

Uptown

Mt. Lebanon

A Place to Celebrate

2016





Acknowledgments

Board of Commissioners

John Bendel
David Brumfield
Kelly Fraasch
Stephen McLean
Steve Silverman

Strategic Plan Committee

Cheri Acrey
Bill Callahan
Steve Denenberg
Mara Peluso
Rick Sabeh
Keith McGill, Municipal Manager
Eric Milliron, Commercial Office District/Economic Development

The Businesses of Uptown and the Washington Road Corridor

**Residents of the Municipality of Mt. Lebanon
for all of their input and suggestions**

Prepared by: Environmental Planning & Design, LLC

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW

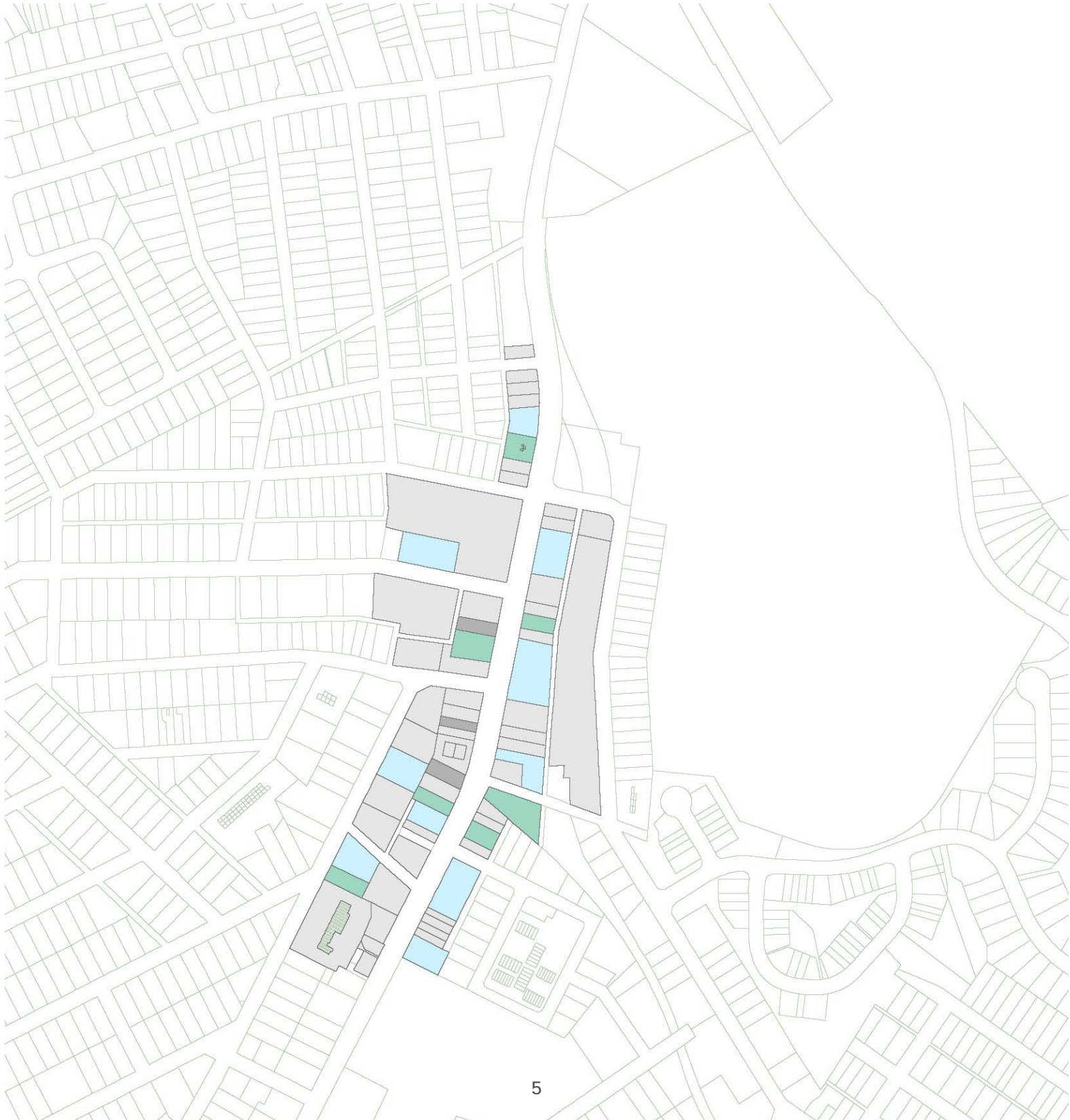
Uptown Mt. Lebanon	7
Purpose of the Strategic Plan	8
Objectives	9
Planning Process	10
Uptown Business District Map	11
Opportunities	12
Ongoing Considerations	13

VISION

Unifying the Commercial District	15
Selective Expansion	17
Maintaining the Streetscape	19
The Pedestrian Experience	21
Programming & Frequency	23
Discovering Parse Way	25
Key Actions	26

APPENDIX

OVERVIEW





lebohistory.org



lebomag.com

Uptown Mt. Lebanon

A Place to Celebrate

Uptown Mt. Lebanon has been serving the community for generations as a central place to live, work, play, and shop. Uptown is a lively corridor “open for business” and serves multiple functions: it is a place for residents’ everyday needs, a special trip for many from beyond the Municipality’s boundary and an identity that all communities seek.

Today, Uptown Mt. Lebanon continues to serve as the community’s commercial nucleus providing a variety of dining establishments, retail shops, and professional offices. Uptown is a community gathering space. Whether it is during a “First Friday,” the Saturday farmer’s market, or a parade, Mt. Lebanon’s residents and many others from communities near and far can be found frequenting Uptown.

With that, Uptown, at its heart, is a destination. This may be a common observation from a driver or passenger of a vehicle traveling North or South along Washington Road, but it is a subtle, yet intriguing, opportunity for those arriving by foot. Uptown, resting at the top of the ridge, offers pedestrians of nearby neighborhoods in the community as well as those arriving from the City of Pittsburgh or South Hills on the Port Authority’s light rail station with a series of visual and physical experiences as one ascends or descends this ridge.

Though the corridor’s past and current highest priorities and functions are to serve as a central point of local business, municipal outreach and community life, it has the potential to attract visitors from far and wide. Collectively, responding to these audiences represents the opportunity to embrace the Corridor’s past successes and to reinforce an enlivened vibrancy for Mt. Lebanon.

This document is organized as a general guide to aid in shaping the continued long-term well-being of Mt. Lebanon’s Uptown. The Vision presents opportunities and a look into the series of influences and concepts that can continue to be explored in the coming years. Where available, 2015 data about Uptown is highlighted for points of reference.

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

Building upon the Best

In 1995, Mt. Lebanon completed its Strategic Plan for Uptown. Since that time, the community has fulfilled a noteworthy series of recommendations:

1. Evaluated/determined a site for the Safety Center Building.
2. Developed the northeast corner of Shady Drive and Washington Road.
3. Established Clearview Common as a new town square/public space for both spontaneous and organized activities.

In 2013, Mt. Lebanon updated its Comprehensive Plan outlining goals and recommended guidelines to assist the municipality in its 10-year vision. The Comprehensive Plan focused on five main topics: Cooperation, Vitality, Connectivity, Systems, and Resources. The document also considered transportation challenges, the quality of residential neighborhoods, and the vitality of the community's commercial districts.

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to build upon the 1995 Strategic Plan and the 2013 Comprehensive Plan recommendations for Uptown. This Strategy aims to ensure the vitality of Uptown by fostering a commercial district that:

- Amplifies the qualities that enable residents to feel pride and draw inspiration from Uptown, Mt. Lebanon's nucleus
- Accommodates both everyday use and special activities within a safe, exciting environment responsive to both pedestrian and vehicular demands
- Serves residents first but while also continuing to draw visitors from the larger metropolitan region

With that, in the decades ahead, it is envisioned that *Uptown Mt. Lebanon is a vibrant mixed use district with dynamic shopping, cuisine, residences and culture that engage residents and visitors, near and far, in experiences that are fulfilling and beyond the expected.*



Objectives

Visions Coming into Focus

Specific objectives formed through this collaborative planning effort and thought include:

- Enhance pedestrian experience and safety; create a walkable district that serves pedestrians and automobiles equally. Intersections of particular interest include:
 - Washington Road and Alfred Street
 - Washington Road and Cedar Boulevard
 - Washington Road and Shady Drive
- Improve infrastructure to accommodate different modes of transportation; connect Mt. Lebanon to the greater metropolitan area
- Maintain balanced mix of retail establishments, restaurants, and professional offices
- Bring in a variety of business types that serve the wants of the community and also make Mt. Lebanon a destination commercial district that competes with other popular districts in the Tri-State area and beyond
- Extend the presence of retail, eating establishments, and residential land uses to promote vibrancy along Washington Road.
- Provide amenities and cultivate the development of businesses that allow for longer-lasting visits to Uptown rather than transient visits.
- Promote unique architectural features and building facades in combination with unifying themes to reinforce a recognizable sense of place.
- Continue developing targeted programming and/or events that bring people to Uptown more frequently.
- Strengthen the function and vitality of Clearview Common.
- Be able to accommodate events with higher attendance such as festivals and farmer's markets on a more regular basis.
- Assess usability of alleyways and service areas adjacent to Washington Road.
- Evaluate desired parking options and frame viable solutions based on feedback.
- Ensure maintenance, upkeep, and freshness of Uptown retail facades and residential units.

Planning Process

Creating the Vision

Community Outreach Public Survey

A public survey initiated during the August 2015 “First Friday” asked residents, business owners, and retail/restaurant patrons what they thought about Uptown Mt. Lebanon, and what, if any, issues should be addressed for improvements. The survey was also available at the public information office and through LeboAlerts and other media outlets. The survey yielded 966 responses illustrating how attentive residents are about their community. Results showed that most participants show support for a diverse variety of businesses along the corridor, tend to both walk and drive in order to reach Uptown, and envision Uptown as serving a variety of purposes and uses for its visitors while remaining a resource for residents.



