives and opportunities for public policy and programs for transformations of our public realm through re-adaptation of existing infrastructure.

The Symposium offers a platform to shape California's streetscape for a more connected and inclusive future.

SYMPOSIUM THEMES

1 EVALUATING SOCIAL EQUITY AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Frameworks for managing and/or funding parklet and other public space programs to achieve social equity outcomes. Research, documentation and storytelling initiatives that look at measurable and perceived impacts—how parklets and open streets affect social cohesion, mobility, local businesses, property values, and pedestrian circulation in communities.

2 CATALYSTS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COHESION

Explore how parklets serve as community gathering spaces, promoting local businesses, and enhancing urban life. Topics could include case studies of bottom-up implementation through community initiatives, strategies for inclusive design, creative placemaking and art interventions, and storytelling to create, sustain and advocate for parklets.

3 INTERSECTION OF ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MATERIALS

Encourage innovative designs that address challenges such as limited space, accessibility, cost-effectiveness, ease of maintenance, aesthetic appeal, and local regulations. This could also invite creative ways of using materials or integrating technology. Development of design guidelines, manuals, and technical specifications are also critical.

Version 4/25/25

4 SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY: INTEGRATING WALKABILITY, CYCLING, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The role of parklets in achieving street safety outcomes; like Vision Zero programs and compact communities that support human-powered mobility through enhancing pedestrian safety, connecting with bike infrastructure, and encouraging alternative forms of transport.

5 POLICY AND PARTNERSHIPS: ENABLING PROJECTS IN THE PUBLIC REALM

Innovations in Policy and regulatory frameworks; especially as the result of collaboration between cities, businesses, artists, and community groups. Current opportunities and challenges for investment in parklets and ideas around the economics of parklet development and maintenance. Transition of individual sites and/or municipal programs – from temporary or pilot to permanent – are also important; for example with legislation, code changes, or program development.



INTERNATIONAL PARKLET SYMPOSIUM: CALIFORNIA

Symposium Co-Chairs:
Robin Abad Ocubillo (City of Oakland) and Shruti Shankar (Studio 111)

Program Committee:
John Bela (Bela Urbanism), Monica Munowitch (SFMTA), Ilaria Salvadori (SF Planning)

Advisors:
Blaine Merker (Gehl) and Luisa Bravo (The Museum of Public Space)

Production Team:
Michael Brentlinger, Jitka Dekojova, Carolyn Hyunh, Janet Le, Jitka Dekojova, Lawrence Li, Aubrey Littleton, Ellina Poltavtseva, Sophia Teng, Jensen Zack

Website: https://centersf.org/ca-parklet-symposium/
Email: parkletstudies@gmail.com

Co-presenting Partners:

Park(ing) Day

MUSEO SPAZIO PUBBLICO bologna

studioneleven

CENTER FOR ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

AIA San Francisco

SPUR

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PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

01 THURSDAY APRIL 10

Center for Architecture & Design
140 Sutter Street

8.30 - 9.00	Registration, Coffee and Refreshments
9.00 - 9.45	Welcome Remarks & Convocation
9.45 - 10.45	Opening Keynote: Origins & Legacies
11.00 - 12.00	Session 1: Design
12.00 - 1.00	Group Photo . Lunch Service
1.00 - 2.00	Session 2: Policy & Planning
2.15 - 3:15	Session 3: Open Streets Across California
3.30 - 4:30	Closing Keynotes: Urban Prototypes
04:30 - 4:45	Closing Remarks

Gehl - San Francisco Office
207 Powell St Suite 6

5.30 - 7.00	Welcome Reception, Happy Hour and Place Games!

02 FRIDAY APRIL 11

SPUR: Urban Center
654 Mission Street

8.30 - 9.00	Reception, Coffee and Refreshments
9.00 - 9.15	Opening Keynote: What's the Cost to the City?
9.15 - 10.15	Session 5: Balancing Community & Commerce
10.30 - 11.30	Session 6: Access & Equity
11.30 - 12.30	Session 7: Parallel Workshops
12.30 - 1.30	Group Photo Lunch Service & Session 8: Pecha Kuchas
1.30 - 2.30	Session 9: Community-Generated Activation
2.30 - 3.30	Session 10: Open Lots are Open Season
3.45 - 4.15	Closing Keynote: Play Streets
4.15 - 4.30	Closing Remarks

Various Locations

4.30 - 6.00	Parallel Field trips

400 Block of Hayes Street / ANINA

6.00 - 8.00	*Friday Night Street Closure*

PROXY SF
432 Octavia Blvd and Hayes Street

8.00 - 10.00	*Optional Outdoor screening of "Crossing"*

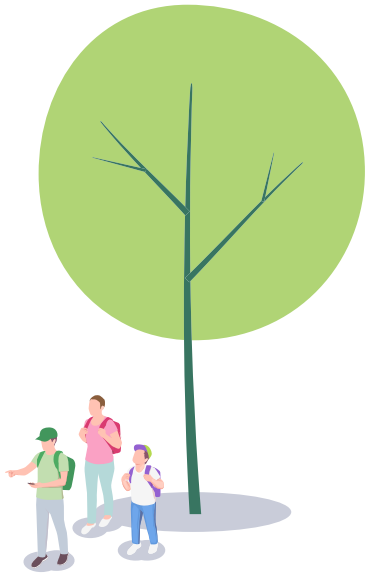
03 SATURDAY APRIL 12

SPUR Urban Center
654 Mission Street

9.30 - 10.00	Reception, Coffee & Refreshments
10.00 - 10.30	Opening Keynote: The Bologna Parklet Manifesto
10.30 - 11.30	Breakout Development Sessions: The California White Paper
11.30 - 12.30	Closing Plenary: Small-Group Report-Out.
12.30 - 1.00	Closing Remarks

Great Highway Park
Ocean Beach, From Lincoln Blvd to Sloat Blvd

all afternoon	*Optional Opening Celebration*



SESSION OUTLINES

WELCOME REMARKS

DAY 1

9 AM - 9.45 AM
Main Lecture Hall
Center for Architecture + Design

Shruti Shankar & Robin Abad Ocubillo, Symposium Co-Chairs

Joaquin Torres, Assesor-Recorder, City and County of San Francisco

Laurie Thomas, President, Golden Gate Restaurant Association

Myrna Melgar, Chair Land Use and Transportaton Committee, San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Rafael Mandelman, President, San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Luisa Bravo, Director, Museum of Punblic Space, Bologna

OPENING PLENARY & KEYNOTES

DAY 1

9.45 AM - 10.45 AM
Main Lecture Hall, Center for Architecture + Design
Chair: Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher
Presentations, Panel Discussion, and Audience Q&A

Keynotes: The origins, legacy, and state Of Parklets Today.
Blaine Merker, Robin Abad Ocubillo, and John Bela

Plenary Panel: Blaine Merker, John Bela and Robin Abad



SESSION 1

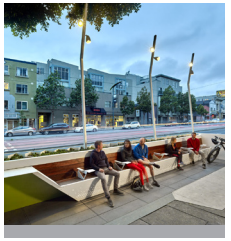
PARKLETS & DESIGN

DAY 1

11 AM - 12 PM
Main Lecture Hall, Center for Architecture + Design
Chair: Nataly Gattegno
Presentations, Panel Discussion, and Audience Q&A



Experiments in Building Curbside Community: Pioneering Parklets in Southern California
Kirk Keller
Principal
Studio One Eleven



The 3rd Street Flashlight Parklet // When is small huge?
Pete Frankel
Principal/Landscape Architect
Bionic



Transforming the Curb: Examining San Francisco's Parklet Typologies and Unique Designs
Brian Manford and Kelly Albers
Senior/Transportation Planner
SFMTA

GROUP PHOTO

12 PM
Main Lecture Hall, Center for Architecture + Design

SESSION 2

POLICY & PLANNING

DAY 1

1 PM - 2 PM
Main Lecture Hall, Center for Architecture + Design
Chair: Monica Munowitch
Presentations, Panel Discussion, and Audience Q&A



From Emergency to Enduring—Transitioning Parklets into Permanent Part of San Francisco's Streetscape

Monica Munowitch
Shared Spaces Program Manager
SFMTA



Navigating Parklet Implementation in Arlington County: Legal, Design, Social and Policy Perspectives

Inumidun Obikoya
Principal Planner
Arlington County Government



Scaling Up the Linear: Bringing New Energy to SF's Corridors

Julie Flynn
Principal, Street Plans
Stella Kim
Associate, Sitelab Urban Studio
Amy Cohen
Business Generation Manager,
Port of San Francisco



SESSION 3

OPEN STREETS ACROSS CALIFORNIA

DAY 1

2.15 PM - 3.15 PM
Main Lecture Hall, Center for Architecture + Design
Chair: Manny Yekutiel
Presentations, Panel Discussion, and Audience Q&A



Why Every City Needs An Open Streets Program

Ed Solis
Founder, Open Space Allies LLC
Former Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, City of San Jose, CA



CicLAvia - Reshaping Los Angeles one street at a time

Rachel Burke
Chief Program Officer
CicLAvia



Doom Loop Disco

Katy Birnbaum
Founder, CEO
Into the Streets

SESSION 4

CLOSING KEYNOTES

DAY 1

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM
Main Lecture Hall, Center for Architecture + Design
Chair: Shruti Shankar
Presentations, Panel Discussion, and Audience Q&A



Parklets 2.0: Transforming Streets into Vibrant Community Spaces

Kristoffer Vestre
Chairman & Director of Americas
Vestre



Pop-Ups, Prototypes, and People St

Rob Berry
Principal
Berry and Linne
Daveed Kapoor
Director
Utopiad



Transforming Public Spaces in West Hollywood

Ric Abramson
City Architect; Urban Design & Architecture Studio Manager
City of West Hollywood, CA

CLOSING REMARKS

DAY 1

4:30 PM - 4:45 PM
Main Lecture Hall, Center for Architecture + Design

Shruti Shankar & Robin Abad Ocubillo, Symposium Co-Chairs
Nataly Gattegno, Monica Munowith, Manny Yekutiel; Session Chairs

WELCOME RECEPTION

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
Gehl - San Francisco Office, 207 Powell St Suite 6

WELCOME REMARKS & OPENING KEYNOTE

DAY 2

9 AM - 9:15 AM
SPUR Urban Center

John Bela, Founder, Bela Urbanism

Keynote: The money question, what's the parklet cost to the City?
Oscar Suastegui Quintero

SESSION 5

BALANCING COMMUNITY & COMMERCE IN THE CURB LANE

DAY 2

9:15 AM - 10:15 AM
SPUR Urban Center
Chair: John Bela
Presentations, Panel Discussion, and Audience Q&A



Streateries as a Tool for Safety

Kimberly Vacca
Public Space Activation Coordinator
District Dept of Transportation (DDOT)



Realizing that Rules Ruin Fun – Seattle Journey in Outdoor Dining.

Joel Miller
Program Development Supervisor for Public Space Management
Seattle DOT

SESSION 6

ACCESS & EQUITY

DAY 2

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM
SPUR Urban Center
Chair: Cristy Johnston-Limon
Presentations, Panel Discussion, and Audience Q&A



Co-creating community-serving public spaces in Vancouver, Canada's Downtown Eastside

Belinda Chan
Public Space Planner
City of Vancouver (Canada)



Streetscapes for Wellness: Stewarding Social and Environmental Justice

Jenna Miller
Director, Urban Design & Policy
NYC Public Design Commission, NYC Office of the Mayor



Seeing is Believing: Advocating for Permanent Change in Nashville

Veronica Foster
Communications + Advocacy Manager
Civic Design Center

WORKSHOP SESSION 7A

DAY 2

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
SPUR Urban Center (2nd Floor)



Pedagogical parklets for infants and toddlers

Elizabeth Gómez Ibarra
Project Design Manager-Placemaker
CDE Studios-Ortopedia Urbana
Jean Carlo Aranda Reyes
Strategic Design-Comunications
CDE Studios-Ortopedia Urbana

WORKSHOP SESSION 7B

DAY 2

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
SPUR Urban Center (4th Floor)



Reimagining Open Spaces in Dense Urban Areas: Lower Nob Hill, SF

Rohit Tak
Associate: Planning and Urban Design
WRT Design
Elijah Ball
Urban Designer

GROUP PHOTO

12:30 PM
Outside, in front of the SPUR Urban Center

SESSION 8

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM
SPUR Urban Center
Chair: Ellina Poltavtseva
Pecha Kucha Presentations

PECHA KUCHAS

DAY 2



San Francisco: City of Awe
Ben Davis
Founder and Chief Visionary Officer, Illuniate the Arts



Big Wheel (Keep on Turnin')
Connie Tran and Vlad Amiot
Center for Civilization at the University of Calgary



International Comparions & Contrasts
Peter Mueller
American Institute of Architects, California



Harvey Milk Plaza: Public Space as Citizen
Brian Springfield
Executive Director, Friends of Harvey Milk Plaza



Parklets as Pedagogy for Youth Development
Raffaella Falchi Macias
Executive Director, Youth Art Exchange

SESSION 9

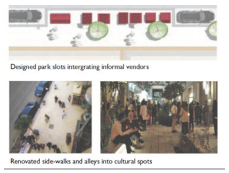
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM
SPUR Urban Center
Chair: Ilaria Salvadori
Presentations, Panel Discussion, and Audience Q&A

COMMUNITY-GENERATED ACTIVATION

DAY 2



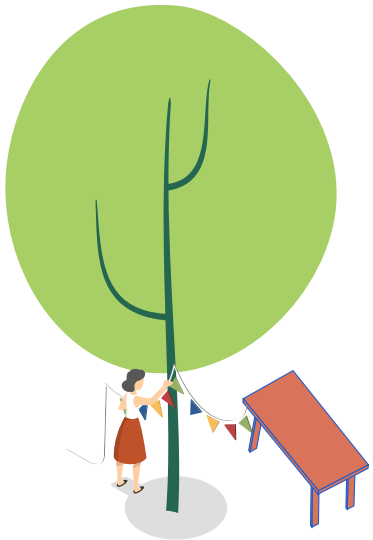
Building Blocks: A New Vision for Parklets in San Francisco
Hoh Chen
Program Manager, SF New Deal
John Bela
Founder, Bela Urbanism



Spatial Agency for Complex Paradoxical Societies' Conviviality
Shaden Elgalaly
University College, London



Public Space Initiatives in the Tenderloin: case studies in community-driven collaboration
Ilaria Salvadori
Senior Urban Designer, San Francisco Planning Department
Tolu Sydney Atoyebi
Urban Planner
San Francisco Planning Department

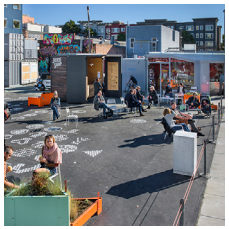


SESSION 10

OPEN LOTS ARE OPEN SEASON

DAY 2

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM
SPUR Urban Center
Chair: Kelly Varian
Presentations, Panel Discussion, and Audience Q&A



PROXY: from Parking Lot to Park Plus

Douglas Burnham
Founding Partner
Envelope A+D, PROXYSF



Kapwa Gardens: Cultivating Community Engagement and Urban Cohesion

Desi Danganan
Executive Director
KULTIVATE LABS



The Role of Urban Public Space in Reimagining Downtown

Andrew Robinson
Executive Director
The East Cut

SESSION 11

CLOSING KEYNOTE

DAY 2

3:45 PM - 4:15 PM
SPUR Urban Center



Designing for Play and Gender Equity: How Play Streets Inspire More Inclusive Public Spaces

Ross Hansen
Design Coordinator
Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI)
Naria Kiani
Senior Associate
Fehr & Peers (formerly KDI)

CLOSING PLENARY

DAY 2

4:15 PM - 4:30 PM
SPUR Urban Center

Shruti Shankar and Robin Abad Ocubillo, Symposium Co-Chairs
John Bela, Cristy Johnston-Limon, Ilaria Salvadori, Kelly Varian;
Session Chairs



FIELD TRIPS/ SITE VISITS

4:30 PM - 6 PM
Various Locations

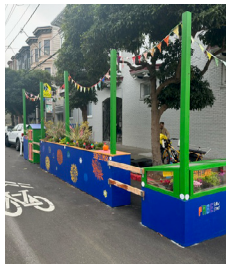
DAY 2



Places Remade: Dogpatch Public Spaces
David Fletcher
Founder & Principal
Fletcher Studio
Kelly Johnson
Board of Directors
Dogpatch Northwest Potrero Green Benefit District



Activation and transformation through art
Ben Davis
Founder and Director
Illuminate the Arts



Valencia Street Bikeway: Improving Safety and Preserving Parklets
Brian Manford
Senior Transportation Planner
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
Shayda Rager
Senior Transportation Planner

OPENING PLENARY

10:00 AM - 10:30 AM
Main Hall, SPUR Urban Center

DAY 3

The Parklet Manifesto
Bela, Bravo, Abad, Salvadori & Shankar

Orientation to the California White Paper Structure & Workshops

WHITE PAPER DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

DAY 3

Group 1: Social Equity & Economic Impacts (1st Floor Rear)

Group 2: Community Engagement & Cohesion (1st Floor Front Lounge)

Group 3: Engineering, Design, & Materials (1st Floor Conference Room)

Group 4: Safe & Sustainable Mobility (2nd Floor Main Hall)

Group 5: Policy & Partnerships (2nd Floor Main Hall)

PLENARY SESSION

11:30 AM - 12:30 AM
Main Hall, SPUR Urban Center
White Paper Report Out
Closing Remarks

DAY 3



PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS



Big Wheel (keep on turnin'): Temporary street furniture as urban performance

Connie Tran, Volodymyr (Vlad) Amiot
Day 2, Session 5

Originally installed as a tactical urbanism intervention for Park(ing) Day 2024, Big Wheel creates a whimsical addition to the public realm while critically commenting on car culture. It also reimagines how temporary urban infrastructures might move through, and be deployed in, the city.

As a design strategy, the installation mirrors the elements of Rebar's original 2005 guerrilla occupation of a parking spot in downtown San Francisco. However, it reimagines each element using the language of vehicular infrastructure: traffic cones become the trunk and leaves of a sculptural tree that acts as an urban landmark; a tire becomes bench seating that curves to encourage face-to-face interaction; and city play mats become a lawn for kids to run around. Scale, colour, patterns, and graphics are used to evoke the lightheartedness and nostalgia of youth while subtly making a statement about the naïveté of society's obsession with the private automobile. As such, the installation is critically positioned relative to its contexts, but it is also welcoming of a variety of age groups and demographics who might use the installation in different ways, including as a playground, as a resting place, or as a conversation pit. With its distinctively playful design language, it creates a unique sense of place that brings out the inner child in all of us.

The name "Big Wheel" refers to the ability of the seating elements to be reconfigured in the shape of a six-foot-tall tire, simultaneously referencing the aesthetics of children's toys, automobile parts, rural farm equipment, and the otherworldly scale of fossil fuel extraction machinery, referencing its Albertan context. The physical transformation of the bench into a circle allows it to be transported by rolling through the city without the need for vehicular support. In a twist of automotive convention, this tire is transported by humans. The bench takes a mundane design criterion – the ability to be transported to site – and uses it as the basis for a design that is sustainable, eliminating reliance on fossil fuels for transport, as well as performative, engendering a theatre of the street. Just as Park(ing) Day rescripts the space of the parking spot, Big Wheel rescripts the sidewalk as a space not just for pedestrians but also for everyday urban spectacles of all kinds. Once on site, Big Wheel is disassembled and the seating elements rearranged into various potential configurations. When temporary urban infrastructure is required elsewhere in the city, Big Wheel is reassembled, rolled to its next destination, and redeployed.

Big Wheel successfully combines various imperatives to create a joyful, distinctive, welcoming, and sustainable take on placemaking. More broadly, the project acts as a prototype for innovative and playful approaches to the design and deployment of temporary urban infrastructures.



Building Blocks: A New Vision for Parklets in San Francisco

Hoh Chen, John Bela
Day 2, Session 6A

During the pandemic, when indoor gathering was restricted, the City of San Francisco authorized the quick construction of parklets and outdoor dining areas, dubbed Shared Spaces. Beloved by both businesses and the public, hundreds were constructed in the early days of the pandemic.

Although the program served as a lifeline for small businesses, transitioning the temporary program to a legislated process proved challenging: costly and complex to businesses, and with a heavy compliance and staffing burden on permitting agencies.

Over the past 2 years, SF New Deal has worked in partnership with the City of San Francisco as a grantmaking and technical assistance partner to help small businesses navigate the compliance process. Our work has also focussed on activation and beautification, supporting operators in realizing the great potential of their Shared Spaces.

As SF New Deal has worked in close partnership with both the City and small businesses, our team has come to understand the core challenges associated with Shared Spaces. For the continued success of the program, it's critical to:
1. Lower the barrier of entry for small business participation in the program,
2. Introduce a collective management and governance model for stewardship, and
3. Develop a program model that balances both commercial and community uses.

SF New Deal, in partnership with Bela Urbanism, has launched Building Blocks, a pilot program focussed on addressing these core considerations. Through the pilot, SF New Deal will oversee the design, construction, operation and maintenance of Building Block parklets, taking on the responsibility for creating dynamic, community-focused and business-serving spaces.

Using a leasing model to partner with participating small businesses, SF New Deal will handle everything from permitting to maintenance, so it's easy for small businesses to participate in creating vibrant commercial corridors and welcoming community gathering places. Building Blocks will create a dynamic, kit-of-parts based solution for parklets in San Francisco that is capable of streamlining design, implementation, and maintenance.

Through this session, and associated site visit to our first Building Blocks parklet at Excelsior Coffee, our team will:
1. Present on our findings and learning from our work in partnership with the City on challenges and opportunities in navigating a phased, compliance-based process for parklets.
2. Share best practices from our work focussed on activating parklets through our arts and culture based granting program.
3. Introduce Building Blocks and its approach to creating a sustainable, dynamic and high performing future for the parklets in San Francisco.



CicLAvia - reshaping Los Angeles one street at a time

Rachel Burke
Day 1, Session 3

At CicLAvia, we view public space as an ideal hub for community members to gather, engage in healthy activities, and exchange ideas that promote human and environmental well-being. Our events bring together people, local businesses, and civic organizations to transform relationships within communities and inspire lasting, positive change in the urban landscape.

CicLAvia is a nonprofit organization dedicated to reshaping how Los Angeles residents view and use streets as public spaces. By reimagining streets, we encourage people to move away from a car-centered lifestyle, foster engagement with the urban environment, and celebrate the region's diverse cultures. We envision a Los Angeles where everyone feels safe and has a sense of belonging.

Since 2010, CicLAvia has hosted 59 open street events across the Los Angeles region. These events temporarily close streets to car traffic, transforming them into public parks for Angelenos to enjoy for the day. CicLAvia Sundays feature activities, street games, local business engagements, and cultural events for all ages, inspiring participants to rethink their urban environment and advocate for bike- and pedestrian-friendly streets and public spaces in the long term.

CicLAvia events offer attendees a chance to experience their urban environment in a new light: as a public park, with ample space for biking, walking, shade, seating, and other activities. A key long-term goal is to inspire residents to rethink how streets can be used, ultimately transforming them into safe and inclusive spaces where everyone feels welcome.

For CicLAvia, success means encouraging people to improve individual and community health by reconsidering car-centric lifestyles and reimagining the urban landscape. According to Metro Los Angeles, people who attend open street events like CicLAvia are more likely to ride bikes and explore public transit options. Additionally, over 50% of CicLAvia attendees report they would have been inactive if not for the event. Research also shows that businesses along CicLAvia routes experience a significant increase in sales on event days, highlighting the positive social and economic impact on neighborhoods.

CicLAvia strives to help Angelenos envision and create a vibrant city filled with livable urban spaces. Our large-scale events provide a model for how streets can be transformed into civic spaces, motivating attendees to get involved in making their neighborhoods more bikeable, walkable, and livable.



Designing for Play and Gender Equity: How Play Streets Inspire More Inclusive Public Spaces

Naria Kiani, Ross Hansen
Day 2, Closing Keynote

Play streets can offer more than temporary moments of joy — they can be a blueprint for designing more equitable, inclusive public spaces. This presentation explores how gender and play theory intersect with built environment design, highlighting how play streets can disrupt traditional planning, design and development and inspire longer-term changes.
We'll share lessons from real-world play street implementations, focusing on the design challenges and solutions that emerged. In addition, we will share gender-inclusive design projects focused on public space. The session will highlight the Play Streets Kit of Parts, demonstrating how adaptable, intentional design elements can make public spaces more accessible, welcoming, and joyful for people of all ages, genders, and abilities.

Session Takeaways:
Understand the role of play in public space equity: Explore how play streets challenge traditional spatial hierarchies and foster belonging.
Identify design barriers and solutions: Learn how built environment choices can unintentionally exclude and how adaptable, modular design can help overcome these challenges.
Design-deep dive: "Unpack" the Play Streets Kit of Parts, a collection of elements that support





Doom Loop Disco

Katy Birnbaum
Day 1, Session 3

Cities specifically, San Francisco, are where I met and live happily with my wife. Cities are where I have not only found a way to live, but helped me discover my professional calling as a community organizer and cultural event producer.

Cities are where I have been delighted by meeting new people and learning about different cultures and ways of living other than my own. SF has also been real world gymnasium to strengthen the values that I believe in most - celebrating the diversity of humanity, being kind to your neighbors and those in need, and learning how to better care for myself and the planet.

My belief in cities is why I started Into The Streets - to help the place that I love so much rebuild more resiliently and in a way that will support its biggest boosters - the culture makers like myself, artists, small businesses, and minority communities who make San Francisco so special.

Into The Streets is a culture production studio that specializes in bringing civic community and cultural events to the streets at scale.

I chose civic events because I am also a strong believer that the lack of shared experiences due to our social media usage and siloed lifestyles are helping feed toxic divisions that are putting our society, democracy and planet in peril.

I also believe that intentional civic events can be an antidote to this trend by giving people a space to experience others in a positive way. These joyous shared experiences can build empathy, dispel misconceptions, inspire kindness, and create community and belonging.

Into The Streets was the first organization to bring a large scale event to downtown upon a call from the city to activate public spaces after the pandemic. Bhangra & Beats Night Market drew 10,000 people to downtown San Francisco on Friday nights at a time when the streets were completely vacant.

Before the pandemic, people in the city didn't think a night market would work. And nobody would come downtown after 6 PM on the weekends.

But the city and county of San Francisco took a chance on my idea and not only did we prove the naysayers wrong – we did the unimaginable and brought people downtown in masses on a Friday night post pandemic to dance in the streets. We're now heading into season 3 and have helped Diwali be officially recognized and celebrated by the city of SF.

That incredible success caught the eye of local nonprofit, Civic Joy Fund, who partnered with us to create Downtown First Thursdays.

Since then, DFT has brought over 150k people downtown to dance under a giant disco ball, spend money downtown and reimagine the city core as a culture and arts destination.



Experiments in Building Curbside Community: Pioneering Parklets in Southern California

Kirk Keller
Day 1, Session 1

At Studio One Eleven, parklets embody our urban design philosophy—creating incremental, community-centered public spaces that enhance vibrancy and help shift the car-centric culture that has long shaped Southern California's urban fabric. Over the past 15 years, Studio 111 has pioneered several parklet initiatives, including designing and advocating for Southern California's first parklets in Long Beach in 2011.

Since then, Studio 111 has partnered with cities, community groups, and businesses to explore how reimagining curbside parking spaces can contribute to walkable, people-focused cities.

Each project underscores our commitment to fostering human connections and promoting sustainability, demonstrating how parklets support small businesses, calm traffic, and create spaces for casual social interactions and community events. The success of the Long Beach Parklet Pilot Program has allowed us to advise and collaborate with other cities on expanding similar initiatives throughout the region.

Like any urban intervention, designing and implementing parklets comes with complexities. Our experience has emphasized the importance of advocating alternative uses of curbside parking, navigating permitting challenges, and ensuring long-term maintenance and accessibility. As perspectives on parklets have evolved—from their early days through pre-pandemic pilot programs to the post-pandemic era—our insights continue to shape policies and inform best practices for cities and practitioners alike.

This presentation explores Studio One Eleven's journey in parklet design and construction, highlighting successes, obstacles, and key takeaways from nearly 15 years of work. Known for its sprawling development, expansive freeways, and car-oriented infrastructure, Southern California presents unique challenges for pedestrian-friendly spaces. However, it is also home to diverse communities, mixed-use neighborhoods, and a growing movement to reimagine the public realm. Parklets have proven to be a powerful tool for transforming underutilized urban spaces into dynamic, inclusive places that serve local needs and contribute to healthier, more connected cities.

Building Blocks is reimagining parklets and the curb lane in San Francisco. This innovative model for how public and commercial spaces can be designed, constructed, and maintained is lowering the burden on small business operators, and increasing street-level vibrancy.