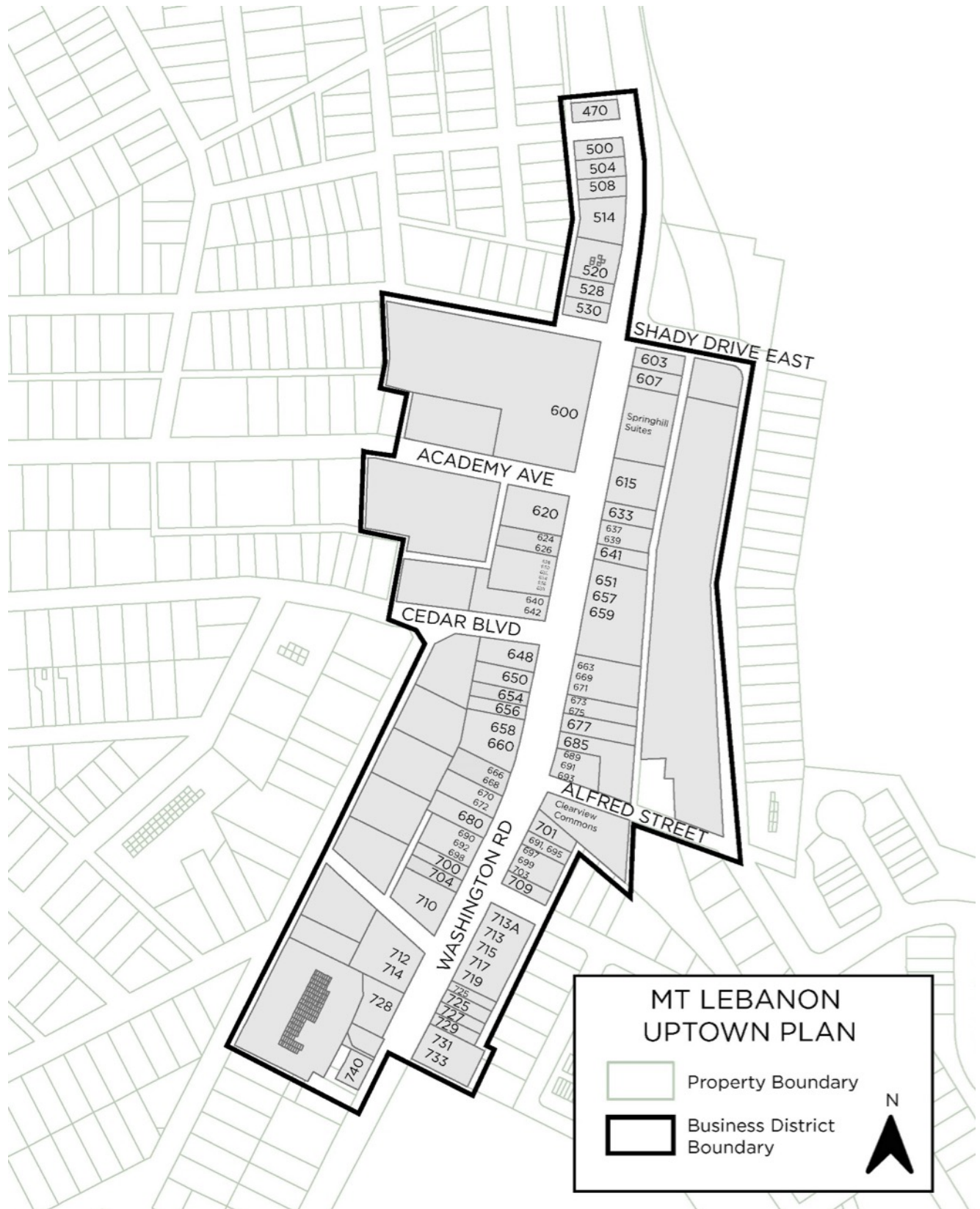
Stakeholder Feedback Local Business Interview

Two public meetings, held in October 2015, allowed residents and business owners to give voice to their vision for the Uptown corridor. Business owners expressed a desire for more foot traffic and for Uptown to be better promoted as a destination. It was also brought up that affordability of retail rental spaces should be a priority to retain and attract local businesses and to prevent the influx of national chains. Residents also discussed the need for pedestrian safety and lighting improvements. Other improvements regarding waste management, better utilization of Parse Way, and streetscape maintenance were also posed as part of these discussions.

Committee & Administrative Insight Administrative Expertise

Multiple departments within the Municipality’s administration carry out the everyday duties and functions that keep the Uptown Corridor thriving. As part of this planning efforts, representatives from management, commercial districts/economic development offices and public information collaborated on the evaluation of both challenges and possibilities. As the realities of resources will be an important component of realizing these efforts, the Municipality continues pursuing different possible funding avenues. A copy of current potential funding sources is kept of file at the Municipality’s commercial districts/economic development offices.

Uptown Business District Map



Opportunities

From Which to Build

Planning professionals and citizens call out numerous opportunities for further enhancing Uptown's character, activities and infrastructure. Notably:

1. Uptown serves as the destination spot for community events; programming of these events can increase or can further optimize building on the energies of past successes and defining distinctions of this community.
2. Visited by those looking for a specialty retail shop or a satisfying meal, stores located on Washington Road are frequented daily by residents. There are further opportunities to build both the local and regional draw of the Uptown commercial district.
3. Clearview Common, winning statewide attention through the American Planning Association of Pennsylvania as a 2015 Great Space, is a node of attraction and is a right-of-way space that is used with increasing frequency during community events. This space has the potential to be used even more extensively and to become a catalyst for the success of adjacent businesses.
4. Delivering finishing touches to the various elements of character along Washington Road can help create a distinguishable sense of place that fosters lasting experiences for visitors, encouraging them to revisit often.
5. From plentiful structured parking to seasonal special events, Uptown has the potential to provide visitor experiences that leave lasting impressions.



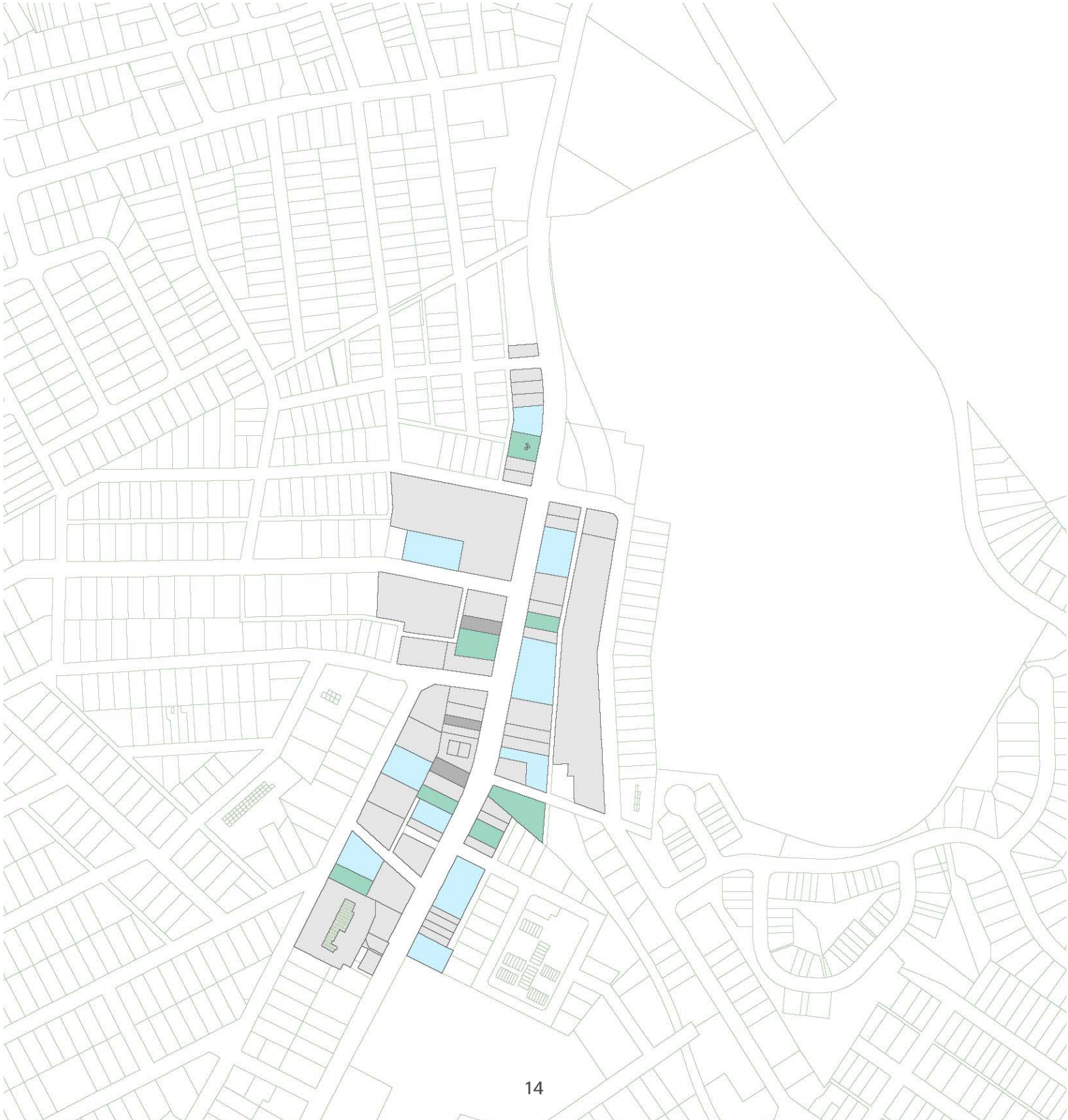
Ongoing Considerations

Areas for Focus

Uptown Mt. Lebanon, as a successful, popular central point within the Municipality, faces everyday challenges to thrive as a destination business district. These include:

- Solidifying district branding. A unifying factor or pattern that defines the district can further create a sense of place, promote businesses and foot traffic.
- Maintaining the overall mix. A success of Uptown is its high rate of occupancy. With first floor vacancies at an impressive 5-7%+, dining establishments, retail shops, and offices that serve the needs of both residents and visitors, and the hours of operation that dictate visitor flow.
- Determining outcomes of future safety evaluations in conjunction with PennDOT and prioritizing pedestrian and bicyclist safety to ensure that Mt. Lebanon's commercial district continues to succeed as a high-foot traffic, pedestrian-oriented area.
- Supporting strategic development where still possible. The commercial district itself is mostly built out. Though Academy Avenue and possibly a few other locations may still be developed, there is limited space overall. However, there remains the potential to build up rather than out.
- Determining the long-term function of Clearview Common. This is a space utilized during community events and activities held in Uptown, but it still has room for further, more frequent programming. Reevaluating this as a multipurpose space can increase use and foster vitality.
- Refocusing the perception (or misconception) of available on-street parking on adjacent and parallel streets as well as those perceptions of structure-related parking.
- Reinforcing Uptown's ability to compete with other area communities as a commercial destination.
- Continuing maintenance as an ongoing community effort, with special attention focused on cleanliness, health, and safety in and around the Uptown district.
- Recognizing that restaurant and larger-scale businesses are generally able to fulfill asking rental rates while smaller scale operations may experience greater limitations in meeting the current market rates.

VISION

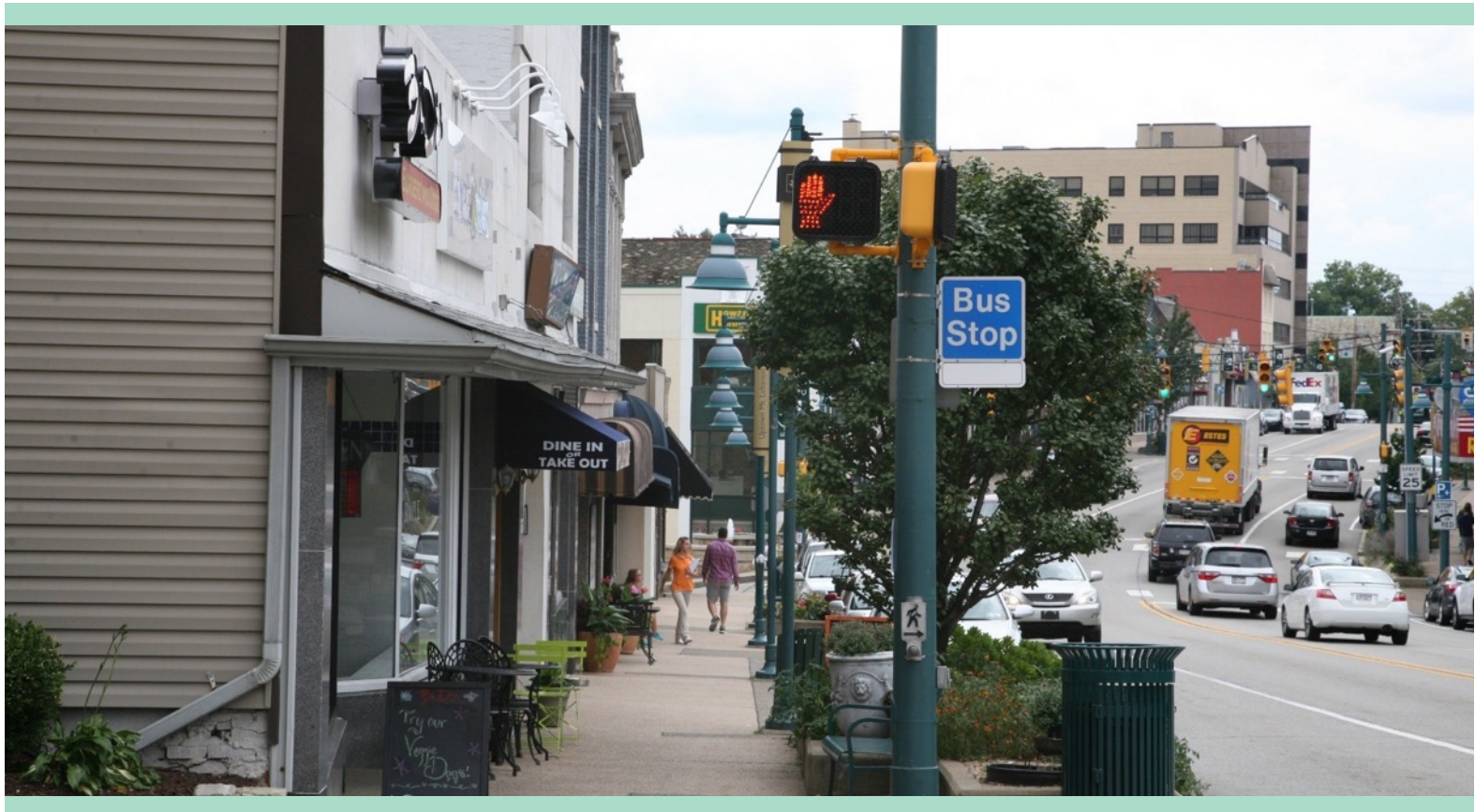


Unifying the Commercial District

Enlivening the Community

The Uptown District has an excitement that continues to grow. A rich Uptown experience comes to life when the District's businesses, buildings, programming and audience all come together; one of the great assets in Mt. Lebanon is its people. Vibrancy on the streets occurs among these retail shops, offices, and eating establishments. There is opportunity to bring further unity and livelihood in this corridor.