From Emergency to Enduring—Transitioning Parklets into Permanent Part of San Francisco's Streetscape

Monica Munowitch
Day 1, Session 2

Before the pandemic, San Francisco led the parklet movement, transforming curb space into public spaces. The city's 2010 parklet program laid the foundation for reclaiming streets for community use. When COVID-19 hit, Shared Spaces became a critical response, allowing businesses to operate outdoors with streamlined permits. Practically overnight, the city scaled up from a small initiative to a citywide program, reshaping San Francisco's streets.

Transitioning from an emergency measure to a permanent program posed challenges. This session explores how SFMTA and its partners navigated this shift through key focus areas:

Legislative and Policy Frameworks
Formalizing parklets required legislation to balance public space, business needs, and mobility. Regulations were structured to prevent unintended consequences, ensuring small businesses and underserved communities were not excluded.

Regulatory Hurdles & Solutions
Integrating emergency parklets into a structured system required addressing fire safety, accessibility, and maintenance. Compliance inspections and clear permitting standards were introduced, requiring coordination across city agencies, including the Fire Department, Public Works, MTA, and Planning.

Equity & Accessibility
Without intervention, a permanent parklet program risked favoring wealthier businesses. To address this, San Francisco partnered with SF New Deal to provide grants and financial aid, helping small businesses meet compliance standards and integrate arts and culture programming.

Managing the Curb
Parklets had to be incorporated into the broader transportation network, balancing pedestrian access, loading zones, transit efficiency, and emergency response needs. As both public spaces and business extensions, they required thoughtful governance to ensure they enhanced urban life without disrupting mobility.

Implementation & Enforcement
Transitioning from emergency operations to long-term compliance required a shift from punitive enforcement to collaboration. Instead of relying on fines, the city prioritized education and engagement, fostering shared responsibility for maintaining parklets as public assets.

San Francisco's experience provides key lessons in integrating parklets into long-term urban policy. This session will offer insights for cities looking to create successful, equitable, and well-managed public space programs.



Kapwa Gardens: Cultivating Community Engagement and Urban Cohesion

Desi Danganan
Day 2, Session 10

In the heart of San Francisco's SOMA Pilipinas district, Kapwa Gardens stands as a testament to the transformative power of community-driven initiatives. Once a nondescript parking lot, this space has been reimagined into a vibrant garden and cultural hub, embodying the Filipino concept of "kapwa," which signifies a profound sense of shared identity and interconnectedness.

A Community-Led Transformation
The inception of Kapwa Gardens is a compelling example of bottom-up urban development. Spearheaded by Kultivate Labs, a local nonprofit, the project engaged over 350 volunteers from diverse backgrounds to bring the vision to life. This collective effort not only fostered a strong sense of ownership among participants but also ensured that the space reflected the community's aspirations and needs.

A Multifaceted Urban Oasis
Kapwa Gardens functions as more than just a green space; it is a dynamic venue for a multitude of activities that promote community engagement and support local enterprises. The garden hosts wellness classes such as yoga and tai chi, cultural performances, art installations, and food markets featuring local vendors. These events create opportunities for residents to connect, celebrate their heritage, and support small businesses, thereby enhancing the social and economic fabric of the neighborhood.

Inclusive Design and Accessibility
Central to the garden's success is its commitment to inclusive design. The layout incorporates accessible pathways, seating areas, and spaces that cater to individuals of all ages and abilities. By prioritizing accessibility, Kapwa Gardens ensures that everyone in the community can participate in and benefit from the offerings, reinforcing the principles of equity and inclusivity.

Storytelling Through Art and Culture
Storytelling is woven into the very fabric of Kapwa Gardens. Murals and art installations throughout the space narrate the rich history and cultural narratives of the Filipino community, fostering a deeper connection among visitors. Additionally, events such as traditional dance performances and oral history sessions provide platforms for sharing personal stories and preserving cultural heritage.

A Model for Community-Driven Urban Spaces
Kapwa Gardens exemplifies how community engagement and cohesion can be catalyzed through thoughtful urban design and programming. By transforming an underutilized urban area into a thriving communal space, it demonstrates the potential of grassroots initiatives to revitalize neighborhoods, promote local businesses, and enhance the quality of urban life. The garden serves as an inspiring model for other communities seeking to create inclusive, vibrant, and resilient public spaces."



Navigating Parklet Implementation in Arlington County: Legal, Design, Social and Policy Perspectives

Inumidun Obikoya
Day 1, Session 2

This presentation explores the multifaceted challenges and opportunities associated with parklet implementation in Arlington County, Virginia. Given the unique legal framework governing parklets in counties versus towns and cities in the Commonwealth of Virginia, we delve into strategies for compliance with Virginia's Code and local building permit requirements. By streamlining the permit application process, we highlight lessons learned from two case studies – one successful and one unsuccessful - providing a roadmap for future projects.

From a design and implementation perspective, we examine how to balance aesthetics, functionality, and regulatory compliance. This includes innovative approaches to design that meet both community needs and legal standards. We also present research methodologies for assessing the social and economic impacts of parklets, focusing on their effects on local businesses, social cohesion and fiscal implications. Tools for documenting and sharing success stories will be discussed, offering practical insights for stakeholders.

To enrich our analysis, we incorporate community interviews from parklet users and adjacent businesses. These firsthand accounts provide valuable insights into the real-world impacts of parklets, highlighting both benefits and areas for improvement. Additionally, we address the challenges faced by business improvement districts (BIDs) when proposing parklets on non-County owned streets, emphasizing the need for coordinated efforts and clear guidelines.

Policy development is crucial for the sustainability of parklet programs. We explore frameworks that support these initiatives, addressing challenges and opportunities for policy changes at both local and state levels. This includes fostering public-private partnerships and creating economic incentives for parklet development. We also highlight the unique challenge for Arlington County, which, as a county and not a town or city, is governed by different regulations under the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Safety and sustainability are paramount in parklet design. We outline best practices for ensuring parklets are safe and accessible, complying with safety standards and accessibility guidelines. Additionally, we advocate for the use of eco-friendly materials and sustainable design practices, integrating green infrastructure to promote environmental sustainability.

This presentation addresses the themes of Legal and Regulatory Compliance, Design and Implementation, Measuring Social and Economic Impacts, Policy Development, and Safety and Sustainability. By providing a comprehensive overview of these interconnected areas, we aim to contribute to the broader dialogue on parklet implementation and impact.



Parklets 2.0: Transforming Streets into Vibrant Community Spaces

Kristoffer Vestre
Day 1, Session 4

Vestre transforms streets into vibrant community spaces. Parklets 2.0 is an innovative, modular parklet system designed to adapt seamlessly to diverse urban environments. Born from Vestre's collaboration with the City of Oslo and SOLA landscape architects, Parklets 2.0 has been instrumental in Oslo's car-free city initiative, ""Bilfritt Byliv,"" and has since transformed streetscapes in California (Glendora, Pasadena), Chicago, Washington D.C., New York City, Berlin, and beyond.

Our presentation will highlight how Parklets 2.0 reclaims public space, fostering social connections, economic vitality, and environmental resilience. The system's modularity allows easy customization, rapid deployment, and flexible reconfiguration, making it ideal for California's diverse urban contexts. Built with Scandinavian craftsmanship, it boasts a lifetime anti-rust warranty, 15-year adhesion and anti-rot guarantees, and sustainable materials with minimal maintenance requirements.

Through the Glendora case study Kristoffer Vestre and Vanessa Nalbandian will explore design principles, community engagement strategies, and the transformative potential of modular parklets in creating inclusive, climate-resilient public spaces.

Catalysts for Community Engagement and Cohesion
Parklets 2.0 serve as dynamic community hubs, promoting local businesses and fostering social interactions. They transform underutilized spaces into vibrant public realms, enhancing urban life.

Innovations in Engineering, Design, and Materials
Parklets 2.0 exemplify cutting-edge design with modular, durable, and sustainable construction. They offer industry-leading sustainability and durability, with low carbon production and exceptional warranties. Their adaptability addresses challenges of space constraints, maintenance, and urban diversity.

Design Flexibility
How modular systems can be tailored to diverse urban conditions.

Sustainability Leadership
Insights into material choices and maintenance strategies that support long-term environmental goals.

Global Best Practices
Lessons from international parklet implementations that can inspire California's streetscapes.

Community Impact
Strategies for fostering social equity and economic vitality through public space interventions."



Parklets as Pedagogy for Youth Development

Raffaella Falchi Macias
Day 2, Session 8

YAX's architecture program, she founded its design/build model and since 2008 has guided the collaborative work between practicing architects and San Francisco public high school students, primarily low income youth and youth of color. Youth and architects embark on a project-based learning approach to design/build projects, using architectural design as a catalyst for youth development and voice. Over nearly two decades, youth designers at YAX have designed and built four parklets, public installations, street furniture, semi-permanent structures, and more using this youth-led and architect-guided model. Rooted in youth development best practices, youth experience five key ingredients in the program design: safety, supportive relationships, meaningful youth leadership, skill building, and community + civic engagement. Through this project-based learning pedagogy, youth have grown as leaders, thinkers, and emerging artists who are engaged with each other and their communities, along with shaping their city. Youth determine their projects and how they can address community needs and issues through design. When youth have the ability to contribute to their built environment, they feel more agency to create positive change. Partners in this work have included: San Francisco Planning Department, San Francisco Office of Economic & Workforce Development, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, John O'Connell Building + Construction Trades CTE program, Excelsior Action Group, Ocean Avenue Community Benefit District, Portola Neighborhood Association, architecture firms, and community partners.

Since 2000, YAX has been at the intersection of youth development and arts education and architecture has been a flagship discipline along with printmaking, darkroom photography, music production, mural arts, fashion design, and more. YAX operates two youth and community arts centers on the ground floor of 100% affordable housing sites in the Mission and Excelsior neighborhoods, opening the doors to community members of all ages to experience and learn through the arts.



Pedagogical parklets for infants and toddlers

Elizabeth Gómez Ibarra, Jean Carlo Aranda Reyes
Day 2, Session 7A

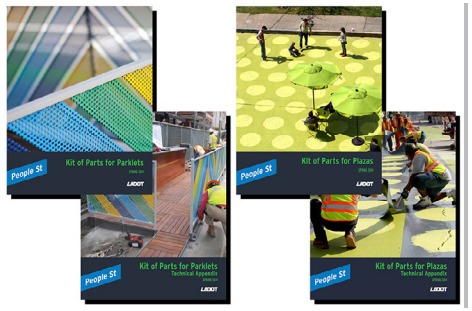
If you saw the city from a height of 95 cm (the height of a 3-year-old child), what would you change? " - Urban 95-
Pedagogical parklets for infants and toddlers
In this workshop, attendees will learn how to guide the construction of a parklet with an early childhood and caregiver perspective. Based on the case study of our project MY RIVER LAB, México, we will share the methodology to diagnose, map actors, create alliances and obtain funding oriented to environmental public policies to build parklets that have been designed to be child-friendly.
This perspective not only benefits children but also communities because it promotes coexistence through play, decreases the perception of insecurity (a public space with children is an indicator of safety and well-being).
At the end the participants will end up with a physical prototype (model) focused on their own contexts and an action plan to implement it.
They will learn the principles of PLacemaking, Citizen Innovation and the components of a city at scale.

Why do we focus on early childhood?
The first phase of life (pre-birth to age 5) provides an unparalleled opportunity for transformation. During early childhood, the brain develops very rapidly, and a small change at this tender age can have permanent effects that will help create more inclusive societies.
Children's first experiences and early development depend on the people who care for them. Parents are not alone in parenting: government institutions, businesses, civil society and philanthropy all play an important role in supporting families.

Session content:
-Welcome
-Traveling back in time, city and childhood
-Key concepts for the creation of child-friendly spaces
-The case of the pedagogical Parklets (MY RIVER LAB)
-Methodology of creation
Pre-typing workshop
-Closing and conclusions









Pop-Ups, Prototypes, and People St

Rob Berry, Daveed Kapoor
Day 1, Session 4

The City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) launched People St in 2014. Intended to ease access for community groups to create and build parklets and plazas throughout the city, the program included a series of kit-of-parts manuals containing pre-approved designs, technical details, furniture and planting selections, and graphic identities.

The kit-of-parts manuals served as a collection of best practices gleaned from early examples of tactical urbanism, bringing together in one place a wealth of knowledge on parklets developed by a community of designers all across the country. A shared resource provided by the city to its communities, the manuals offered well-considered solutions to common challenges associated with parklet design, approval, and construction. The program overall represented a shift in parklets from their grassroots origins toward a model of shared partnership between communities and municipalities.

Daveed Kapoor and Rob Berry, two of the collaborators on the kits-of-parts, will reflect back on the development of People St while considering the future of municipal parklet programs. They will share the beginnings of the program in community activism; provide an overview of the manuals, including adaptable design prototypes, engineering considerations, and city agency requirements; and survey the first set of parklets implemented through the program. More recent examples and adaptations, both in Los Angeles and other cities, will also be discussed.



PROXY: from Parking Lot to Park Plus

Douglas Burnham
Day 2, Session 10

Douglas Burnham will trace the trajectory of PROXY, a temporary activation of two city-owned lots, from a fenced-off parking lot into a thriving construct of culture, commerce and community at the very heart of San Francisco's Hayes Valley neighborhood. PROXY is a placeholder for a more permanent development, transforming spaces formerly in the footprint of the elevated 101 Central Freeway. PROXY is the ""plus"" to the adjacent Patricia's Green Park, providing a unique blend of small businesses, an open plaza space, engaging cultural programming and intentional architectural design that is open to all.

The arc of PROXY's story begins and end with the idea that we all have the agency to contribute to and to nurture the development of our cities. PROXY was designed and developed by and is still curated, cared for and run by ENVELOPE Architecture + Design. ENVELOPE, through PROXY, produces two film festivals and multiple music, film and cultural events on site each year — all free and open to the public. Though it began with a focus on building local micro-enterprise on site, PROXY has evolved into an experiment in advancing togetherness in real life and real space with the explicit goal of building community cohesion and pride of place.











Public Space Initiatives in the Tenderloin: case studies in community-driven collaboration

Ilaria Salvadori, Sydney Tolou
Day 2, Session 9

Explore Elm Alley School Street -the first of its kind in San Francisco- the Golden Gate Greenway and other public space revitalization projects in the Tenderloin Community Action Plan (TCAP). Learn about innovative strategies to increase open space for the residents of the neighborhood; explore creative collaboration models between service providers and City agencies. Discuss road blocks encountered and what strategies the TCAP team used to overcome them in order to make the vision of a better, safer, greener Tenderloin neighborhood a reality.