One of the Municipality's ongoing efforts is in ensuring that this street life creates positive, enduring memories for those who conduct their business and visit. An important part of this process in the years ahead is unifying patterns throughout the District. Among a diversity of building types, signage and public amenities, the Municipality can provide a framework where design remains inspiring while flexible. The common goal in this safe and unified space is to remain rooted in providing a business environment that remains timeless, welcoming to all, and "the" place to be.





In the coming years, where there is opportunity, areas of outdoor dining can be designated. Recognizing space on lots and adjacent to the right-of-way is limited, intimate dining experiences are able to exist. Activating areas of seating also inspire ideas for improved lighting that distinguishes the needs of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.



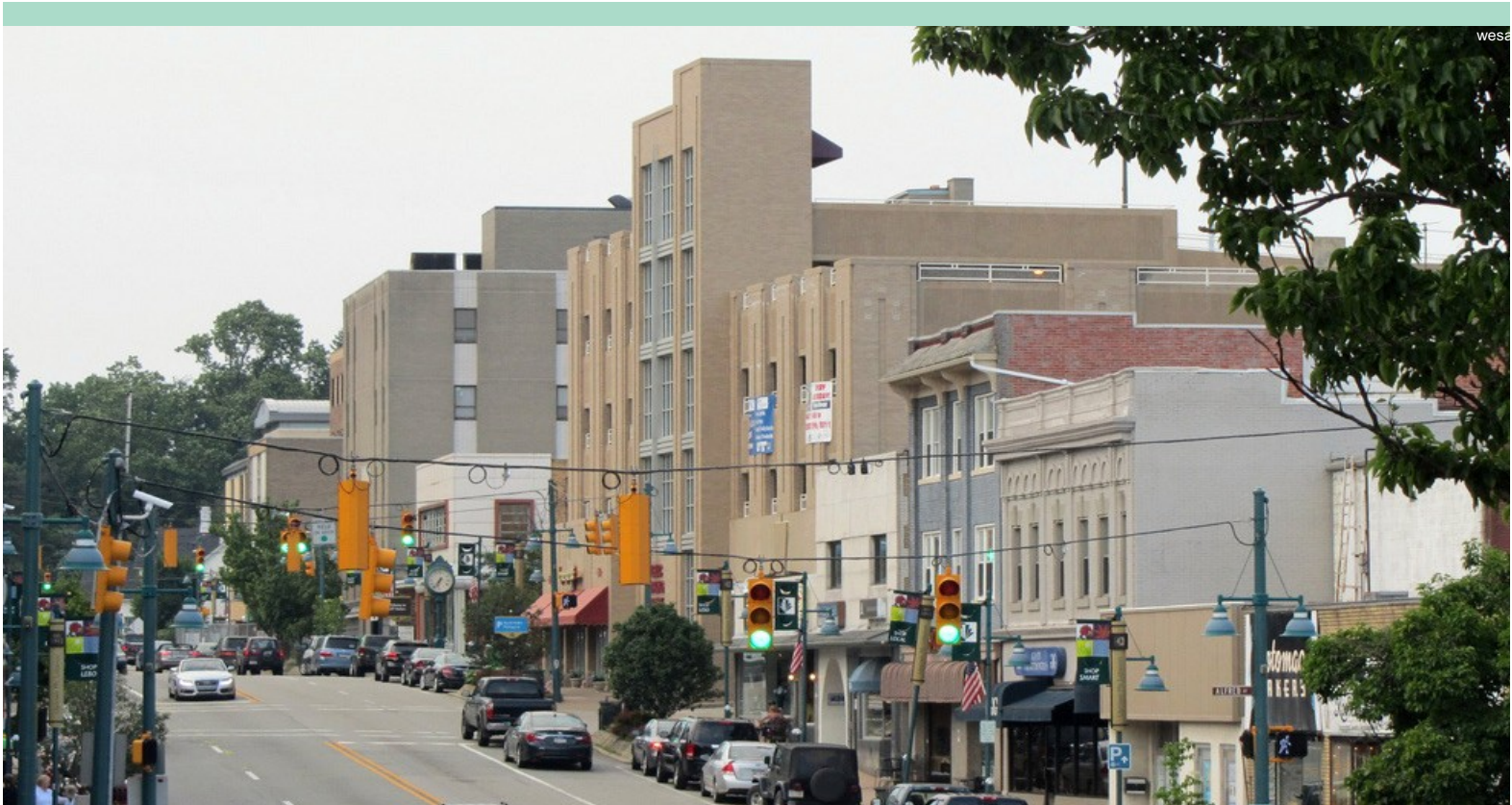
Selective Expansion

Strategic Growth of the Commercial District

Uptown Mt. Lebanon is currently comprised of a mix of professional offices, restaurants, and retail stores. Host to a number of landmark businesses and with space available for emerging ventures, the Uptown corridor provides approximately 700,000 square feet of business space, with an impressive 5-7% street-level vacancy rate. Just slightly over 1/3 of Uptown's total potential business space is found at street level.

Through extensive 2013 public survey residents expressed that Uptown--and the unique businesses that reside there--was critical in their decision to choose Mt. Lebanon as a place to live. Further community-wide surveying in 2015 indicates that the primary desire of Mt Lebanon residents for Uptown is for "more retail" and respondents believe Uptown could be even more viable with the inclusion of "more retail options," particularly unique, local businesses.

To help ensure the long-term vitality of this important community amenity, the Municipality is encouraged to consider Uptown's current business mix and the impact of that mix for the corridor's future. Uptown is a special place for the community; continued proactive decision-making can and should be made to preserve its place as a community asset. In response to community desires, to ensure Uptown survives as the community's heart and as a marketing tool for potential homebuyers, the Municipality is encouraged to reinforce the existing business mix with additional retail and entertainment businesses. Theater/ performance space and associated experiences oriented to the public





This specific section of Bakery Square (above) in Pittsburgh is an example of a successful mixed-use development that incorporates retail and restaurant space on the ground floor and reserves upper floors for professional offices and apartments. The mixed-use development allows for multifunctional space and could be applicable to Uptown in its scale and vibrancy, particularly with proposed transit-oriented development in the corridor.

realm can provide a dynamic, 4-season appeal to audiences of all ages. To keep Uptown thriving, the Municipality is encouraged to explore incorporating updated Central Business District provisions with retail/dining/civic spaces locating along the street level and, whereas, new service/ professional offices would locate on upper floors and on the corridor's surrounding streets. Existing service/professional offices would remain unaffected; as time moves forward, existing street-level office space could convert to new uses as retail/entertainment/restaurant space. In the long term, promoting first-floor space for these uses will encourage superior economic growth and vitality. A balance of parking demands will also be part of the strategic implementation of this growth. Regionally and nationally, communities with proven economic success have employed this practice to maintain and promote economic development within the limited space of a core business district. Action to preserve space for retail, restaurant and entertainment businesses can enable the Uptown corridor to become more vibrant as many current and future Mt Lebanon residents desire.

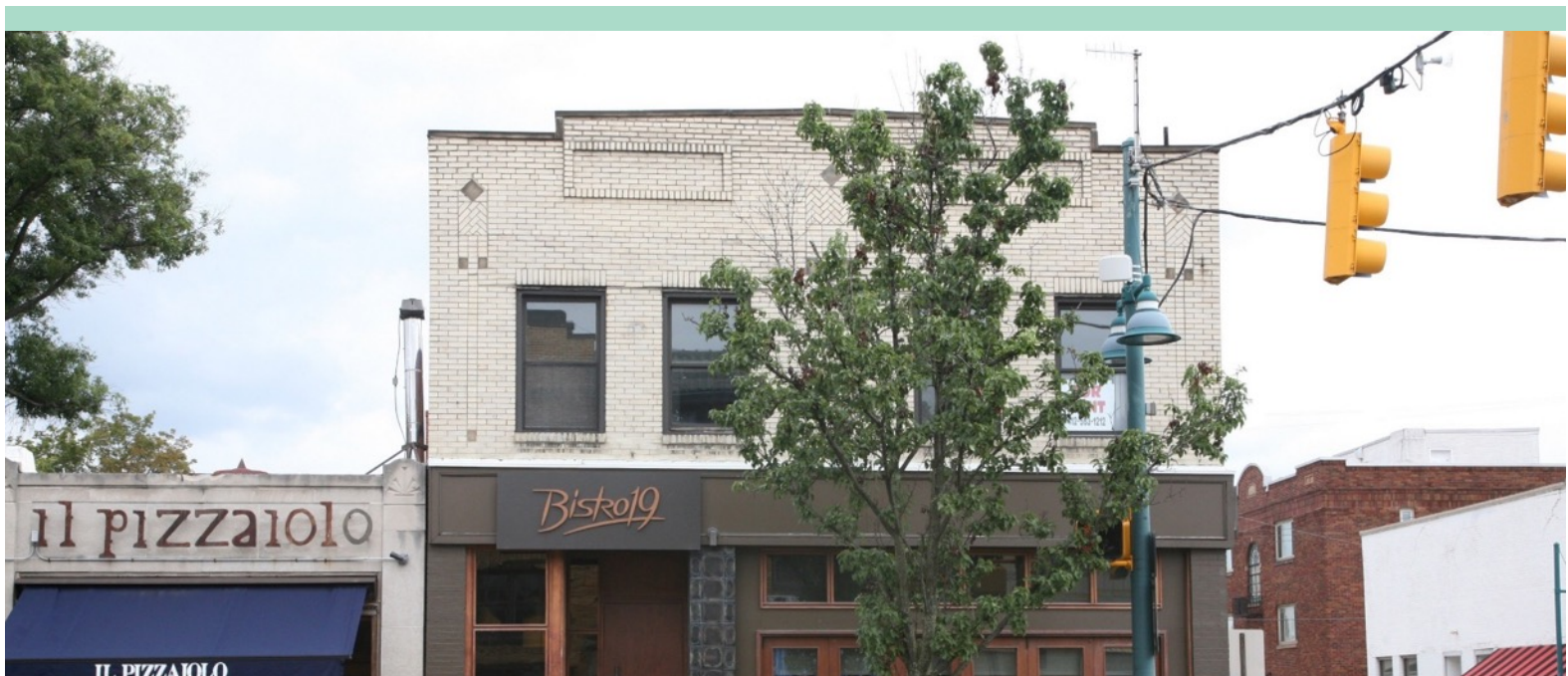
Maintaining the Streetscape

Realizing a Striking Uptown

Washington Road presents two different scales of design and experience; a predominate impact is made by those in the driver seat. Beauty is in aesthetics, and beauty is in safety. The pedestrian brings a unique identity and action to Uptown. With that, re-planning traffic on Washington Road could give the Uptown a big boost both visually and economically. This brings opportunity to evaluate how to make street crossings safer, increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the Uptown and give citizens parking alternatives. Additional transportation evaluation and implementation could lead to greater opportunities to plan events in the Uptown and understanding of ways in which Uptown businesses may use sidewalk areas with greater frequency and ease.