Realizing that Rules Ruin Fun – Seattle Journey in Outdoor Dining

Joel Miller
Day 2, Session 5

Seattle proudly began offering curbspace cafes (streateries) as early as 2017. We saw the success of parking day and of parklets, and knew that to truly center our climate, livability, and public space goals we should allow these people-centered uses of our curb. Our Public Space Management team led the charge, working with our friends in our urban design group, our transportation engineers, our attorneys and our budget managers to assemble a set of permit rules that satisfied all. We published those rules, saw excited urbanists start building, and by early 2020 had ...(wait for it!) ... almost nothing. Maybe 2-3 successful parklets and cafes across our entire city. Then the pandemic hit.

This presentation will demonstrate how Seattle adjusted and relaxed our rules during the pandemic. We will explore how those emergency actions not only saved businesses across the city, but showed us how much our rules were holding us back from our goals, and how to truly bring people-centered spaces to our streets, we needed to think differently. We will walk through what we kept, what we threw out, and how we balanced the needs of the city in our new outdoor dining program. We will show success stories in our Ballard neighborhood and failures in Columbia City, and how our program is integrated with our new People Streets and Public Spaces as our Department of Transportation gets serious about its role in managing the public right of way not only for transportation, but as Seattle's front porch.



Reimagining Open Spaces in Dense Urban Areas: Lower Nob Hill, SF

Rohit Tak, Elijah Ball
Day 2, Session 7B

As cities densify, integrating meaningful open space into built-out neighborhoods becomes increasingly urgent. Lower Nob Hill, one of San Francisco's densest districts, spans 20 city blocks with limited opportunities for traditional park development. While large-scale parks often require costly land acquisition and years of planning, Lower Nob Hill residents and policymakers have sought alternative solutions to enhance livability.

In 2023, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urged the Recreation and Park Department to adopt flexible criteria for open space, including smaller interventions like parklets and pocket parks. This workshop explores how parklets can serve as a scalable, community-driven strategy for expanding green space in dense urban areas.

Focusing on Bush, Sutter, and Post Streets as case studies, we will examine how a bottom-up approach—prioritizing cultural, historical, and environmental factors—can create more inclusive and vibrant urban spaces using community operated parklets as a strategy. Through discussions on policy, community engagement, and design, this session will highlight how rethinking the public right-of-way can transform the urban landscape without requiring large land acquisitions.



Scaling Up the Linear: Bringing New Energy to SF's Corridors

Stella Kim, Julie Flynn, Amy Cohen
Day 1, Session 2

This panel will focus on exploring beyond parklets to the corridor scale, and highlight recent linear placemaking pilot projects in San Francisco that aim to bring new energy to the public realm – specifically Landing at Leidesdorff, a pedestrianized set of historic alleyways in the heart of FiDi, and Fisherman's Wharf Promenade, a stretch of revitalized waterfront in the city's famous visitor destination. The three panelists represent diverse perspectives and were involved in visioning / implementing / permitting both of these project areas.

These projects shared a lot of the same goals and challenges, while being in different context. Both aimed to help revitalize historic areas of San Francisco that have seen brighter days pre-pandemic and support local businesses by implementing place-specific pilot projects and new campaigns/programs, not dissimilar from parklets. Both projects were created for local Community Benefit Districts (CBDs) in collaboration with the City / Port of SF, and involved bringing together hyperlocal stakeholders for the first time and deep listening in shaping visions.

Landing at Leidesdorff: Sitting between the Transamerica Pyramid, Embarcadero Center, and Chinatown, Landing at Leidesdorff is "where old meets new". The overall concept of place is inspired by the street's namesake, Captain William Alexander Leidesdorff, Jr., known as the "African founding father of California", and that SF's original shoreline from the 1850s once ran through this street. This intersection of alleyways is now a new accessible open space, and features new lighting, seating, and multiple surfaces that tell these stories of place. SITELAB led the project design and engagement. The project was a collaboration between SITELAB, Downtown SF Partnership, the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development (formerly where Julie and Amy worked), the Mayor's office, and local business owners, tenants, and artists. This project successfully overcame many regulatory roadblocks being a first pilot project of its kind in San Francisco with creativity and good will.

Fisherman's Wharf: Street Plans led the design and implementation of a multi-faceted Placemaking and Urban Design project for the Fisherman's Wharf Community Benefit District, aimed at revitalizing the iconic Fisherman's Wharf area of San Francisco's waterfront. The project utilizes an economic recovery grant received by the FWCBD from the San Francisco Port, and brings new amenities that enhance the area's appeal for both visitors and locals while celebrating its rich history and advancing the SF Port's economic recovery goals. The project was installed in phases to allow for initial elements to be deployed extremely quickly, in time for the 2024 summer tourist season. The panel will highlight how pilot projects set the stage for longer term strategies and the power in collective building up of place.



Seeing is Believing: Advocating for Permanent Change in Nashville

Veronica Foster
Day 2, Session 6

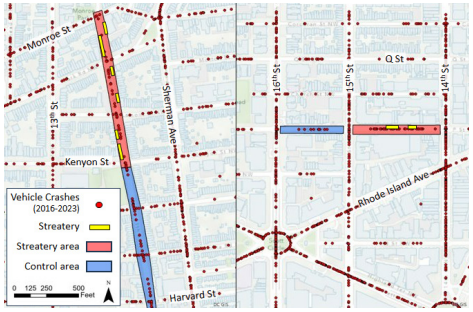
The Civic Design Center has been advocating for reclaiming public space for people ever since they adapted PARK(ing) Day for Nashville in 2012. While parklets have grown in popularity around the world, it took over a decade of work to pass legislation that would make it possible for Nashvillians to apply for a long-term parklet permit in the right of way. PARK(ing) Day was an excellent advocacy tool to eventually expand the sidewalks in an area of downtown Nashville that sees hundreds of thousands of pedestrians each weekend—Lower Broadway.

One of the Civic Design Center's Guiding Principles is to "celebrate streets as places that address neighborhood needs and facilitate community interactions," and we firmly believe that parklets are capable of doing that. The Design Center regularly moved the location of PARK(ing) Day after seeing success in order to keep pushing the needle on this issue.

Having written the official Tactical Urbanism permit for Nashville's Public Works, now the Nashville Department of Transportation (NDOT), the Design Center is used to getting creative, so we tested a pop-up parklet for two weeks by applying for a dumpster permit in 2017. Then when the pandemic renewed the public's interest in outdoor dining options and a champion in Metro Council led more permanent legislation for parklets specifically, by 2023 we had finally achieved a parklet permit and an official parklet manual under NDOT. However, while parklets were loved by the designers who had participated in PARK(ing) Day over the years, business owners who would be the ones applying for these permits still didn't have any local precedents for parklets. The Civic Design Center's mission, in part, is to advocate for actionable change in communities, and we felt like building one permanent parklet in place of pop-up parklets for one day would get more people to understand the long-term vision.

In 2023, we partnered with NDOT, a locally-owned business, and a local construction company to kick-off the very first Parklet Design Competition. The concept would engage designers to design a parklet concept specifically for the business, and the winning design would be fully built into the very first permanent parklet in Nashville and unveiled during a PARK(ing) Day Block Party. The construction partner would do the project entirely pro bono and NDOT would waive the permit fees for the first year.

The goal was to not only to facilitate an amazing design example of a parklet, but to also test the ease with which a business could actually apply for the permit. This presentation will cover a very brief history of how far Nashville has come in the parklet sphere, focusing on the success of the Parklet Design Competition—now entering its 3rd years—as a catalyst for encouraging reclaiming public space for people permanently. When it comes to infrastructure change, you often have to show people what the possibilities are before you can expect their buy-in.



Streateries as a Tool for Safety

Kimberly Vacca
Day 2, Session 5

While most criticism of streateries and parklets includes concern over the loss of vehicle parking, some opponents also allege that streateries create unsafe roadway conditions. This perception of decreased safety led the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to study the effect of streateries on roadway safety, specifically vehicle crashes. Staff compared vehicle crashes on corridors with a high concentration of streateries before and after the District adopted the streatery program in 2020 (crash data spanned between 2016 and 2023).

The analysis also included other comparable roadways for control and the District's general traffic volume data to determine if any changes in crashes could have resulted from a change in traffic volume. While the results varied by location, data consistently showed that corridors with streateries had either no impact or experienced a decrease in vehicle crashes, with some locations showing up to a 56% reduction. This reduction cannot be attributed to any specific factor, although it's worth noting how the design of streateries create a visual narrowing effect that may cause drivers to travel more slowly. The presentation will show the locations studied in this analysis, designs of the streateries, and graphics of the data.



Streetscapes for Wellness: Stewarding Social and Environmental Justice

Jenna Miller
Day 2, Session 6

Streets make up over a quarter of New York City's land area, serving as public corridors that define how we navigate and experience the city. Well-designed and programmed public streetscapes can improve health and mental wellbeing, encourage physical activity and social interaction, and make people feel safe and welcome. A holistic and integrated approach for a safer public realm addresses public health concerns while improving aesthetics, usability, and public perception to support an inclusive and thriving urban environment and public life.

Designing New York: Streetscapes for Wellness is an award-winning publication by the NYC Public Design Commission, the New York Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Fine Arts Federation of New York, and the NYC Department of City Planning's Urban Design Office. Developed in tandem with pandemic-era public realm interventions and policies, this research has proven to be a source of inspiration for policymakers, practitioners, and community advocates seeking to reimagine streets and promote public health. Streetscapes for Wellness author, Jenna E. Miller of the NYC Public Design Commission will present the importance of community-driven streetscape design and highlight a notable case study about the Clean Air Green Corridor, a Black and Brown youth-led community initiative rooted in Washington Heights.

With this initiative, high school students work to bring their curriculum to life and re-imagine the design of the streetscape in front of their school. This case study introduces unlikely partnerships between a group of students, local community organizations, and City agencies and showcases how temporary public space installations can act as proving grounds for future capital projects and urban policy. The Public Design Commission will share more about this replicable, grassroots organizing model, with the hope that it will inspire and empower people anywhere to contribute to change within their own communities.







The 3rd Street Flashlight Parklet // When is small huge?

Pete Frankel
Day 1, Session 1

When is small huge? It is a matter of context. The 3rd Street Flash Light parklet is an important place in a San Francisco district with little public space. Commissioned by a design museum, the flashlight claimed space from a busy street to create a safe place for people, social interaction, and events in a rapidly transforming postindustrial district.

Over a century ago the Dog Patch district was not built for people. Today industry has transitioned, and the Dog Patch is slowly humanizing. A design museum moving to the area wanted to offer a gift to the community and mark the arrival of their cultural organization. The flashlight channeled the large scale absence of public space and translated it to a meaningful human scaled place using urban design cues.

The museum sits in the middle of a 600 foot long city block. It doesn't feel safe. Cars, trucks, bikes and trains zip past at 40 plus miles per hour all day long. The museum could be easy to miss. The flashlight uses the mid-block location and a long faceted perimeter wall to engage the kinetic movement of the street and create a safe zone for people. As viewers from the street pass by the wall apparently changes color instantly. From the sidewalk the flashlight presents an unexpected offering of comfortable seating, social spaces, and experiences for individuals and groups. As the sun sets, masts above angle their lights towards the public space, and the seating comes alive with a warm glow welcoming visitor's attention and use after dark.

Packed with subtle but potent intelligence and purpose the flashlight is unexpected, striking, and comforting in this raw industrial size urban context.

The flashlight is an invention for this place and unusual situation. The scarcity of public space in the area escalates its value and supports the logic for its uncommon level of quality, detail, performance, and excellent execution.

The design, permitting, funding, and construction of the flashlight took 4 years. The same amount of time it might take to entitle a new sky scraper in the city of San Francisco. It required a community process, letters of support, multi-agency review for planning and constructions, and full building permits. The long process is an indication of the complexity entailed in building anything in the public realm of a major city with an engaged citizenry. It is also an indication of the struggle to reclaim public space from the dominance of vehicles and their institutionalized bureaucracy.

The 3rd street flash light is a new form of public space that confronts limitation and conventions with ingenuity. While physically small, it asserts big picture results and demonstrates how urban complexity can be engaged and manipulated by design to enable life in the most forbidding circumstances.



The money question, what's the parklet cost to the city?

Oscar Suastegui Quintero
Day 2, Opening Keynote

For many years, public spaces in Mexico City have been primarily divided into parks, gardens, and pedestrian transit zones. This segmentation has limited their function to mere passageways, often neglecting their potential for broader social and recreational uses. Streets and parking areas, in particular, have rarely been considered as viable spaces for community engagement and relaxation. However, over the past decade, a significant shift in urban policy has led to a reimagining of these spaces, aiming to create more inclusive, welcoming, and people-centered environments.

This presentation will explore the transformation of parking spaces into pedestrian-friendly recreational areas. We will outline the benefits, challenges, and strategic steps needed to make these spaces more dynamic, interactive, and accessible. Our aim is to highlight the importance of fostering social engagement, pedestrian comfort, and overall city enjoyment through well-designed urban interventions.

To successfully implement this transformation, a collaborative approach is essential. This proposal aims to initiate dialogue among stakeholders and present a structured strategy for expanding pedestrian-friendly areas in Mexico City. Through innovation, policy refinement, and community participation, we can enhance urban life and create a more inclusive city for all.

Key Discussion Points:
Urban Policy Shift – Examination of recent changes in public space planning and their impact on city dynamics.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement – The role of local authorities, businesses, and neighborhood groups in the decision-making process.

Challenges and Solutions – Bureaucratic, economic, and social factors influencing implementation.

Case Studies and Success Stories – Examples of neighborhoods that have benefited from these transformations, including traffic reduction and enhanced social interactions.

Proposed Strategy for Expansion – Steps to develop a large-scale program, including collaboration between public and private entities, updating policy guidelines, and launching a pilot parklet program.



The Role of Urban Public Space in Reimagining Downtown

Andrew Robinson
Day 2, Session 10

As downtown San Francisco undergoes a period of transformation, public spaces have emerged as powerful catalysts for a more socio-economically diverse, creative, and vibrant city. The Crossing at East Cut, a temporary activation on 2.2 acres of the former Temporary Transbay Transit Center, demonstrates how strategic placemaking fosters community vitality, social cohesion, and neighborhood pride.

This presentation will explore The Crossing's evolution—from an idea shaped through a community planning process before COVID to a pandemic-era response that has become a model for flexible, high-impact urban public space. It will highlight how partnerships among public, private, nonprofit, and community stakeholders made the project possible and will discuss key lessons in adaptability, programming, and its economic and social impact.

By examining The Crossing's role in reimagining downtown, this session will offer insights into how cities can leverage pre-development or underutilized public spaces as tools for economic recovery and long-term resilience. It will highlight how strategic public realm investments can help shape the future of urban centers.



Transforming Public Spaces in West Hollywood

Ric Abramson
Day 1, Session 4

Over the past decade, West Hollywood has envisioned and transformed its public spaces through creative design solutions and innovative policy changes and partnerships. Particularly by introducing its outdoor dining and parklet initiatives, multi-modal approaches to its public rights-of-way, its Sunset Arts & Advertising Program for billboards, its community education program, and its urban design visioning the city has reinforced its heritage as a place of experimentation and innovation within the natural and built environment. Sometimes temporary or pilot programs in their origin, many of the current urban design and placemaking initiatives have now become a permanent fixture that will forever change the fabric of the city's urban experience. These public-oriented programs and spaces, which enhance livability and foster community well-being, are also now contributing to the city's economic vitality and socio-cultural growth.



Transforming the Curb: Examining San Francisco's Parklet Typologies and Unique Designs

Brian Manford, Kelly Albers
Day 1, Session 1

Hear from two Shared Spaces plan checkers about San Francisco's diverse parklet landscape. This presentation will explore different parklet typologies, showcasing unique design examples, and sharing best practices. Typologies include parklets designed for day use, for bad weather, roofless ones, built on a slope, built for angled parking, and built by community partnerships. We aim to inspire urban planners, designers, and community advocates to leverage parklets as vibrant extensions of public space.



Why Every City Needs and Open Streets Program

Ed Solis
Day 1, Session 3

Viva CalleSJ (VCSJ) is a city run program based in the Parks and Recreation Department with the City of San Jose. Founded in 2015, it has been in operation for 10 years.

The City Funds the team that produce the program who intern partner wit over 200 volunteers and partners to produce 6-10 miles of open streets in the 10th largest city in America.

In addition, VCSJ also secures grants and sponsorships that offset and, in some cases, pays for activations.

VCSJ engages every city department for support but also for co-marketing of city services and well as other departmental programs. Police recruitment, housing programs, and small business engagement

VCSJ partners with our local JR colleges as well as San Jose State University for volunteers, surveying participants, also creating opportunities for Masters Classes to study and help improve program delivery. MTI is also a great partner for evaluation and efficacy of VCSJ.

VCSJ has a model community outreach program and utilizing social media for marketing and communication. Almost zero funds spent on marketing/advertisement.

VCSJ is a regional draw from Napa to Salinas with most participants coming from within the city of San Jose.

VCSJ is an economic juggernaut for local businesses. In 2018surevy, 68% or participants reported spending over $21 which equates to more than $1.5 million in local revenue. VCSJ also incorporates local makers and arts groups for every activation. Picking beautification projects such as electrical box painting projects, murals, and chalk art projects. VCSJ produces 7 different routes that are “best of the best”, model routes. They cover all council districts and all regions of the city.

VCSJ connects low-med-high income communities in every route produced and has included ride through San Jose State University, Happy Hollow Park and Zoo, and other SJ landmarks.

VCSJ is largely well received and has enjoyed support from communities, business districts, schools, nonprofits, and city elected officials. Its impact is felt across every facet of city life.

SITE VISIT DESCRIPTIONS



Activation and transformation through art

Ben Davis
Day 2, Site Visits

In the fall of 2022, San Francisco stood at a crossroads. The hard-won, car-free transformation of JFK Promenade, a beloved route through Golden Gate Park, was suddenly in jeopardy. A ballot measure threatened to undo it all, reopening the road to vehicles and reversing a rare people-first success. What had taken years of advocacy, community visioning, and incremental progress could be reversed in a single vote. Many predicted a tight race. Some feared the worst. Few believed the system could respond quickly enough to protect what had just begun.

Then something extraordinary happened.

Over ten furious, joy-filled weeks, Illuminate sprang into action—not through traditional campaigning, but by inviting the city to see what was at stake. No one was told how to vote. Instead, people were shown what they already had: a golden ribbon of public possibility through Golden Gate Park. Illuminate transformed the road from a place of hurried passage to one of lingering destination, inviting people to slow down and stay awhile. One hundred bright yellow Adirondack chairs were placed along the route, inviting spontaneous rest and connection. Through a flurry of fast, low-cost, high-impact interventions, JFK Promenade was reborn as The Golden Mile—not a road you were allowed to walk on, but a place that seemed purpose-built for people. The route was marked by exclamation points of whimsy. Music drifted on the breeze. Art sprang up from the asphalt. And everywhere, smiles bloomed. The promenade became something new: a smile factory, producing civic joy at scale.

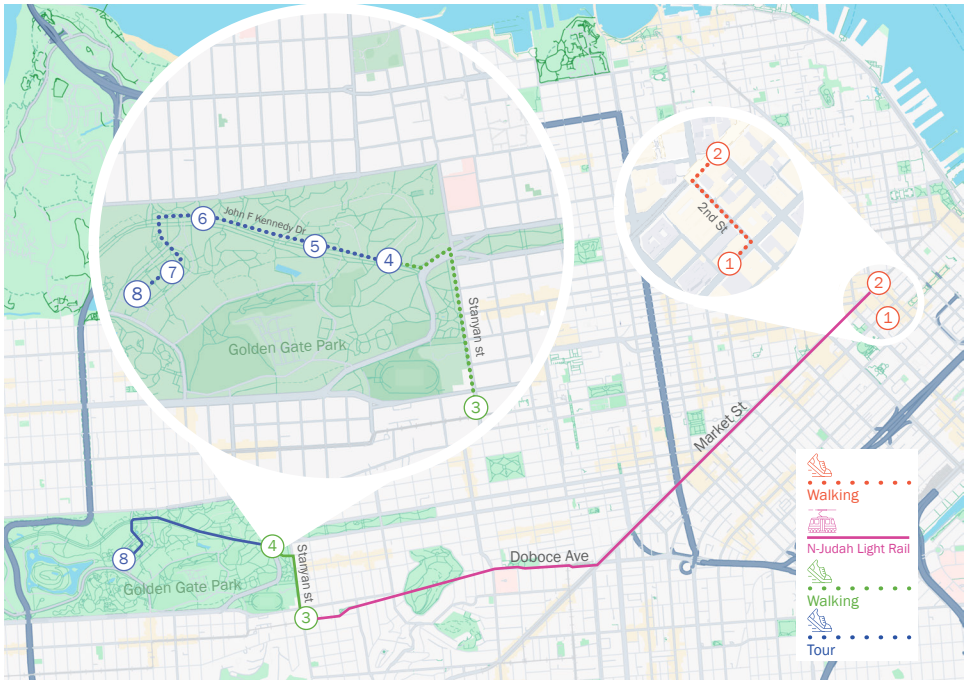
What unfolded wasn't just a campaign—it was a living demonstration of what's possible when bureaucracy bends toward beauty. Few thought the system could move—but it did. Illuminate mobilized artists, builders, and dreamers in a spontaneous symphony of public imagination. Word-of-mouth alone drew thousands of new visitors. Families biked in. Dancers spun. Strangers lingered. Joy became contagious—and visible.

And then, the vote.

What was forecast as a razor-thin contest became a landslide. The people of San Francisco overwhelmingly chose to keep JFK Promenade car-free. It was more than a policy win. It was a cultural affirmation: This is who we are. The victory sent a powerful message that resonated beyond the park—hopeful evidence that San Francisco could, in fact, still move boldly, quickly, and creatively toward the common good. A loss, on the other hand, would have sent the opposite message. A defeat on JFK wouldn't just have reopened a road—it would have closed the window on progress across the city, demoralizing visionaries and resetting momentum by half a decade or more.

Instead, something brighter took root. Since the vote, Illuminate has maintained a minor encroachment permit to keep evolving the promenade, always with the same goal: to turn a former traffic corridor into a permanent engine of civic delight.

JFK Promenade now stands as proof that change is possible.



Start time 4.30 *Friday, April 11th*

1. **SPUR -** 654 Mission St, San Francisco, CA 94105
2. **Montgomery MUNI Station (N-Judah light rail) -** 598 Market St, San Francisco, CA 94104
3. **Carl St & Stanyan St -** Carl St & Stanyan St, San Fransisco, CA 94117
4. **GOLDEN MILE TOUR START -** Fohn F Kennedy Dr & Stanyan St, San Francisco, CA 94117
8. **Music Concourse -** 78 Music Concourse Dr, San Francisco, CA 94118



Places Remade: Dogpatch Public Spaces

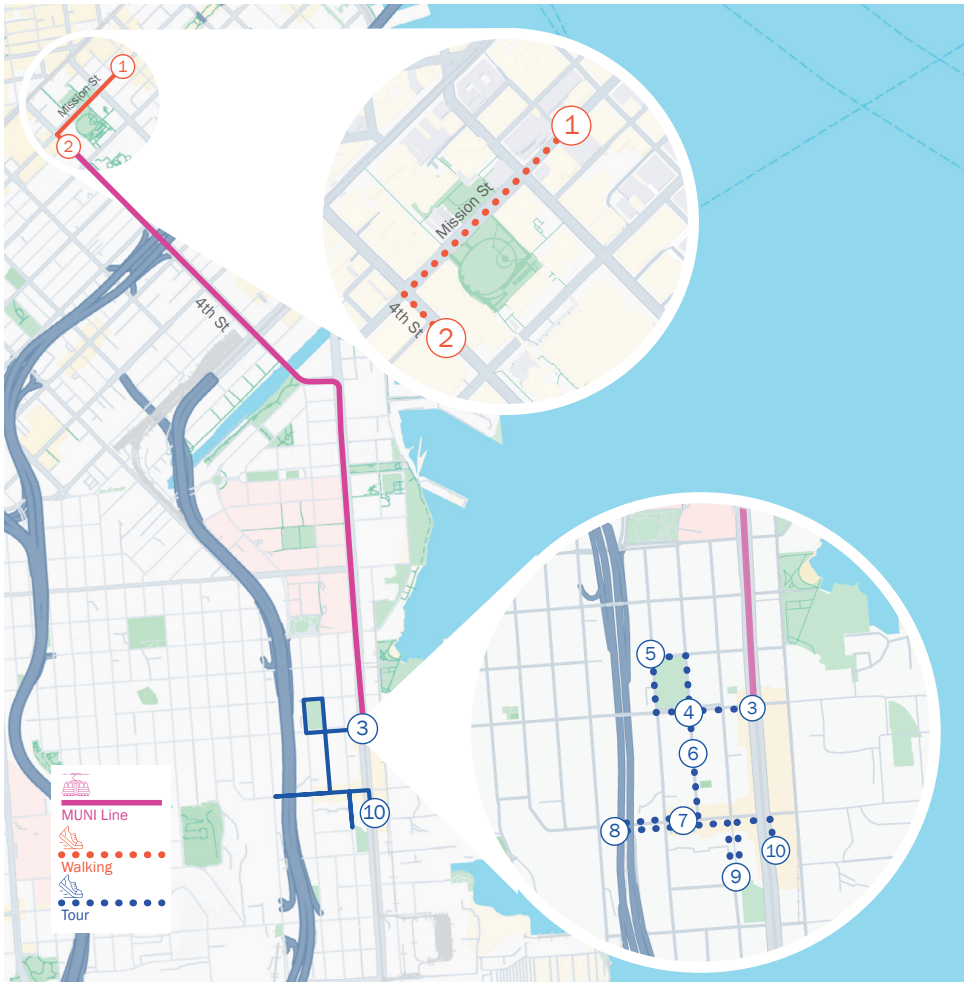
Jason Kelly Johnson,
David Fletcher
Day 2, Site Visits

Since the Dogpatch neighborhood was once a heavy industrial manufacturing district, not all the parts of Dogpatch are within comfortable walking distance to an existing park. Many areas lack adequate places for recreation and relaxation. With the influx of new employees and residents, this deficiency will only be exacerbated. Thus, one of the primary objectives of this Public Realm Plan is to identify potential improvements and additional open space opportunities to increase the capacity of existing open space and to serve both current and new residents, employees, and visitors.

Over the years, a number of informal parks and open spaces were created by residents to meet local recreational needs. This collection of unique assets, created from underutilized rights-of-way, express the spirit of Dogpatch and inventiveness of its residents. As the neighborhood continues to grow with new residents and workers, informal open spaces are being upgraded, expanded, and multiplied alongside existing formal parks. Renovations accommodate diversifying user needs, upgrades to facilities and furnishings, and night time safety. New open spaces are being implemented throughout the area, giving more equal and ready access to recreational facilities.

Central Waterfront streets and open spaces vary in quality and character from block to block. This landscape reflects a neighborhood history steeped in maritime industry, industrial manufacturing, and a new creative economy of local crafts and fabrication. Streetscape and open space designs are increasingly responsive to immediate land uses, and highlight remnant warehouse architecture and other historic fabric. Rather than draw on standard solutions found ubiquitously throughout the city, designs, materials and furnishings in the public realm borrow from industrial forms and palette.
Key historic buildings associated with past institutional are being adaptively reused to serve new needs.

The Central Waterfront was made up of an incomplete, discontiguous street grid with physical characteristics of the neighborhood's industrial past. Dogpatch Streets are being made complete in all senses of the word: broken links in the street grid are being completed, and areas with new residential and commercial growth are including the amenities serving higher pedestrian and bicycle use. Pedestrian and cyclist connections to adjacent neighborhoods, new waterfront parks, and neighborhood institutions are being made comfortable and safe.