The provision of trees within the corridor is significant to shaping both the driver and the pedestrian experience. The trees' physical condition and appearance are important as they direct views and reduce glare; sidewalk planters, installed in past decades, shape how pedestrians experience the space and how safety and distinction of space are formed. The addition of both ground and hanging planters along Washington Road has helped to incorporate natural beauty into the corridor. Though these planters enhance the streetscape, an ongoing challenge is maintenance.

The volunteer efforts of citizens who want to improve their neighborhood is a wonderful attribute of any community. To ensure that all landscaped areas are receiving equal attention, management systems that include a schedule of necessary maintenance operations along with defined material and vegetation standards should be implemented to complement the efforts of the volunteers.





Above are examples of the impacts that maintenance can have on Washington Road. The top left and right photographs portray the positive aesthetic quality that the planters bring to Uptown in making the pedestrian experience more stimulating and in enhancing the facades of storefronts. The bottom left picture conveys the maintenance challenges that planter areas and their surroundings can pose and the need for attention to be given to planted spaces to ensure that they are all equally maintained.

Throughout Uptown, there are pockets, or zones, where development, maintenance, and livelihood come together in a way that have yet to realize their full potential. This, in part, stems from the placement of amenities and the vibrancy of the facades. Maintenance of recycling and larger-scale trash collection can be explored with building business/property owner participation to address ongoing maintenance and sanitation collection needs.

The Pedestrian Experience

Enhancing Connectivity & the Human Scale

Uptown Mt. Lebanon is a corridor that brings in pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles— all modes of transport either come to or pass through Uptown. An ongoing challenge that Uptown faces with Washington Road is finding a balance between serving both motorists who use the roadway as a primary regional thoroughfare and the pedestrians visiting the commercial nucleus. Several of the intersections in Uptown have been identified as intersections of concern for pedestrian and bicyclist safety in a traffic study conducted during the process of creating Mt. Lebanon's Comprehensive Plan.

There are several ways that Washington Road's pedestrian experience can be improved while still promoting regional connectivity. For instance, better marking pedestrian crosswalks can enhance their visibility. Walkways can be made more prominent by re-designing them with different materials and unconventional patterns, as shown in the photographs on the next page.

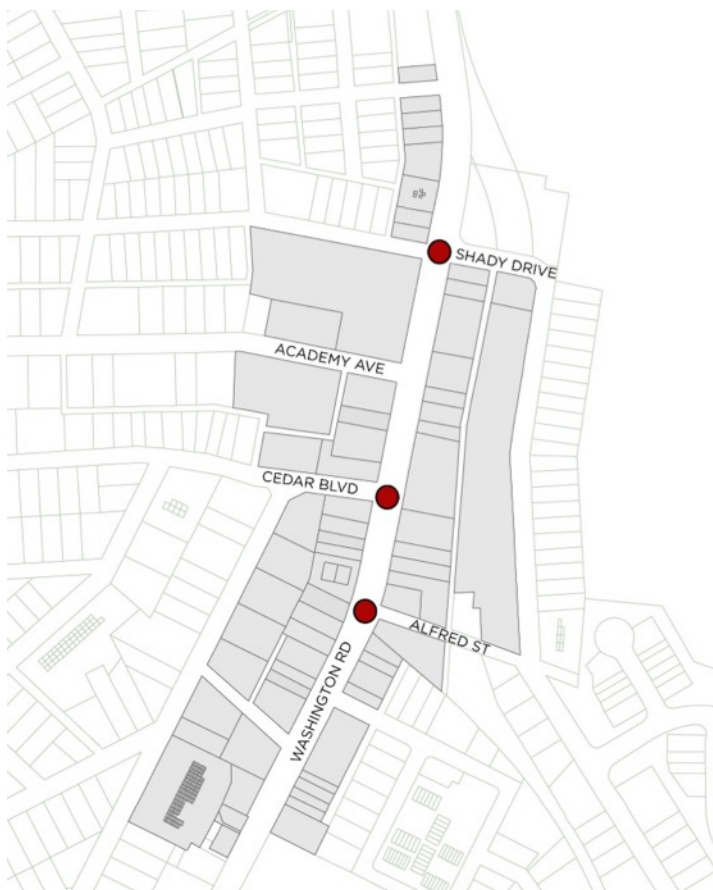
Transforming Washington Road into a multimodal traffic corridor can expand Mt. Lebanon's connection to surrounding neighborhoods and promote alternatives to driving. The establishment of a multimodal roadway will enhance the presence of pedestrians and bicyclists, who are currently overpowered by the predominance of automobiles. If Washington Road is not a viable bicycle route, alternative options may be considered that support the goal of the Allegheny County Active Transportation Plan (Active Allegheny) in expanding the bicycle route network.





Above are examples of pedestrian crosswalks that strive to be prominent as possible to ensure pedestrian safety. A change in material and color can make the crosswalk more noticeable to vehicles. Raising crosswalks slightly also better indicates to drivers the presence of the crosswalk.

In addition to accessibility challenges that pertain to pedestrians and bicyclists, misperceptions about the scarcity of parking in Uptown also exist. By implementing electronic signs displaying the number of open parking spots at the ingress points of parking garages, drivers could be better informed about the availability of parking in Uptown. If the district strives to bring more or more frequent visitors into the community, consideration of extended or special times of discounted parking hours might also be worth evaluation.



To the Left, the intersections marked by red dots are those that were identified in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan as being intersections to focus further efforts on pedestrian and bicycle safety. These intersections should be the first where crosswalk improvements are addressed and implemented.

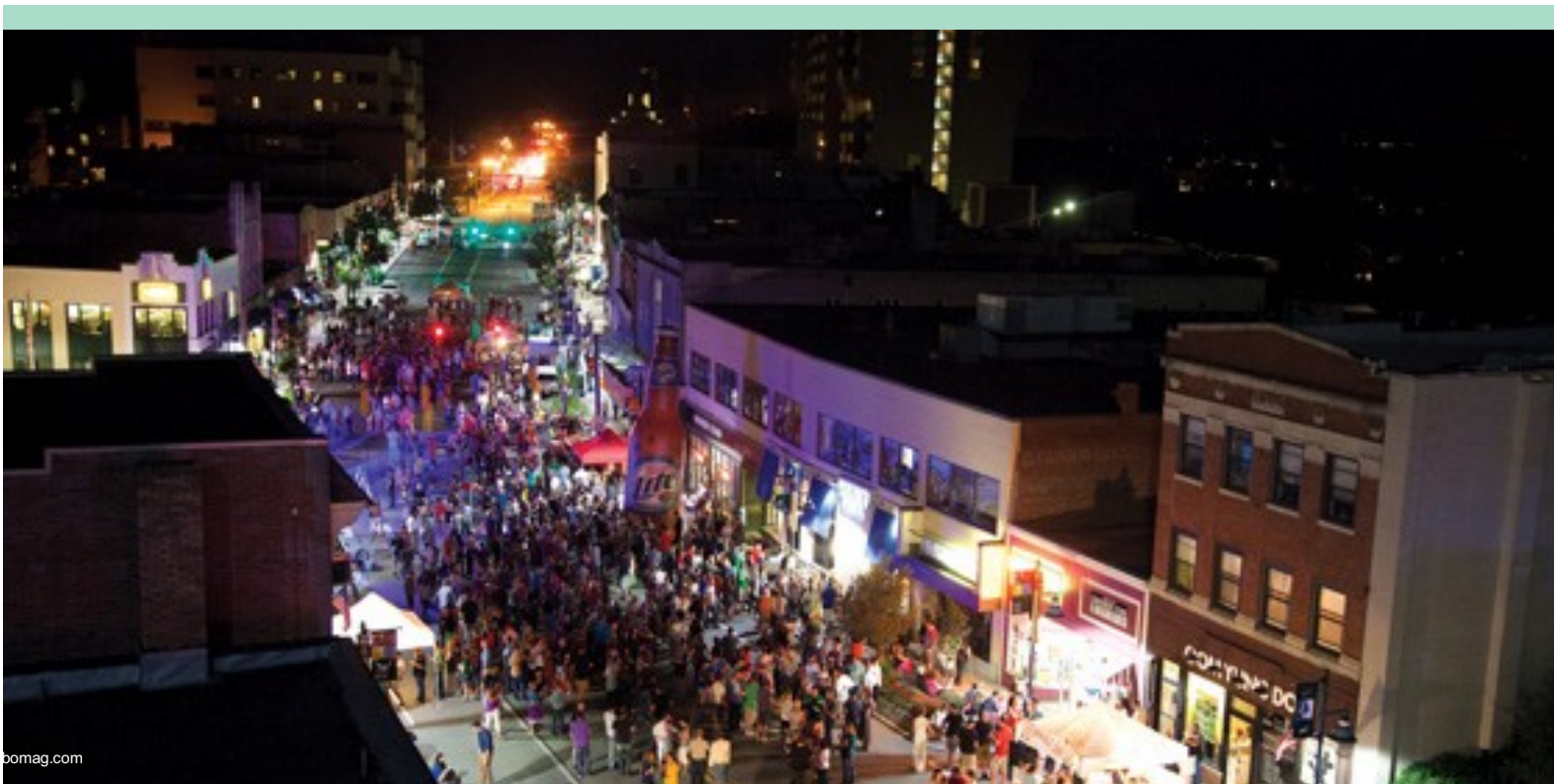
Programming & Frequency

Creating a Destination through Activity

For Mt. Lebanon, Uptown is the go-to destination for any community-wide celebration or event. Whether it is First Fridays, the Saturday farmers' markets, or seasonal celebrations, Uptown serves as the gathering place for its citizens. With the desire to expand on its popularity, there has been interest demonstrated by both residents and the Municipality to increase and to support recurring programming and events held in Uptown. Increasing the number of or the length of events that take place here can aid in drawing more visitors and reinforce Mt. Lebanon's prominence as a destination commercial district.

A marked interest in the arts continues to arise among feedback that the Municipality receives from those coming to Uptown. This is also reflected through public art dispersed along the edges of the district. Expanding on the possibility of establishing Uptown's branding, the corridor should consider distinguishing itself through the arts. Aside from the Cultural District in Downtown Pittsburgh and the Penn Avenue Arts District in Bloomfield/Garfield, few other designated arts districts exist in the region. Steps such as incorporating more public art and increasing studio space (of various types) along Washington Road can build this artistic presence.

It should be noted that designating Uptown as an Arts district could give formal shape to new traditional and non-traditional artistic endeavors and/or establishments to locate in Uptown in the future.





Above is an indicator found in Mt. Lebanon that suggests that the community values creativity and has an interest in the arts. Public art like the welcome sign and the wall mural on Shady Drive East sparks interest in visitors and brings character to the neighborhood. To the right are two examples of public art in a thriving arts district in another city. These establishments, which incorporate art on facades and side walls, are frequented by visitors and photographed often, conveying that these are spaces where people want to be. If desired, Uptown can incorporate more public art into its own corridor. There are several spaces along Washington Road that are lower activity spaces and/or possess blank walls that may be transformed into works of art that people would want to visit time and again.



Discovering Parse Way

Bringing Vibrancy to a Potential Pedestrian Corridor

Building on the possibility of Uptown distinguishing itself as an arts district, opportunities exist to transform Parse Way - a wide concrete alley located between Washington Road and the Port Authority Washington Road 'T' station. Areas of service, parking and utilities are necessary everyday activities within this utilitarian corridor. Foremost, this right-of-way is a space that has yet to be realized to its fullest for a safe and inspiring connection between Clearview Common and the Washington Road T Station pedestrian access. As an artful, vibrant corridor, this right-of-way can extend the pedestrian experience, resident and non-resident alike, and serve as a gateway for both attract pedestrians and aid in more succinctly organize motorized demands. Extending from Clearview Common to the Clock Tower Parklet at the pinnacle of the 'T' Station steps along Washington Road, this Corridor can add vitality and local distinction for festivals, events, and extended community programming.

The archway underneath the parking garage presents opportunity to implement a colorful light installation, as shown below, and the dimensions of the alleyway are conducive to food trucks, which would bring quick meals - healthier than conventional fastfood and locally - based-to workers, visitors, transit users, and residents.

The chain-link fence and low concrete wall lining the alleyway holds untapped potential as an artistic space. Numerous possibilities exist to bring a distinctly Mt. Lebanon theme to the fence. For instance, scenes could depict the municipality's history, the presence of the 'T' light rail line, or designs created by local schoolchildren, or could advertise upcoming events in the community. The Plan's Appendix identifies some initial ideas for further exploring this dynamic utility corridor's possibilities as well as examples from around the world as to how alley transformations/rethinking has led to inspiring, realistic successes.



Key Actions

ACTIONS		Time	Est. Municipal Costs
Goal: Elevate and reaffirm Mt. Lebanon's Uptown business district as a successful, prominent central point within the Municipality.			
1	Reinforce Uptown's ability to compete with other communities in the region as a locally focused commercial destination.	On-going	\$
2	Solidify and carry out Uptown's physical and media branding including but not limited to a timeless, unifying theme/pattern/message distinguishes the district and establishes a distinct sense of place, promoting business activities for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.	Short-term/ On-going	\$ to \$\$
3	Continue to encourage an overall variety of retail businesses and dining establishments within the district to promote a complementary mix of activity that accommodate residents and visitor interests.	On-going	\$
4	Support strategic development where possible throughout the district, taking advantage of side streets along the commercial district corridor and promoting additional-story development upon existing buildings.	On-going	\$
5	Determine the long-term function of Clearview Common and consider the space's aim as a year-round, multi-use venue while continuing to utilize the space for community-oriented events and programming; schedule events accordingly.	On-going	\$
6	Evaluate outcomes of future safety evaluations (conducted in cooperation with PennDOT) and implement appropriate safety measures that respond to and prioritize pedestrian and bicyclist safety.	Short-term/ On-going	\$
7	Incorporate a "real-time" parking communication system to identify available public parking locations and quantities throughout Uptown.	Long-term	\$\$-\$\$\$\$
8	Strategize corridor-wide maintenance planning and practices to realize an effective ongoing effort that focuses on and ensures cleanliness, health, and safety throughout Uptown's right-of-way; work with property owners/organizations as applicable to realize cost-effective solutions.	Short-term/ On-going	\$-\$\$\$
9	Promote creative and safe solutions for expanded areas of outdoor dining.	On-going	\$
10	Reinforce an activated corridor through improved lighting with distinguishing pedestrian and vehicular environments.	Long-term	\$-\$\$\$\$
11	Encourage offices and/or professional services as well as residential to create an identifiable mixed use environment on upper floors within the corridor.	On-going	\$
12	Continue to set forth and host unique, responsive programming/events in Uptown.	On-going	\$ to \$\$
13	Incorporate additional public art into Uptown; coordinate themes, locations and aimed impacts to reinforce the vibrancy of the Mt. Lebanon community.	Short-term/ On-going	\$ to \$\$

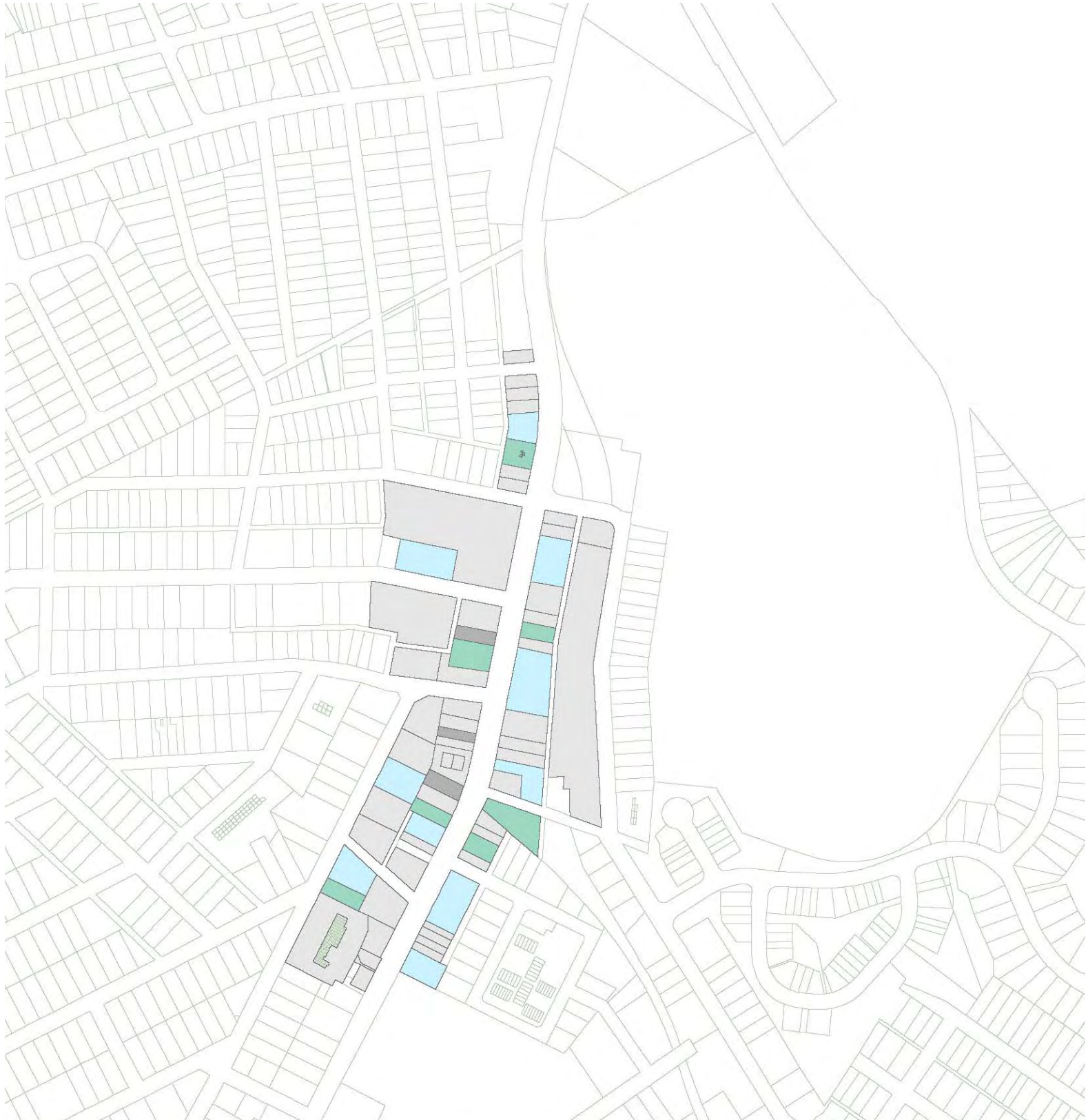
\$0-\$5,000

\$\$ \$5,000-\$20,000

\$\$\$ \$20,000-\$100,000

\$\$\$\$ \$100,000+

APPENDIX



There was a total of 966 participants in this survey.

1. How would you rate the overall appearance of Uptown Mt. Lebanon today?

	Response Count	Percentage
Excellent	64	6.7%
Very Good	492	51.2%
Good	338	35.2%
Neutral	51	5.3%
Poor	16	1.7%

961 participants answered this question.

2. I would shop or conduct business in Uptown Mt. Lebanon more often if (check all that apply)

	Response Count	Percentage
It featured a greater variety of retail shops	679	43.8%
Had an expanded selection of nice restaurants	336	21.7%
Better overall appearance of the street	141	9.1%
Streets and sidewalks had better lighting	97	6.0%
It was more convenient and/or safer to walk to Washington Rd	170	6.3%
The business district had better bike facilities	128	8.3%

847 participants answered this question, with a total of 1551 answers.

3. When I visit Uptown Mt. Lebanon, my family and I usually (check all that apply):

	Response Count	Percentage
Walk	536	39.3%
Drive	732	53.7%
Bicycle	41	3.0%
Take public transit	14	1.0%
A combination of all	40	2.9%

960 participants answered this question, with a total of 1363 responses.

4. When I drive to Uptown Mt. Lebanon, I most often park (check one):

	Response Count	Percentage
In the North Garage	161	18.2%
In the South Garage	79	8.9%
In the street in a metered space	464	52.5%
In a parking lot on a side road	179	20.3%

883 participants answered this question.

Strategic Plan Update

Mt. Lebanon

EPD, LLC

10/6/15

5. What do you see as Uptown Mt. Lebanon's main function CURRENTLY? (check one):

	Response Count	Percentage
A restaurant-oriented center competing with other business districts in the area	267	28.8%
A retail-oriented center completing with similarly sized business districts in the area	18	1.9%
A civic center for Mt. Lebanon (a place for government services and gathering places)	36	3.9%
A residentially oriented center (including more apartments and condominiums)	8	0.9%
An entertainment and culturally oriented district	7	0.8%
A professional service and business district for the residents and surrounding communities	112	12.1%
Providing the community of Mt Lebanon access to retail, eateries, entertainment, professional & governmental services	478	51.6%

926 participants answered this question.

6. I envision the function of Uptown Mt. Lebanon IN THE FUTURE as (check all that apply):

	Response Count	Percentage
A restaurant-oriented center competing with other business districts in the area	286	16.4%
A retail-oriented center completing with similarly sized business districts in the area	226	12.9%
A civic center for Mt. Lebanon (a place for government services and gathering places)	95	5.4%
A residentially oriented center (including more apartments and condominiums)	82	4.6%
An entertainment and culturally oriented district	243	13.9%
A professional service and business district for the residents and surrounding communities	104	6.0%
Providing the community of Mt Lebanon access to retail, eateries, entertainment, professional & governmental services	710	40.7%

930 participants answered this question, with a total of 1746 responses.

Comparison Chart of Uptown's Current & Future Function

Uptown's Purpose	Current Function	Future Function
Restaurant-oriented center	28.8%	16.4%
Retail-oriented center	1.9%	12.9%
Civic Center	3.9%	5.4%
Residentially oriented center	0.9%	4.6%
Entertainment and culturally oriented center	0.8%	13.9%
Professional service and business district	12.1%	6.0%
Providing the community access to retail, eateries, entertainment, professional and governmental services	51.6%	40.7%

7. What would make the future Uptown Mt. Lebanon most appealing (check all that apply)?

	Response Count	Percentage
Shaded Areas	239	6.0%
Adequate Space for Outdoor Dining	433	10.9%
Adequate Benches and Seating	309	5.4%
Advertised, designated parking garages that said how many spaces were available	217	5.4%
Community Gathering and Event Space	230	5.8%
Public Art	190	4.8%
Wi-Fi	319	8.0%
Better lighting	108	2.7%
More restaurants	390	9.8%
More shops	544	13.8%
More entertainment-type uses	279	7.0%
Adequate bike racks	143	3.6%
Bus shelters	25	0.6%
More trees/landscaping	282	7.1%
Building façade improvements	274	6.9%

899 participants answered this question with a total of 3,982 responses.