Start time 4.30 *Friday, April 11th*

1. **SPUR -** 654 Mission St, San Francisco, CA 94105
2. **4th & Mission MUNI Station -** 4th & Mission, San Francisco, CA 94103
3. **20th MUNI Station -** 20th & 3rd San Francisco, CA 94107
10. **San Francisco Museum of Craft + Design -** Museum of Craft and Design,



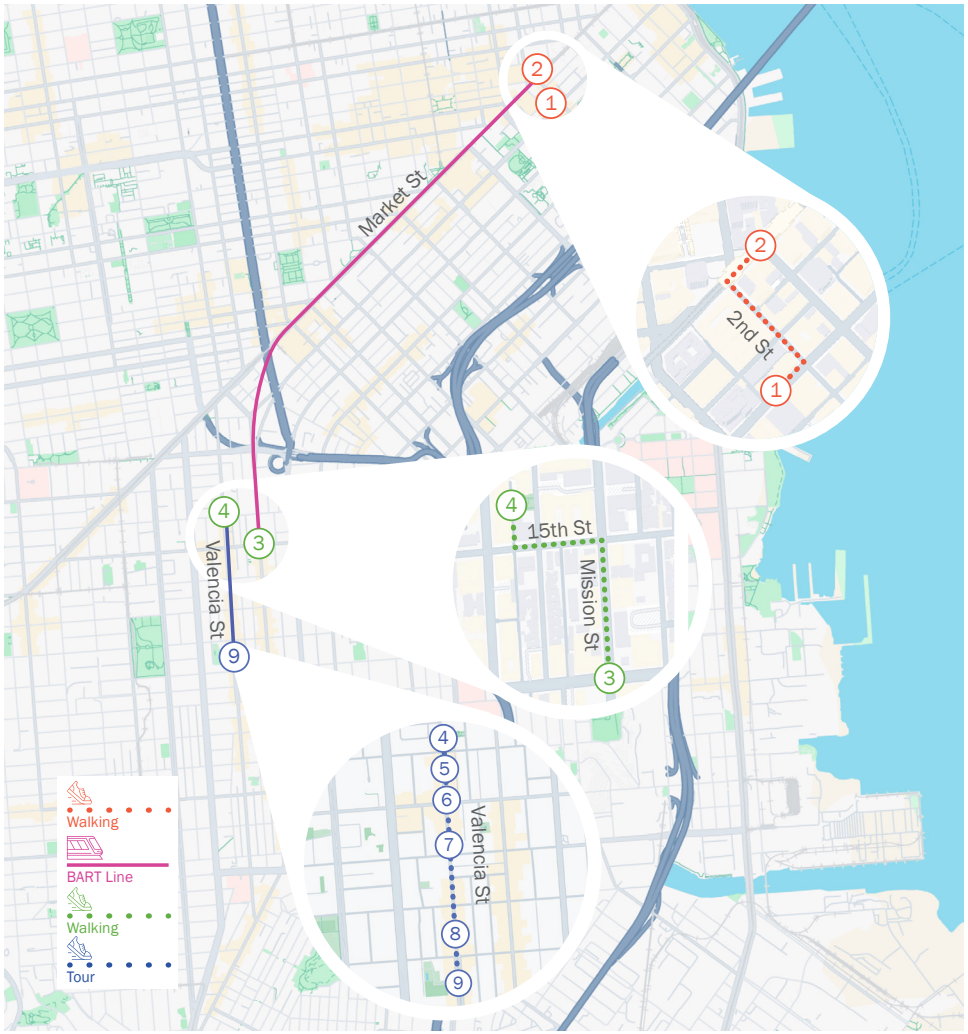
Valencia Street Bikeway: Improving Safety and Preserving Parklets

Brian Manford, Shada Rayger
Day 2, Site Visits

Join members of the Valencia Street Bikeway project for a walking tour of four blocks of the corridor. Parklets have had a strong presence on the corridor for the last decade. Before the pandemic, Valencia Street had the highest concentration of public parklets and during the pandemic this rose to over 70 parklets on a one mile stretch of Valencia. In 2021, one in every five parking spaces within the Mid-Valencia bikeway project area were occupied by a parklet. As the Shared Space program stabilized, a once-paused protected bikeway quick-build project was restarted in a new context, transformed by the pandemic.

Designing a bikeway project with new constraints and a continually evolving context required extensive outreach and creative design. Learn about how the project team iterated through a center-running bikeway pilot to preserve parklets while also re-designing the pilot to a more traditional curbside-running bikeway. The final bikeway design required the development of a new parklet typology for San Francisco, a floating parklet.

This tour will include insights from project engineering/design, communications, curb management, and the Shared Spaces Program. It is anticipated that the corridor will still be under construction during this tour, the exact route may vary depending on the status of the project at the time of the Symposium.



Start time 4.30 *Friday, April 11th*

1. **SPUR -** 654 Mission St, San Francisco, CA 94105
2. **Montgomery BART Station -** 598 Market St, San Francisco, CA 94104
3. **16th St Mission BART Station -** Qa, 2000 Mission St, San Francisco, CA 94110
4. **Four Barrels Coffee -** 375 Valencia St, San Francisco, CA 94103
5. **Venga Empanadas -** 443 Valencia St, San Francisco, CA 94103
6. **Manny's -** 3092 16th St, San Francisco, CA 94103
7. **Bao -** 590 Valencia St, San Francisco, CA 94110
8. **Dandelion Chocolate -** 740 Valencia St, San Francisco, CA 94110
9. **The Beehive -** 842 Valencia St, San Francisco, CA 94110

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Ric Abramson

A licensed design professional for over three decades, Ric. Abramson FAIA joined the City of West Hollywood in 2019 to lead its new Urban Design Architecture Studio as the City Architect. Graduated with a master's degree from UCLA, Ric. also studied architecture as a visiting artist at the American Academy in Rome in 1995 and as a Fulbright scholar to Italy in 1996. An educator as well, he taught for 18 years as a faculty member at the USC School of Architecture and SCI-Arc in Los Angeles. Throughout his professional life, Ric. has been a consistent implementer of urban placemaking, sustainable design, and climate inspired solutions. In the realm of legislative policy, as a private citizen, he crafted two bills that were ultimately signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown. In 2016, he was elevated to the American Institute of Architects' College of Fellows, an honor bestowed on less than 3% of all architects nationally. Since joining the City of West Hollywood, Ric. has been active in overseeing capital improvement projects, producing community education programs, and leading visioning studies for new public spaces, biodiverse ecosystems, and two city park remodels.



Kelly Albers

Kelly Albers is Shared Spaces Permit Lead at San Francisco Public Works. She started her career with the department back in 2018 and has become a key member of the permitting team, focusing on the processing of commercial permits for businesses seeking to establish outdoor seating and merchandise displays in the public right-of-way. When the pandemic hit, she was brought on board to help develop the Shared Spaces Program and has since assisted hundreds of businesses with creating compliant parklets. Outside of work, she enjoys traveling, attending live music events, and spending time with friends, family, and her two cats.



Volodymyr (Vlad) Amiot

Vlad is a designer, sessional instructor, and current PhD student at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at the University of Calgary. His area of research is in queer theory and its application in architecture, with a special interest in dirt as a queering technology in urban spaces.

Vlad holds a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Ecology and Evolution from the University of Calgary and a Master of Architecture from the University of Manitoba. After graduation, he worked in architecture, including at Calgary firms Sturgess and Spectacle, as well as in allied design fields. In 2018, he founded Picostudio, a practice positioned at the intersection of architecture, installation, industrial design, and craft. Picostudio has collaborated with various Calgarian cultural institutions, including Beakerhead, TELUS Spark, Vivo for Healthier Generations, and Alberta Ballet, as well as with private clients. In his spare time, Vlad enjoys getting his hands dirty in his workshop.



Jean Carlo Aranda Reyes

Degree in Audiovisual Media from the CAAV, with experience in campaign management and communication strategies, specialist in coordination of cultural centers and consultant for creative companies.

Winner of the PROJUVENTUDES Fund of the Federal Youth Institute for the project “Youth Network for the recovery of public spaces”. Founder of CDEStudios, consulting firm that empowers and connects communities through Social Innovation and public rescue.



Tolu Sydney Atoyebi

Tolu Atoyebi is a Planner and Designer based in San Francisco, originally from Chicago. Since 2022, she has been with the San Francisco Planning Department, contributing to both Development Review and the Tenderloin Community Action Plan. In the Tenderloin, she helps lead community-driven projects that enhance public spaces and build community capacity through resident advocacy, tactical placemaking, and activations. Passionate about design, social justice, and community service, Tolu is committed to mentoring and uplifting youth in the field and advancing more inclusive and participatory planning processes.



Elijah Ball

Elijah Ball is a San Francisco-based urban designer specializing in campus planning, landscape design, and community engagement. He holds a Master of Landscape Architecture from Cornell University and a B.A. in Urban Planning and Geography from San Francisco State University. Dedicated to making cities more livable and connected, his work spans university master plans and open space projects across diverse geographies in the United States.



Rob Berry

Rob Berry is an architect and educator based in Los Angeles. He is Principal of Berry and Linné, an architecture practice he founded in 2012, and Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California.

Rob's professional work focuses on the everyday spaces of our cities, ranging in scale from bicycle racks and parklets to housing and public plazas. Key projects of his practice include: People St, the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation's program for parklets and plazas; Todos Juntos, a public plaza and art installation at the Benjamin Franklin Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library in Boyle Heights; and Kaleidoscope, a temporary micro-park and interactive installation in West Hollywood.

At USC, Rob teaches design studios and seminars on urbanism and the public realm. His teaching emphasizes the value of cities for a collective, sustainable, and just future.



Katy Birnbaum

Where you see a desolate street, Katy Birnbaum sees a party waiting to happen.

With this unique vision and a passion for bringing people together, Katy founded Into The Streets in 2023 to help lead San Francisco's regeneration efforts with a focus on culture, community, and creativity.

Since then, Into The Streets has launched Downtown First Thursdays and Bhangra and Beats Night Market and has been recognized as a leader in downtown revitalization by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Mayor London Breed, Downtown SF Partnership, and the Center for Architecture & Design/AIA-SF for its outstanding efforts to revitalize Downtown SF.

Bringing over a decade of experience in event production, community organizing, team development, and public/private partnerships, Katy knows how to invite stakeholders to the table to successfully collaborate, share a vision, and make immediate and lasting change in their communities.



Rachel Burke

Rachel has spent over 15 years activating public space with cultural programming and events throughout Los Angeles County. As CicLAvia's Chief Program Officer, Rachel leads all event planning, programming and logistics from start to finish. She works closely with cities, partners and the local community to ensure that each CicLAvia is fun, safe, and successful. In her previous job with Community Arts Resources, she produced multiple festivals and pop-ups including GLOW for the City of Santa Monica, Little Tokyo Design Week, Chinatown Summer Nights, Friday Night Concerts at the J. Paul Getty Museum, and Family Weekends at The Broad. A native Angeleno and UC Berkeley graduate, Rachel is always happy to share her tips on the best spots to dine and drink around LA.



Douglas Burnham

A practicing architect for over 30 years, Douglas founded ENVELOPE Architecture + Design in 2002: an idea-driven architecture and activations studio intent on realizing an equitable and compelling built environment. As a certified B-Corp, ENVELOPE is known for their innovative process of prototyping programmatic elements for permanent projects through interim use. Their process uses direct community feedback to build robust data sets derived from community needs and desires, leading to a ground-up programmatic response that is rooted in the specificity of place.

In 2012, ENVELOPE gained international recognition for PROXY, a pioneering temporary cultural hub presenting film, music, food and fitness in the heart of San Francisco. Douglas speaks and consults widely on interim use as a strategic tool for cities and organizations, and is applying this design thinking to projects from Tucson and Boston to San Francisco's Bayview Hunters Point and Tenderloin.



Belinda Chan

Belinda is an interdisciplinary designer and planner based in Vancouver, Canada. She is passionate about developing creative approaches to planning and design as a way to foster community resiliency. In her role as a Public Space Planner at the City of Vancouver, she strives to build relationships with communities to break down barriers to access and co-create more community-serving public spaces. Belinda is grateful to live on the traditional, ancestral, un-surrendered territories of the Musqueam Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples, and is committed to the ongoing work of seeking truth and healing through decolonization.



Hoh Chen

Hoh Chen is a Program Manager at SF New Deal, where he is dedicated to enhancing community vibrancy and fostering the artistic and cultural life of San Francisco. A Bay Area native and first-generation Taiwanese-American, Hoh has a rich background as an orchestral conductor and operations director, with leadership experience spanning the fine arts, professional services, hospitality, academia, and grassroots non-profit sectors.

Over the past two years, Hoh worked on the Shared Spaces Equity Grants program and helped business owners by administering grants and providing technical assistance for operators trying to transition their pandemic-era parklets into the permanent Shared Spaces program. He also led the design and implementation of the Arts and Culture grants portion of the program, helping Shared Spaces operators activate their outdoor spaces with live performances, artistic installations and murals, and cultural programming.



Amy Cohen

Amy Cohen is the Business Generation Manager at the Port of San Francisco. Prior to 2023, for the past 15+ years Amy worked in multiple roles at the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development, where most recently she was the Director of Public Space Regeneration. Amy is an urban strategist, program developer and grantmaker who designs ambitious cross-sector initiatives that bring new life to places that need it - from underutilized public spaces, empty buildings and vacant storefronts to neighborhoods and, more recently, downtown San Francisco.

Throughout her career, she has built partnerships with a broad array of stakeholders, including residents of low-income neighborhoods, to co-create change, build community, and rebuild trust in government. Amy is a graduate of a Masters program in community development at University of California, Davis and has a BA from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine.



Desi Danganan

Desi Danganan is a Filipino-American community leader and Executive Director of Kultivate Labs, a nonprofit driving economic and cultural development in San Francisco's SOMA Pilipinas. Through initiatives like Balay Kreative, Kapwa Gardens, and UNDISCOVERED SF, he empowers local artists and entrepreneurs, fostering cultural expression, economic resilience, and community revitalization.



Ben Davis

Ben Davis is the founder and Chief Visionary Officer of Illuminate, the nonprofit arts group best known for creating The Bay Lights, the monumental light sculpture on the Bay Bridge. Through large-scale, collaborative works of public art—always free and open to all—Davis transforms the urban realm into a stage for inspiration and civic pride. His projects range from reimagining the Golden Gate Bandshell and JFK Promenade into the Golden Mile, to orchestrating luminous laser-based experiences across San Francisco's skyline. Davis coined San Francisco "The City of Awe," an open-source identity that frames the city as a beacon of creativity, unity, and wonder. With a proven track record of turning bold ideas into real-world impact, he invites cities to dream big, embrace beauty, and spark transformation from the ground up.



Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher

Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher is the Helen Hilton Raiser Curator of Architecture and Design at SFMOMA. She sets the overall vision for the department, overseeing acquisitions, exhibitions and publications. In this department, Dunlop Fletcher has developed a curatorial approach to collecting and exhibiting design as it intersects with technology. Dunlop Fletcher holds a bachelor's degree in Art History from New York University, a master's degree in Curatorial Studies of Contemporary Art from Bard College and a master's degree in Architecture History and Theory from Harvard University.