8. When arriving or leaving Uptown via the T, how would you rate the importance of the following? (check one):

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Appearance	332	400	132	18
Safety	783	94	7	7
Convenience	584	270	22	7

901 participants answered this question.

9. What is your zip code?

	Response Count	Response Percent
15216	10	23.3%
15226	0	0
15234	0	0
15228	26	60.5%
15243	7	16.3%

43 participants answered this question.

10. My age is:

	Response Count	Percentage
Under 10	0	0
11-15	0	0
16-20	2	0.3%
21-25	5	0.7%
26-30	36	5.0%
31-35	78	10.8%
36-40	90	12.5%
41-50	211	29.3%
51-60	148	20.6%
61-70	114	15.8%
71+	36	5.0%

720 participants answered this question.

Reoccurring Individual Participant Comments:

"A grocery store in the area would be perfect, it's too far to walk to the fresh market."

"Improve lighting on the street, as people tend to be hidden in shadows between cars as they attempt to either get into a car or cross the street."

"The ability to cross the street safely will be key if you want to attract more shoppers and diners. **Pedestrian safety should be a main goal.**"

"Bring back the Denis theatre. Lack of entertainment establishments."

"Have specialty shops but also establishments for everyday visits, like a grocery or book store."

"Keep the character by keeping out chain restaurants and businesses. No more Massage Envy's. Bring in businesses that will induce more visits to other shops, not single-purpose establishments."

"More trees and landscaping."

"Facades in Uptown are all concrete. Diversify façade materials. Uptown could use an overall façade improvement/facelift. There is no sense of charm with the buildings."

"2 hour on-street parking is too short."

"There is an over-emphasis on professional offices. Would really like to see more restaurants and retail, especially retail."

"Slow down traffic!"

"Jaywalking needs to be addressed."



IDEAS + ACTION FOR A BETTER CITY

a member-supported nonprofit organization



Issue 534 | June 2014

The Urbanist

Designing at Ground Level

An emphasis on human scale — and on creating a great ground floor — are essential to good urbanism.

Benjamin Grant

Urbanist Article / June 3, 2014

“The ballet of the good city sidewalk never repeats itself from place to place, and in any one place is always replete with new improvisations.” —Jane Jacobs
ActivSpace photo by David Baker Architects



The image is probably the most widely shared touchstone in planning: An urban building with apartments upstairs and a café on the ground floor. For any planner who came of age after *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, this image encapsulates the field.

Density. Mixed use. Pedestrian orientation. Human scale. Eyes on the street. The “Third Place.” Name your urbanist maxim, it’s in this picture.

For many planners, it is this image that first unlocked the idea of urbanism. Most of us have conjured it up repeatedly to explain the magic of cities to relatives, dates, dentists or party guests. But all too often it ends there. We rarely subject this image to much scrutiny, perhaps because it’s so useful, and because achieving anything resembling it has consumed the careers of a generation of planners.

It took the Jane Jacobs generation to rescue the ground floor from insignificance, and to reassert the value of social, civic and economic encounter at street level. Today’s planners, architects and entrepreneurs stand on the shoulders of giants. They take for granted that urbanism happens at street level, and they view the interaction of building and street as a medium for creative experimentation. They are, on the whole, less concerned about height, mass and the skyline than the preceding generation. If human scale is honored, “density” and “high-rise” are not the dirty words they once were.

In the American city, a new and long-absent facility of the public realm has taken hold. Its geography is uneven, its fruits inequitably distributed, but from pop-up shops to graffiti walls to maker spaces, it is growing. We may well look back on this period as the time when the urban project stopped recovering from the 20th century and started inventing the 21st.

Why is the ground floor so important?

Public life is the essence of urbanism. The city’s ability to facilitate movement, commerce, democracy, innovation and creativity resides in the currents and eddies of human beings at the boundary of public and private space, where homes, jobs, shops and civic buildings touch streets, parks and plazas.

In a good urban neighborhood, the ground floors of the buildings work symbiotically with the surrounding sidewalks and public spaces. Together they provide a continuous network of pathways and experiences that are active, safe, comfortable and engaging. The ground-floor café (and retail more generally) is but one of many good ways for buildings to meet the street. After all, even a coffee-crazed town like San Francisco can’t have a café — or even retail — in every building. A good city requires solutions as varied as its fabric and its people and must constantly invent new ones.



In Paris, the sidewalk café is an institution, one of many ways the ground floor is activated in this famously walkable city. But making a great ground floor isn’t as simple as putting in a café. Photo by Metamirst

After a half-century of misguided obeisance to the needs of automobiles, we have begun the long process of reclaiming our cities' streets for people. This issue of *The Urbanist* is devoted to the building side of that symbiosis. Because as it turns out, making the ground floor of urban buildings work is quite a tricky problem, and one that is far from resolved. It is tangled in tensions between policies and markets, cars and people, codes and desires.

New ways of living, working and socializing have generated new policies and different, more adaptable spaces. A roll-up door can turn a streetside loft within a parking podium from residence to store, to production space and back. Today's designers, builders, artists and entrepreneurs, steeped in urbanism, are blurring the lines among uses and the spaces they inhabit — and getting away with it.

A brief history of the ground floor

Ground floor retail has its origins in the homes of urban artisans in medieval and Roman cities. Where fortifications put space at a premium, the family home was often above the family workshop, and business was conducted through an opening onto the street.

By the late 18th century, workshops were giving way to factories, and, in Paris and London, plate glass and gaslight helped create the urban storefront as we know it — a space for shopping, not making. In the 19th century, the era of the flaneur, the street itself was reinvented as a genteel public space, and grand treelined boulevards played host to a fashionable parade of shopping, self-presentation and spectacle.

Modernist architects like Le Corbusier were suspicious of commerce, and found the tight, clamorous spaces of the 19th-century city oppressively filthy and congested. They sought to “free the ground plane” by raising their towers on stilt-like pilotis, so that citizens might wander through a new species of park-like city at their ease, never channeled into something as vulgar as a street. These architects peeled apart the city's mixture, and in doing so they created separate sectors for offices, factories and homes, and built pedestrian sky bridges over sweeping expressways. The intended spaces of discovery became spaces of desolation.

In the mid-to-late 20th century, the car was king. In subdivisions, shopping malls, housing projects and office complexes, inward looking, single-use environments were the norm. For nearly half a century, urban development in the U.S. got an almost total pass from pedestrian considerations, leaving a legacy of blank walls, narrow or non-existent sidewalks and dead spaces.

In the 1960s, critics like Jane Jacobs and architects like Oscar Newman and Jan Gehl began investigating exactly what it was that made traditional urbanism (then under attack) work so well. They zeroed in on the interaction of building edges, public streets, and social interaction, creating some of the classic analyses in urban design. Their efforts revolutionized urban design, and their emphasis on the human scale — once dismissed as quaint and unscientific — has become planning orthodoxy.

Today, walkable streets enlivened by active uses are a widely shared priority, critical to supporting transit, reducing carbon emissions and tackling chronic diseases. But bringing streets to life — especially outside city centers — can be quite a challenge.

Planning and regulating the ground floor

Planning policies often look to manage the use and design of the ground floor to support the public realm. Here are some of the things they can control:

Height

The height of a ground floor has a major impact on its performance. Good retail spaces usually need a 15-18-foot ground floor. (David Baker Architects has been advocating for 20 feet; see pp. 10). A higher ground floor allows adequate space for residential stoops raised a half level, mechanically stacked parking, or groundfloor lofts, workshop space or open lobbies.

Depth

Depth is also important. It is not uncommon for retail tenants or brokers to demand spaces 40 feet deep. Retail depth is often in tension with the need to provide parking behind.

Frontage

Policies may stipulate the minimum frontage that must be occupied by active uses, or minimum frontage of transparent glass. They may also define maximum frontages for exposed parking, utility functions or a single user. A single large user such as a big-box retailer may be required to provide “in-line” storefronts.

Parking

Parking is the single biggest driver of ground-floor design and a major factor in the economics of development. Planning codes typically regulate the amount of parking and may also address its placement and design treatment (by limiting its exposure to the street, for example).

Building heights and building types

Building heights are shaped by the interaction of planning and building codes. The most common multifamily building types put up to five stories of wood-frame construction atop a concrete parking and retail podium. Height limits of 40, 50 or 60 feet often resulted in a cramped 10-foot ground floor with three to five 10-foot stories above. Five additional feet — now permitted by the California building code and increasingly by local zoning codes — adds enough room for a more generous ground floor without adding a story overall.

Utilities and other challenges

Numerous other features must fit into ground floor frontages. These include electrical transformers, fireplugs, ventilation systems, loading docks and trash rooms. When combined with entrances and auto access, there is often little frontage left to work with.

Use

Many cities encourage or require “active uses” in the ground floor of new buildings, which varies from an outright requirement for retail, to broader definitions that include residential doorways. Parking is often the major ground floor use, but policies frequently require that it be hidden. New use categories, like PDR (production/ distribution/repair) as well as co-working, and mixed production and retail have been codified in recent

years. —B.G.



The Proxy Project in Hayes Valley, by envelope A+D, exemplifies the success of experiments in iterative development. Photo courtesy envelope A+D.



Simple transformations have been achieved throughout New York with such easily attainable tools as bright paint and inexpensive furniture — and an openness to change. Photo by Noah Christman.

Making retail work: The market problem

Just because planners allow, or even require, ground floor retail spaces, does not mean there will be ground-floor retail. Retailers, who live and die according to foot traffic, visibility and neighboring stores, are very sensitive to both location and quality of their

spaces and they are well aware that if you build it, customers won't automatically come.

Planners don't create cafes (or restaurants or grocery stores) and for the most part, neither do developers. Entrepreneurs do. It is true that a building without a storefront will never contain a store. On the other hand, the world is full of empty storefronts. The weakness of ground-floor retail in mixed-use construction is so notorious that developers routinely write it off, assuming no revenue at all.

Very often, unoccupied retail space is inhabited as inexpensive office space, by social service agencies, nonprofits, and the like. Some of these – say a clinic or employment center, might work well in a storefront. Others opt to simply lower the Venetian blinds and function as an office. We tend to focus on and remember the zones of gathering and shopping in our cities while often forgetting the quiet (and much more numerous) back streets that sustain them. In trying to create great urban places, both planners and the public tend to want to over-supply retail space. Most urban ground floors, even in Manhattan (shown above) or Paris, serve a single use. The foot traffic and buying power of a whole district is then channeled into supporting a lively street life in limited area — given walkable streets and sufficient density.

In today's white-hot San Francisco, ground-floor retail has pretty good prospects, and businesses can and do make use of all kinds of spaces, from the 12- foot frontages along Hayes Street to ActivSpace on 18th and Treat Streets, which houses a thriving café in just 99 square feet. But elsewhere, ground floor space often sits empty, a planner's aspiration that never bore fruit.

In downtown San Jose, where empty ground floors are common, the challenge of implementing the right storefront strategy was highlighted in a recent debate over whether to allow office uses in ground floor retail spaces. Ground-floor office space does little to engage the street, but one could argue that some use is preferable to none at all.

So do we build for the market that exists, or for the market we hope will one day exist? The cost of empty retail space is simply folded into the cost of the space upstairs. But urban districts take time to mature and once they do, demand can change dramatically in a short time. Sometimes all it takes is one amazing business to totally transform a place — and a market.

But how to figure out what that business is? Trying things out on a temporary basis can often yield longterm solutions. If you want to shift the way a space is perceived, make something interesting happen there and pack it full of people. A market, after all, is only the aggregate of people's assumptions and experiences — things that can be engaged and shaped.