Raffaella Falchi

Raffaella Falchi Macias is the executive director of Youth Art Exchange, taking the reins in 2020. She has been at YAX for over 17 years as a faculty artist, director of programs, and most recently deputy director. She is an educator, designer and choreographer and holds a B.A. in psychology from UC Berkeley and a Masters in Architecture from California College of the Arts. She is an architectural designer with an emphasis on social design. She received a fellowship from CCA and worked with the Manguinhos favela community in Rio de Janeiro under the Brazilian architect Jorge Mario Jauregui and his Favela/Barrio project. She has spent over a decade working at the intersection of arts and youth development as an educator teaching architecture and dance to public high school students. She is also the founder and artistic director of Sambaé dance company, and is a world dance faculty member for almost 2 decades at ODC in San Francisco. She is quadrilingual, speaking Spanish, Italian and Portuguese.



David Fletcher

David is the founding principal of Fletcher Studio. He has practiced in landscape architecture for 30 years, and has worked on the planning, design, and construction of projects ranging in scale from regional watersheds to furniture design. David's formative education in field biology and fine art created an eclectic foundation where urban ecology, pop culture, and the California landscape intermingle with the everyday.

David oversees the Studio's project portfolio and serves as Design Director for the office's projects, collaborating with Project Managers, designers, clients, and communities to help bring planning, multifamily housing, and open space projects to fruition. In addition, David has worked in a range of different design applications, including: video games, public art, and speculative environments. The studio's work has been exhibited internationally and David continues to lecture, write, and review projects exploring possibilities for engaging and enlivening design.



Julie Flynn

Julie Flynn is an urban planner and designer with over a decade of experience spanning public and private sector roles. As a Principal at Street Plans, Julie leads a portfolio of Tactical Urbanism and Placemaking projects with a focus on streets and waterfronts. Highlights include a recent project at San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf. Prior to joining Street Plans, Julie served in key positions at the City of San Francisco's Planning Department and the City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, where she managed innovative public realm and downtown recovery initiatives. Julie holds a BA in Urban Studies from Brown University.



Veronica Foster

Veronica's passion for increasing livability in cities emerged from a unique study of cognitive science and urban design at Tufts University in Boston, MA. Veronica believes data, storytelling and advocacy for equity are the keys to create the change we want to see in cities. You might see this come alive in the messaging she creates for the Civic Design Center in Nashville, TN. At the Design Center she also leads the strategy for community education events as well as major advocacy projects like the Parklet Design Competition. Design is not just a creative outlet for Veronica, but a critical element to improving quality of life. By being on the Board for Nashville Design Week, she is also dedicated to making design more accessible to the general public.

Veronica is committed to working with and raising the voices of people in their communities. She is a natural facilitator, dedicated to mindful listening, and speaking up in difficult discussions.



Pete Frankel

Pete Frankel is a licensed Landscape Architect who studied Landscape Architecture and City Planning at UC Berkeley. For the last decade Pete has worked at Bionic, a San Francisco based Landscape Architecture and Urban Design firm where he is currently a Principal. Pete's work at Bionic includes leading the design and management of a wide range of projects, including the recently completed Redwood Square in downtown Sunnyvale, the new Founders Tower at Adobe's Headquarters in San Jose, the LinkedIn Middlefield Campus in Mountain View, and the Third Street Flashlight paklet at the Museum of Craft and Design in San Francisco. Pete's expertise is in the conception and implementation of innovative approaches to public realm and urban infrastructure for open spaces, campuses and workplaces. His experience spans from master planning through construction administration and he has played a key role in projects ranging from the size of a few parking spaces to an urban district.



Ross Hansen

Ross Hansen is a Senior Design Associate at Kounkuey Design Initiative. He is passionate about using design as a tool to catalyze social change. Prior to joining KDI, Ross worked as a landscape designer at Hood Design Studio and at Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture. He also worked as a design and fabrication manager at LA-Más, and taught a design and build course at Woodbury University's Agency for Civic Engagement Center. Ross holds a Bachelor of Arts in Landscape Architecture from Iowa State and a Master of Fine Arts from Cranbrook Academy of Art.



Nataly Gattegno

Nataly Gattegno is an artist and founding managing partner of FUTUREFORMS, an interdisciplinary design and research collaborative that has developed a range of award-winning projects exploring the intersections of art and design with public space, advanced fabrication technologies, and responsive building systems.

Gattegno is currently a Professor at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco, CA. Her work has explored notions of territory –- terrestrial, arctic, urban, and suburban -- by speculating on the design opportunities and inhabitation of extreme climatic environments. Nataly was born and raised in Athens, Greece. She received a MA from Cambridge University, St. John's College, UK, and a Masters of Architecture from Princeton University.



Elizabeth Gómez Ibarra

Master in Social Innovation and Wellness Management, and Bachelor in Industrial Design from the University of Guadalajara. Specialized in Accessibility and Universal Design in Urban Environments by the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México. Professor of Design Methods, Social Entrepreneurship and Design for Sustainability. Founder of Ortopedia Urbana, a citizen laboratory that promotes citizen participation for the rescue of public spaces through placemaking. Consultant in Social Innovation and founder of CDE-Community, Design & Engagement.

For more than 10 years coordinates social innovation projects for the rescue of public space, municipal youth award for civic merit with the project to rescue the river Tepatitlán, participant and international speaker in food security projects in Peru, plastic transformation in Costa Rica and universal accessibility in Argentina. Part of the 10th generation of YLAI (Young Leadership of Americas Initiative).



Cristy Johnson Limon

Cristy Johnston Limón is Deputy Director of the Oakland Economic and Workforce Development Department. She previsously held executive director roles at national poetry and spoken word organization Youth Speaks, Oakland based performing arts organization Destiny Arts Center, and San Francisco economic development organization in San Francisco, Excelsior Action Group. Her professional experience includes real estate and community development, public policy as a legislative aide, and nonprofit leadership with a focus on organizational change. Cristy grew up in San Francisco and is passionate about advancing social change through broad cross-sector engagement, investing in leaders and in social impact organizations. On the board of Oakland's Bandaloop and former co-chair of the Haas Alumni Diversity Council, Cristy mentors and leads rising and established leaders in arts, culture, and business to advance positive social change.



Daveed Kapoor

Daveed Kapoor has been practicing architecture in Los Angeles since 2000. In 2005 Daveed founded utopiad.org, an architecture and urbanism collective focused on redressing social justice issues in Central Los Angeles, and creating space that improves the quality of people's lives. This work includes housing; art galleries, performance spaces; hospitality projects; public space improvements; public art commissions; and large scale urban speculations.

Daveed has taught design studios at Cal Poly Pomona's Departments of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban and Regional Planning.

Kapoor is an advocate for a more sustainable future for Los Angeles, pushing for policy changes and physical improvements to our walking, biking, and transit systems. He has led numerous community walks all across Los Angeles, has successfully implemented new bus stops, helped the Bus Riders Union design documents to achieve bus only lanes, and served on the board of Los Angeles Walks for ten years.



Kirk Keller

With 25+ years of experience, he specializes in public realm and urban development projects, collaborating with cities, communities, and organizations to create unique and meaningful places. Kirk blends landscape architecture and urban design, ensuring streets, parks, and open spaces function as one interconnected system that supports people and the environment.

He played a key role in pioneering parklets in Southern California, transforming underutilized street space into vibrant, people-focused public areas. His work has set a precedent for reclaiming urban space for pedestrians, inspiring policies and projects that have reshaped city streets to be more active, engaging, and community oriented.
A licensed Professional Landscape Architect in California, Nevada, and Texas, and a LEED AP since 2007, Kirk has led award-winning projects recognized nationally and internationally for their innovation and impact.



Jason Kelly Johnson

JASON KELLY JOHNSON is lead artist and founding partner of FUTUREFORMS. He brings an expertise in computational design and advanced digital fabrication, produced through the lens of critical art production and public space advocacy. Jason was born and raised in Canada. He received a Bachelor of Science from the University of Virginia, and a Masters of Architecture from Princeton University. Johnson is currently a full Professor at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco, CA. He also serves on the board of the Museum of Craft & Design and the Green Benefit District.



Naria Kiani

Naria Kiani is Senior Associate at Fehr & Peers and formerly Senior Planning Principal at Kounkuey Design Initiative. She is an urban planner with over a decade of experience with a focus on equitable public space. Through a community-engaged approach, she has led open streets programs, vacant land revitalization projects, transportation research studies, and policy development. She excels at leading residents and government officials through collective co-design processes that result in safer, more equitable built environments. Naria holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Policy, Planning, and Management from the University of Oregon and a Master of Urban Planning from the University of California, Los Angeles.



Stella Kim

Stella brings a wealth of knowledge to SITELAB, with experience spanning the Bay Area and New York City, as well as public and private sectors. From leading NYC's privately owned public spaces program to guiding new visions for downtown streets and open spaces, Stella is always looking for opportunities to improve the public realm and enhance the human experience of cities. Stella possesses a Master of City Planning with an urban design emphasis from UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design, and a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies and Planning from UC San Diego.



Rafael Mandelman

San Francisco Board of Supervisors President, Rafael Mandelman represents District 8 on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Supervisor Mandelman is one of the LGBTQ members of the Board of Supervisors, and throughout his first term, was one of the only LGBTQ Supervisors in Northern California.

Supervisor Mandelman co-sponsored several pieces of legislation that advanced the use of parklets and open streets during and after the pandemic. His District includes vibrant examples of communities activating their streets, such as the Castro Art Mart on the first Sunday of the month; and Castro Night Market on the third Friday of the month.

He is also a strong advocate for the City's public transportation system, co-chairing the Muni Reliability Working Group in 2019 and leading efforts to stabilize and reinvest in our transit and paratransit systems in his role as Chair of the County Transportation Authority. Supervisor Mandelman is committed to pedestrian and bicycle safety and closed a funding gap to deliver major streetscape improvements through the Upper Market Safety Project in 2020.



Brian Manford

Brian Manford is a senior transportation planner at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency on the Parking and Curb Management Team. Since 2022, he has contributed to San Francisco's Shared Spaces parklet permitting process, data analysis, and program evaluation. As a multimodal planner, he enjoys working on challenging projects that bring together multiple perspectives and disciplines to find shared benefits and achieve tangible outcomes. Prior to joining the SFMTA he worked for Nelson\ Nygaard Transportation Consulting and King County Metro Transit.



Myrna Melgar

Myrna Melgar is Chair of the Land Use and Transportation Committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. During and after the pandemic, Melgar championed the Shared Spaces Ordinances that started with hearings in her committee. She advocated for lowering barriers for nonprofit, arts, and other groups; making parklets and open streets more accessible to all neighborhoods.

Melgar formerly worked as the Executive Director of the Jamestown Community Center, Deputy Director of the Mission Economic Development Agency, Director of Homeownership Programs at the Mayor's Office of Housing during the Newsom Administration, and served as President of the City Planning Commission and Vice President of the Building Inspection Commission. Her legislative priorities include reducing homelessness; increasing the availability of affordable housing and homeownership opportunities for San Franciscans; improving rent control protections for tenants; supporting small businesses, supporting the rights of workers, improving our public transportation infrastructure, reducing our city's carbon footprint and expanding education opportunities for disadvantaged San Francisco youth and families.



Jenna Miller

Jenna E. Miller is an Architect and Urban Designer focused on advancing spatial justice in the public realm. Jenna is Co-Founder of NYC-based design firm RUEd' ARCH, as well as Director of Urban Design & Policy at the NYC Public Design Commission, where she authored the award-winning publication, Designing New York: Streetscapes for Wellness and oversees the capital project review process and various interagency public realm design, policy, and research initiatives. Jenna is an Urban Design Forum Fellow and holds a M.Arch from Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and a B.A. in Architecture and Environmental Studies from Wellesley College. She has presented widely about centering local knowledge and developing creative strategies for improved equity and engagement in the design of the public realm.



Joel Miller

Joel's passion for sustainable mobility and public space was born at Backroads (an $80M leading bike tour company) where I led luxury week-long bike tours through some of the world's most beautiful places while also managing back-end operations. To apply the leadership and organizational skills I learned at Backroads to city design, I pursued advanced degrees in both urban planning and landscape architecture and began a career in city government. Today, I combine my passion, experience, and education to help manage Seattle's streets, sidewalks, and other public space to be lively, vibrant, and equitable community-centered space.



Inumidun Obikoya

Inumidun Obikoya combines design, Black culture, and human potential in her work. As a design engineer and city planner in the Washington, DC Metro area for over 20 years, she has implemented initiatives focusing on multimodal transportation, sustainability, and development. She also serves as her neighborhood's historic preservation specialist.

Currently pursuing doctoral studies at Morgan State University in Architecture, Urbanism and Built Environments, Inumidun explores the relationship between built environment and Black life. She's also an urban planning instructor and volunteer, mentoring future community advocates.

Beyond her professional life, Inumidun's passions include family, yoga, community, culture, art, and travel. This holistic approach enriches her perspective on the spaces where we dwell.



Oscar Suastegui Quintero

Oscar is a landscape architect, with experience in project management of public space and road infrastructure with a focus on mobility, community design and urban planning. He is always interested in urban, social and urban development issues.

He has a track record in the public administration of Mexico City in the management of programmes and projects of urban infrastructure and road infrastructure as well as in tactical urbanism projects in conjunction with local NGO's, as well as with local governments throughout the Mexican Republic.



Shayda Rager

Shayda Rager is a transportation planner and works at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency going on nine years. While working in the Livable Streets subdivision she led various Vision Zero active transportation projects including the Golden Gate Quick-Build Project and Bayview Quick-Build Project. She now works in the Parking & Curb Management subdivision of the agency applying the Agency's Curb Management Strategy on projects like the Valencia Bikeway Improvements and Folsom & Howard Streetscape Projects. She has a bachelor's degree in geography/ environmental studies from UCLA and obtained a master's degree in city planning and a GIS certificate from UPenn.



Andrew Robinson

"Andrew serves as the Executive Director of The East Cut Community Benefit District, leading initiatives to elevate public spaces and enrich the quality of life in San Francisco's rapidly evolving neighborhood. Since 2016, Andrew has overseen the neighborhood's transformation, ensuring that parks, open spaces, retail areas, and street services align with the community's dynamic growth.



Ed Solis

As a former parks and recreational professional with the City of San Jose, Ed was the spearhead and creative mind behind Viva CalleSJ. Viva CalleSJ is the largest open streets program in Northern California and is celebrating 10 years of connecting people to people and people to places this September. Ed also lead the placemaking/Public Life efforts for the City of San Jose establishing the high successful Viva Parks program services.



Brian Springfield

Brian moved to San Francisco in 1997 and found his home in the Castro. His professional background is in architecture and graphic design, and he owned and operated his graphic design consultancy in the Castro for over 10 years. A believer in volunteerism and community service, Brian has served on the board of Castro Merchants for over eight years. In 2016, he help found The Friends of Harvey Milk Plaza and has served as the Executive Director since 2020.



Rohit Tak

Rohit Tak is an urban design and mobility planning professional with 13 years of experience across India, Southeast Asia, and North America. He specializes in public participation and data-driven approaches to urban transformation, leveraging his expertise in both developing and developed contexts to drive sustainable outcomes. Rohit holds a Master's degree from UC Berkeley as a Fulbright Fellow, a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Pune University, and a Leadership Diploma in Road Safety Management from Johns Hopkins University. He is dedicated to creating healthy, livable, and thriving communities.



Joaquin Torres

Joaquín Torres was elected as San Francisco's Assessor-Recorder on February 15, 2022. Prior to his election, Torres served as the Director of the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development since 2018, and has led citywide efforts to mitigate economic hardships on businesses and workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the years, Torres collaboratively leveraged resources across City departments to create opportunities for all, expand support for small businesses and workers, build capacity and stability for locally rooted nonprofits, and maximize equitable economic and social impact for the benefit of San Franciscan communities, residents, businesses, and neighborhoods. As Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, he provided citywide leadership and coordination for workforce development, business development, neighborhood economic development, film, small business, and development planning.



Connie Tran

Connie is a freelance Landscape Designer and Master of Environmental Design student at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at the University of Calgary. She is currently completing her thesis on parklets as a tool for creating flexible streets in downtown Calgary, Canada. Noticing a gap in small-scale temporary public infrastructure in Calgary, she hopes to introduce a parklet program to complement the existing patio program with a focus on public access.

Connie's artistic background fueled her creativity throughout her Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Landscape Architecture during her time at the University of Calgary. Combined with a love for the urban realm, she dug her feet into creative placemaking. In 2019, Connie collaborated with a fellow MLA classmate to design and build her first parklet for Park(ing) Day. Since then, she was involved in several more small-scale design-build projects that transforms underutilized parking spaces into exciting new amenities.



Kelly Varian

Kelly Varian is the Business Development Manager for Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Sectors at the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development. She has worked as a consultant with nonprofits, foundations, and public agencies in the arts sector. She specialized in helping clients use data to answer important questions, make informed decisions, and tell their story better. Her approach can be applied to a variety of projects including business planning, monitoring and evaluation, survey creation, audience research, and strategic planning.

Kelly's background is in both the arts and in data. At Vogl Consulting she worked on projects for local and national arts organizations. As Communications and Development Specialist at Sustain Arts, a cultural data platform developed at Harvard University, she helped artists put meaningful data to use.



Kimberly Vacca

Kimberly Vacca is the Public Space Activation Coordinator at the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). There, she manages the District's Streatery program, including developing design guidelines, processing public space permits, and assisting applicants through District processes. Kimberly also manages the District's Open Streets program and other public space activation programs and projects, including parklets, PARK(ing) Day, and Arts in the Right-of-Way (AROW).



Kristoffer Vestre

Kristoffer Vestre is the Chairman of Vestre, a company known for creating innovative, sustainable site furniture that brings people together. Since 1947, Vestre has helped shape public spaces around the world, from Times Square in New York City to Kings Cross in London and Aker Brygge in Oslo. Vestre's latest factory, The Plus, designed by BIG, is the most sustainable furniture factory in the world. Nearly ten years ago, Vestre partnered with the City of Oslo to develop a new modular, scalable parklet system. This collaboration led to the creation of Parklets 2.0, now featured in cities large and small across the globe.



Manny Yekutiel

Manny, originally from Los Angeles, earned a B.A. in political science from Williams College. He served as a White House Intern in the Office of Public Engagement and spent 12 months traveling through six countries on a Thomas Watson Fellowship studying LGBT rights movements. Manny returned to the United States as a field organizer for President Barack Obama's re-election campaign. He became chief of staff of FWD.us, an immigrant reform advocacy group, for which he was named one of Forbes 30 under 30 in law and policy in 2015. In 2016 Manny built a physical civic gathering space called Manny's, combining a restaurant, bar, coffee shop, political bookstore, and civic events space to increase civic participation. In its first year Manny's was awarded Small Business of the Year by the California State Senate and has been featured in the New York Times, Rolling Stone magazine, and the San Francisco Chronicle. It has served over 55,000 cups of coffee and tea, hosted over 500 civic events for the community, including over 150 local non-profits and 17 of the 2020 democratic presidential candidates. Manny's has helped 16 formerly homeless or incarcerated individuals graduate from the training kitchen run by the non-profit Farming Hope who now have full time employment.

SYMPOSIUM ORGANIZERS



Robin Abad Ocubillo, Co-Chair

Robin Abad Ocubillo is Co-Chair of the International Parklet Symposium, California. He is a dedicated public servant with a passion for civic innovation in public space design, planning, evaluation, and policy. He is currently the Citywide Ombuds at the City Administrator's office in Oakland, CA in a newly created role centering citywide equity and neighborhood resiliency through civic innovation across departments and agencies. Before that, he served as Director of Shared Spaces San Francisco, the City's banner public space programs that built upon Places for People, the first placemaking ordinance of its kind in the country for which Robin was the City's principal planner. He shepherded its legislation into a permanent program that continues to help communities leverage the public realm for economic recovery, social and psychological wellbeing. Robin is also curator and editor of social practice art; with past projects at The SF Urban Film Festival, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and SFMOMA.



Shruti Shankar, Co-Chair

Shruti Shankar is Co-Chair of the International Parklet Symposium, California. She is an urban design director and Senior Associate at Studio One Eleven, where she leads projects that transform streets, public spaces, and neighborhoods into more vibrant, people-centered environments. With a background in architecture and urban design, Shruti specializes in creating inclusive, community-driven places that enhance mobility, sustainability, and social life. She has led major streetscape and public realm initiatives, including waterfront visioning, downtown revitalization, and policy development to support active public spaces. Passionate about tactical urbanism and the role of design in shaping equitable cities, Shruti has worked across scales, from parklets to district-wide plans. She brings expertise in curbside innovation and placemaking strategies that balance accessibility, economic vitality, and community benefit in urban streetscapes.



John Bela, Programme Committee

John Bela is a landscape architect, urban designer, and co-founder of the internationally acclaimed Rebar Group, creators of Park(ing) Day and pioneers of parklet design. With over a decade of experience leading multidisciplinary teams, John specializes in public realm strategy, public space design, and the creation of equitable, resilient neighborhoods. He collaborates with communities, municipalities, and private partners to transform underutilized spaces into vibrant places for the common good. Skilled in ethnographic research and spatial analysis, John integrates social science and data-driven strategies into his work, while excelling in public speaking, facilitation, and media engagement. Currently, John leads a consulting practice dedicated to people-centered projects, is the executive director of the Park(ing) Day Network, and is writing the Parklet Book on the history and evolution of flexible curb lanes and streets as public space.



Austin Blackwell, Photographer

Austin Blackwell is a freelance event photographer who has with 10 years experience covering film festivals such as SF Urban Film Festival, CAAMfest and Frameline.



Luisa Bravo, Programme Advisor

Dr Luisa Bravo is a public space scholar, passionate activist, cultural entrepreneur and academic. She is the founder and president of City Space Architecture, which promotes public space culture on a global scale, the founder and editor-in-chief of The Journal of Public Space, the founder and director of the Public Space Academy, and the founder and curator of Museo Spazio Pubblico in Bologna, Italy. After completing her PhD at the University of Bologna (2008), she has taught, researched and lectured in Europe, the United States, the Middle East, Asia and Australia. Since 2013 she has been an Adjunct Professor of Urban Design at the University of Florence. She is an advisor to UN-Habitat, an expert for the European Commission, a member of the AESOP Thematic Group on Public Spaces and Urban Cultures, a member of the Board of Experts of the European Prize for Urban Public Space promoted by the Centre for Contemporary Culture in Barcelona, and an advisor to the Global Platform for the Right to the City.



Michael Brentlinger, Graphics

Michael Brentlinger has a background in Graphic Design and is currently pursuing his degree in Architecture. Michael led the graphic design and production of the parklet symposium program book.



Jitka Dekojova, Volunteer Coordinator

Jitka Dekojova is Project Manager at Studio One Eleven, and a licensed landscape architect with an interdisciplinary background in Urban Design and Environmental Planning. She brings over a decade of project experience in the USA and Czech Republic to her work. She has led a variety of project types and scales, from streetscape improvement projects, to urban design, civic plazas, community engagement efforts to public parks. Jitka is well equipped to balance both aesthetics, current urban needs, and ecological resilience in landscape design, while emphasizing adaptive reuse and green stormwater infrastructure. She takes into account the ephemeral phenomenological aspects of the urban environment: the need for whimsical elements, the joy of unexpected discovery in everyday urbanism, the advantage of flexibility in planned spaces, and the importance of a mix of people to bring vibrancy into urban spaces.



Carolyn Hyunh, Producer

Carolyn Huynh is Events Coordinator, AIASF/CA+D. She bridges the architectural community through thoughtfully designed events at AIA San Francisco (AIASF) and the Center for Architecture + Design (CA+D). She produces everything from major award ceremonies to discussions addressing critical industry challenges, ensuring each gathering fosters connections, sparks dialogue, and drives the field forward.

Drawing on her UC Berkeley Media Studies background, Carolyn brings a keen understanding of communication and connection to every program. Whether coordinating large-scale events or intimate roundtables, she crafts environments that catalyze meaningful progress in the built environment.



Lawrence Li, Producer

Lawrence Li does systems design, analytics, finance, HR, facilities, and IT. Urban space enthusiast splitting time between Honolulu and SF, seeking innovative partnerships to transform cities and enhance quality of life through design and community engagement.



Janet Le, Graphics

Janet is an urban designer who is passionate about creating more sustainable, equitable, and resilient places. As part of the Urban Design team at Studio One Eleven, she is closely involved in design strategy and community engagement efforts on projects at various scales. She has a background in graphic design, multimedia arts, and visual communications, which allows her to explore innovative ways of engaging communities in the planning process through the use of new technologies and storytelling methods.





Aubrey Littleton, Producer

Aubrey Littleton is a marketing, communications, and public engagement leader at SPUR, where his work helps advance policies for a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous Bay Area region. He develops and implements branding, outreach, and advocacy strategies while improving operational processes to enhance SPUR's reach and impact.

His expertise spans strategic communications, digital marketing, media relations, event production, and public affairs, with a strong background in research and operational strategy. Before joining SPUR, he was a researcher at Altimeter, a Prophet company, analyzing emerging technologies and their impact on business and society. He has also led digital transformation initiatives in the architecture, engineering, and construction industries.

Passionate about creating more connected, vibrant urban spaces, Aubrey is deeply invested in the future of the Bay Area's cities and the role of public space in fostering community, economic vitality, and sustainability.

Aubrey holds a B.A. in International Relations and French from UC Davis.



Monica Munowitch, Programme Committee

Monica Munowitch is Principal Planner at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), and currently manages the City's Shared Spaces Program. She is passionate about civil service, the creative use of public space, and has served many capacities in her nearly 12 years with the city. As a seasoned program and section manager, Monica's roles leading multi-disciplinary teams spans from complete streets planning to inform San Francisco's capital programs to directing Shared Spaces in its transition to a functional and sustainable post-pandemic program. Prior to joining the SFMTA, Monica worked as a transportation consultant in the Bay Area managing multi-modal projects from bicycle pedestrian plans, transportation demand management for large campuses, to safe routes to school.



Ellina Poltavtseva, Producer

A licensed architect in California, Ellina Poltavtseva was born in Yekaterinburg, Russia, and has called San Francisco home for over four years. She holds a Master of Advanced Architectural Design from UC Berkeley and a Bachelor's in Architecture from Moscow Architectural Institute. With over six years of international experience, she has contributed to renowned firms such as MAD Architects in Beijing and BCV Architecture and Interiors in San Francisco.

Ellina's work focuses on creating meaningful public spaces, museums, flagship stores, restaurants and innovation centers. Her designs emphasize cultural and environmental connections, storytelling, and nature-inspired aesthetics.

A recipient of multiple competition recognitions and awards, Ellina actively participates in architectural discourse and competitions.



Ilaria Salvadori, Programme Committee

Ilaria Salvadori is Senior Planner and Urban Designer with the San Francisco Planning Department, where she has overseen many tactical urbanism projects and programs across the City's diverse neighborhoods.

Ilaria Salvadori is an urban designer with the City Design Group at the San Francisco Planning Department (USA) reclaiming underutilized spaces in the city and turning it into vibrant catalyst places for San Francisco neighborhoods. She is currently managing the Public Space Initiative of the Tenderloin Community Action Plan -one of the first community-led Participatory Budgeting efforts in the country.

While at the SF Planning, Ilaria has helped create the Mission Community Market, the first open air market in the District and has managed the Mission District Streetscape Plan, the Cesar Chavez East Community Design Plan and the Mission Public Life Plan, three community-based projects that rethink streets as multi-modal, inclusive spaces for people.

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Jensen Zack, Producer

ensen Zack is the Community Engagement Coordinator for AIASF and The Center for Architecture + Design.

Born and raised in San Francisco in a family of architects, she developed a deep appreciation for the built environment from an early age. Jensen's experiences as a chef in San Francisco, along with her anthropology studies in Paris, inspired her passion for community engagement. Today, she channels that passion into fostering connections between architects, designers, and the broader public, helping create inclusive spaces and dialogues that celebrate the city's unique design heritage.



Sophia Teng, Producer

Sophia Teng is the Communications Coordinator at AIA San Francisco (AIASF) and the Center for Architecture + Design (CA+D), where she leads strategic messaging and marketing campaigns, and manages large-scale projects that amplify public engagement with architecture and design. She works closely with consultants, designers, firms, and organizations to broaden the conversation about the built environment in the San Francisco Bay Area, fostering deeper connections between design professionals and the community.

As a San Francisco native and the daughter of an architect and landscape designer, Sophia has a passion for design and an appreciation for how spaces shape human experiences. She earned her degree in Art History from UC Berkeley, concentrating on museum and interdisciplinary reception studies, which deepened her understanding of cultural and historical narratives. Drawing from her multidisciplinary background, she combines design, culture, and environmental context to craft visual and written narratives that connect people with their surroundings.

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654 Mission St, San Francisco, CA 94105

2 **CENTER FOR ARTCHITECTURE + DESIGN**
140 Sutter St, San Fransisco, CA 94104

3 **GEHL**
207 Powell St, San Fransisco, CA 94102

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