Long before taco trucks became a global phenomenon, they were simply a cheap way to create a mobile storefront. Many developed semi-fixed locations, enlivened by loyal patrons. Lately, food truck gatherings like San Francisco's "Off the Grid" have joined farmers' markets, shipping containers and pop-up shops as part of a suite of solutions that create instant, low-risk critical mass. These tactical approaches are increasingly being deployed to enliven public space in advance of conventional development projects.



Retail along 8th Street keeps things lively at San Francisco's 8th & Howard/ SOMA Studios, which has 162 units of affordable housing. SOMA Studios designed by David Baker Architects, photo by Brian Rose

Ground floor code reforms in San Francisco

In recent years, San Francisco, with the help of advocacy groups like Livable City, has revised significant portions of the planning code, with a focus on making the ground floor work for pedestrians. They include:

- No parking required in transit-oriented housing.
- Minimum ground floor heights were increased to as much as 17 feet.
- Transit-oriented districts were allowed a 5-foot height bonus within the ground floor.
- Active uses required to a depth of 25 feet from the street frontage.
- Ground floor parking must be 25 feet from the street frontage.
- Parking on upper floors must have level floors, minimum floor-to-floor heights and other features to ensure they can be converted to other uses in the future.
- Stackers and other space-efficient parking solutions are permitted as-of-right.
- Neighborhood Commercial zoning was loosened to allow for limited production. Prescriptive limits on equipment and facilities were replaced with performance standards for noise, odors etc.
- PDR zoning was loosened to allow limited retail sales onsite.



One South Market is the first new residential tower in downtown San Jose to be built since the recession. When initial designs gave short shrift to ground floor retail spaces, SPUR worked with city officials, the San Jose Downtown Association and other advocates to support deeper, better-equipped retail spaces and limit exposed parking. The result is increased retail demand and street life much akin to the daily rhythm of the city's Paseo de San Antonio (pictured).

Photo by Sergio Ruiz.

San Francisco's ground floor: An urban design success story

San Francisco has made major strides over the past decade in its treatment of the ground floor. Planning policies, the development industry and local communities have all begun to crack the code on urbanism, and in structures both new and old, street life is thriving. Although perennial tensions around the pace and shape of growth have again come to the fore, one thing seems certain: The urban design quality of the current development boom is vastly improved.

In recent years, San Francisco has modified its zoning code in a variety of ways to improve how new buildings engage the street. A lot of these changes were facilitated by a sea change in regulations, markets, and public culture on the issue of parking, which is generally the single biggest driver of ground floor design. Today, some housing is being built without any dedicated parking, a prospect that seemed radical a decade ago. It's not that parking is no longer valued but that street life is valued more.

Zoning came into being to separate "noxious" industrial uses from residences, even as industry was already leaving American cities for the suburbs and the developing world. The later revival of city life in America depended in part on repurposing the city from production to consumption, as a playground for shopping, dining and entertainment. But recent years have seen a surprising return of urban production.

With scarce land being converted to office and high-end residential, "Production, Distribution and Repair" (or PDR), is a zoning designation meant to protect critical light-

industrial functions and the jobs they provide. This has corresponded with a rise in new kinds of businesses, combining artisanal and craft production, digitally-enabled fabrication and prototyping, and small-scale service and retail. Taken together, these new uses have significant implications for the texture of the city as encountered at the ground floor. Far from being a noxious use, production has become an amenity.

Recent reforms to the zoning code have increased the flexibility in combining production and retail in San Francisco. Small retail outlets are now allowed in PDR space (Heath Ceramics is one notable example), and production is now permitted in neighborhood commercial districts, with performance standards to address noise, odors or other potential nuisances.

More and more people can work anywhere, and a great many of them choose to do so in cities, among other people. Cafés are packed with mobile workers on laptops, blurring the line in both time and space between the workplace, the public realm and the third place of public social interaction. Co-working spaces, which combine social interaction with office facilities and business support, often with a deliberate connection to the street, are a significant new land use category.

Architects, designers, planners and entrepreneurs are adapting to these changes with new, hybrid forms. More than ever, the basics of good urbanism — generous spaces, active uses, limits on the impact of cars — are locked into policy, while the program at street level is open-ended, flexible and hybridized.

Elsewhere, the story is not so upbeat. In much of the region, life at street level remains an aspiration, and it is often compromised by deference to the automobile in both markets and regulations. In communities where the café in the ground floor has struggled to find traction, the flexible models being pioneered in San Francisco could be a valuable export.

About the Authors:

Benjamin Grant is SPUR's Public Realm and Urban Design Program Manager



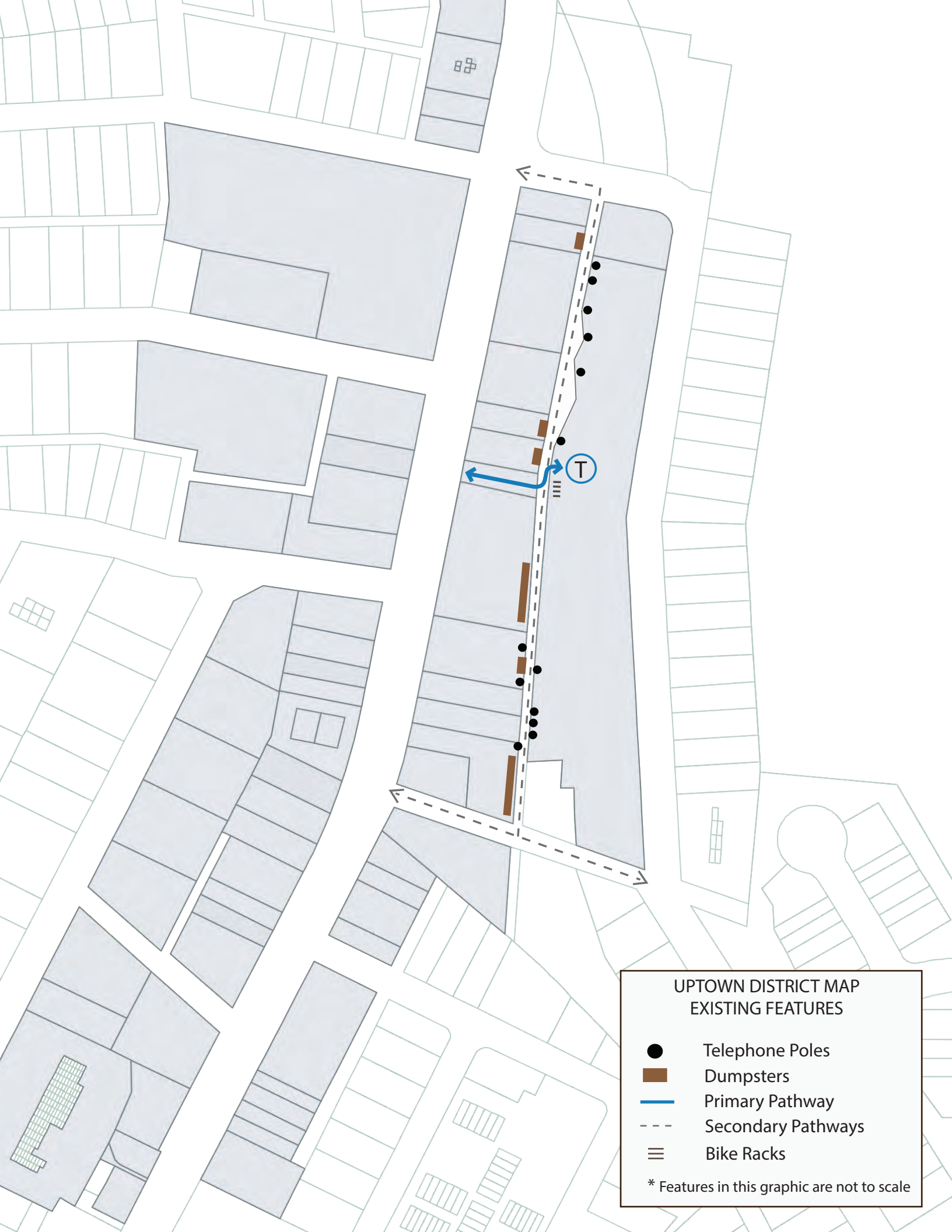
Issue 534 | June 2014

[Designing at Ground Level](#) □

[Focus on the First 20 Feet](#) □

[Urban Field Notes: This Is Where I Walk, Rest, Eat, Perform, Live, Shop, Work, Nap, Read, Chat...](#) □

[See All Urbanist Articles](#) □










UPTOWN DISTRICT MAP EXISTING FEATURES

- Telephone Poles
- Dumpsters
- Primary Pathway
- - - Secondary Pathways
- ≡ Bike Racks

* Features in this graphic are not to scale



UPTOWN DISTRICT MAP POTENTIAL FEATURES

-  Parking Garage Entrance
-  Dumpster Area (Hidden)
-  Primary Pathway
-  Secondary Pathways
-  Bike Racks
-  On-Street Parking
-  Gathering Corridor

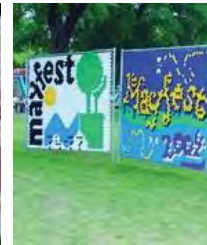
* Features in this graphic are not to scale

Very few drivers or pedestrians may be aware of the service corridor that exists parallel to the east-side of Washington Road. This corridor is comprised of two adjacent rights-of-way -- one owned by the municipality of Mt. Lebanon and the Port Authority of Allegheny County. Currently, this corridor functions as a stop for service (dumpsters, utilities, etc.) parking access, T-Station access, Port Authority bus staging area, and a respite from Washington Rd's traffic. In realizing the fullest potential of Parse Way, it is of most importance to consider how this space functions as a direct link between two existing and dynamic public spaces in Uptown – Clearview Common and Clock Tower Plaza (Parse Way's connection to Washington Rd). This corridor is bound on the west-side by rear-building facades and on the east-side by chain link fence. The Mt. Lebanon North Parking Garage arches over a portion of Parse Way. All of these edges are dynamic and have opportunity to become significant, positive contributions to this space.

Why is it important to evaluate and explore Parse Way? Parse Way is the front door to Uptown for those traveling along Port Authority's trolley line. Areas of service and secondary access form perceptions of safety and a sense of civic pride. The locations and manner in which waste receptacles currently exist is an area of potential focus to address both functional and sanitation needs throughout the Parse Way corridor. The ultimate solution to these needs however should be considered in context of long-term goal for Parse Way. Communities across the United States are introducing "greener" and interactive alleys. Whether for demonstration of "greener" rights-of-way or alternative pedestrian routes, the 360-degree experience of Parse Way will impact residents and visitors for many years to come.



Making a Cost Effective Impact with Existing Fencing



Clock Tower Plaza on Washington Road



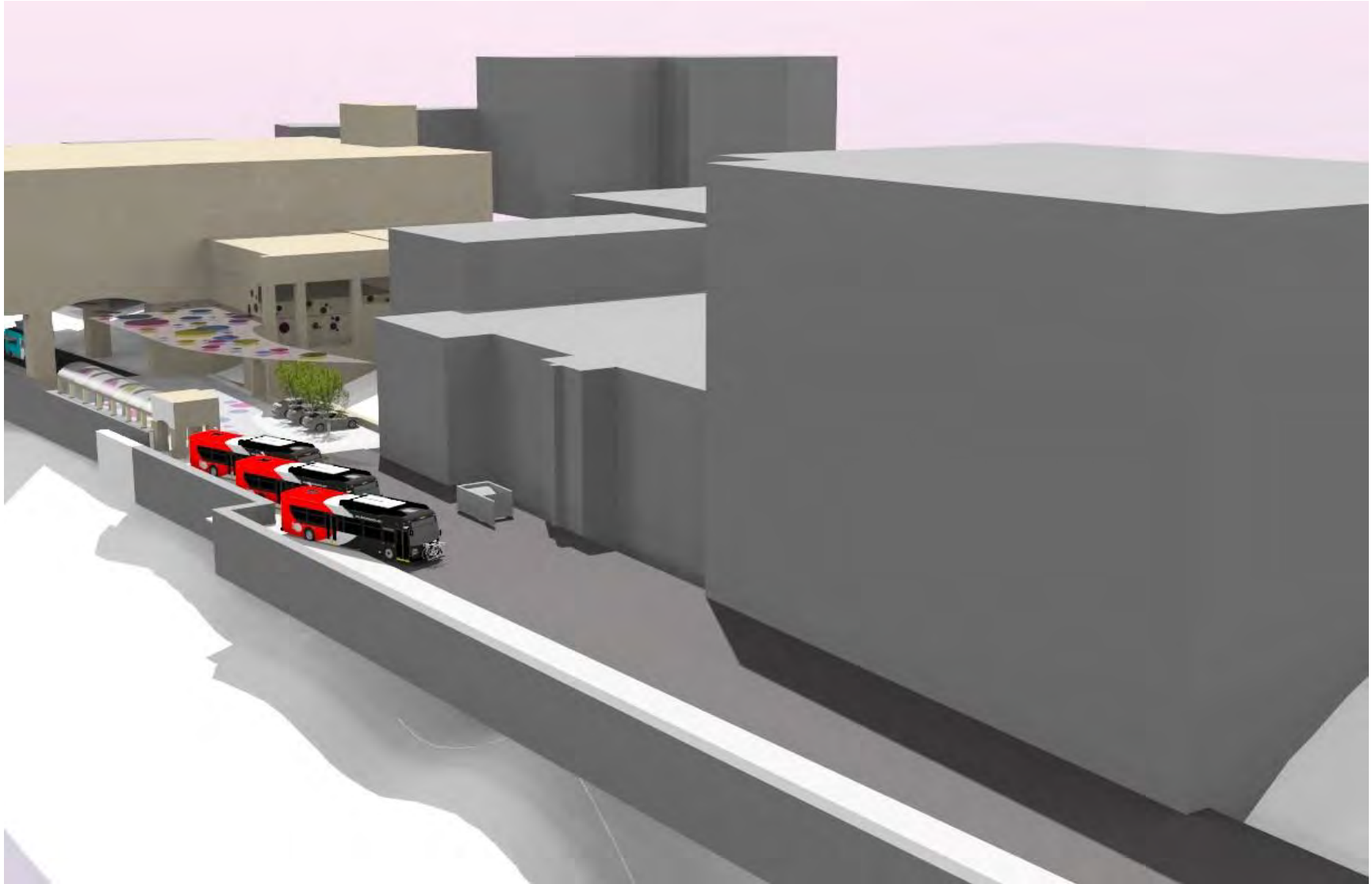
Introducing an artistic and purposeful design on the ground plane can serve to define this unique public space and direct pedestrians between Washington Road and Parse Way.

Parse Way and the North Parking Garage



Artful and distinctive design transitions from the Washington Rd ground plane to the vertical structure of the stair/elevator tower connecting Washington Road with Parse Way.

Bird's Eye View of Parse Way



The elements of the design transform into an experience overhead which also becomes reflected/indirectly illuminated onto the ground plane.

Parse Way



Parse Way has opportunity to host many types of activities beyond its utilitarian function today. From food truck staging to four-seasons special event set-up, the length of Parse Way is an important pedestrian-scaled link between Clearview Common and the ascension to Washington Road.

Parse Way



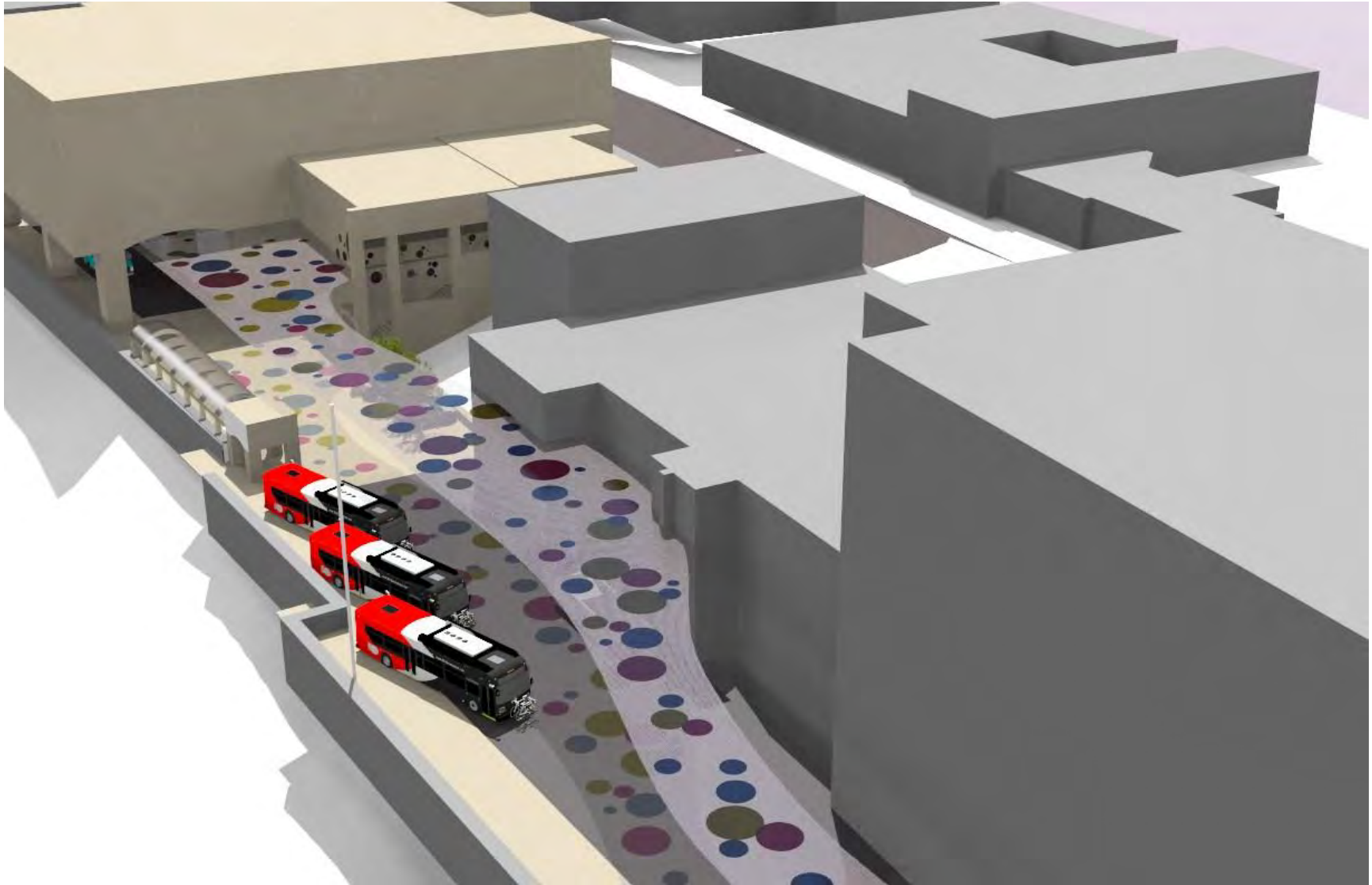
The balance of pedestrian, vehicular and service needs can all come together as a composed environment and hidden gem in Mt. Lebanon.

Bird's Eye View of Parse Way



From a bird's-eye view, the necessities that Parse Way hosts can all be seen in context of the simple, elegant, and playful transformation that can be realized in this service corridor.

Bird's Eye View of Parse Way



The extent of design elements can be evaluated and determined based on detailed coordination of the myriad of influenced present along Parse Way.

Activating Austin's Downtown Alleys as Public Spaces



A Report by the City of Austin Downtown Commission
Alley Activation Workgroup
November 4, 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. BRIEF HISTORY OF AUSTIN'S DOWNTOWN ALLEYS	4
III. PLANNING FOR THE DOWNTOWN AUSTIN ALLEY ACTIVATION PROJECT	7
IV. ACTIVATING ALLEY 111: 20FT WIDE	9
ACTIVATION THROUGH PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS	
ACTIVATION THROUGH ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS	
KEY ELEMENTS TO THE SUCCESS OF 20FT WIDE	
SURVEYS	
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PRESS	
V. WHY ACTIVATE AUSTIN'S DOWNTOWN ALLEYS	14
WORKING WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN AUSTIN PLAN	
VI. THE POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE ALLEY ACTIVATIONS IN AUSTIN	16
BENEFITS OF ACTIVATING ALLEYS	
POTENTIAL PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS	
POTENTIAL PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES	
VII. THE LOGISTICS OF ACTIVATING ALLEYS	20
NEXT STEPS FOR PLANNING ALLEY EVENTS	
VIII. EXAMPLES OF ALLEY ACTIVATION PROGRAMS IN OTHER CITIES	23
IX. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	27
APPENDIX A: PROJECT PARTICIPANTS	30
DOWNTOWN ALLEY CONVERSION WORKGROUP MEMBERS ("TEAM ALLEY")	
CREATIVE AND PROJECT PARTNERS	
NON-PROFIT AND BUSINESS CONTRIBUTORS AND SUPPORTERS	
INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS, CONTRIBUTORS, AND SUPPORTERS	
SPECIAL THANKS TO	
APPENDIX B: 20FT WIDE SURVEY INSTRUMENT & RESULTS	33
APPENDIX C: RESOURCES ON ALLEYS	37

Adopted by the City of Austin Downtown Commission on November 20, 2013, on an 11-0 vote.

I. Introduction

Today, Austin's downtown area suffers from a critical lack of developed vibrant public spaces. As a city known for its festivals, live music, and dynamic civic life, Austin in fact has few permanent physical resources to support this identity within downtown.

Traditionally seen as utilitarian corridors, Austin's downtown alleys have long been overlooked for their potential to help fill Austin's need for activated public spaces downtown. With alleys conceived of as spaces suited only for cars, trash, and deliveries, the city has not planned a role for alleys to serve as vibrant urban spaces, as alleys do in other cities across the United States and abroad. The general perception of alleys as "eyesores" that are unsafe and unclean has reinforced the lack of popular and political support needed to maximize their potential as open space resources.

To add to this issue is the ever-mounting pressure in Austin to create super-block developments. In the past 15 years, the City Council has vacated and sold off its easement rights for at least 10 downtown alleys to developers. In one of the most recent examples, in 2010, the Council approved vacating the alley in block 18 just east of Congress for the development of the new Marriott hotel. In 2013, a developer submitted a request for the vacation of an alley in the Rainey Street district, for one of the longest remaining alley corridors in downtown Austin.

With more than 100 blocks of alleys still remaining in downtown—more than half a million square feet of public space—Austin's alleys offer a tremendous opportunity to help fill Austin's need for more vibrant public spaces downtown. Other cities around the world have been embracing alleys for the special role they play in providing engaging and intimate public spaces, enhancing the pedestrian experience, supporting small businesses and the arts, providing areas that serve as a respite to busy streets, and attracting people into underutilized areas of downtown. Residents and tourists alike flock to alleys in places like San Francisco, Melbourne, and Seville for the unique opportunities these charming spaces offer as places to visit, relax, shop, play, and explore.

In Fall 2012, the City of Austin Downtown Commission created a workgroup to examine opportunities for activating Austin's downtown alleys in order to contribute to a more vibrant network of people-oriented public spaces in Downtown Austin. The workgroup, which grew over the course of the project, consisted of representatives from the Downtown Commission, the City of Austin, a range of downtown and citywide institutions, individual artists and community activists.ⁱ This Report summarizes the workgroup's findings and policy recommendations. It should be noted that the findings presented within the report do not necessarily represent the position held by the specific organizations that took part in the workgroup.

II. Brief History of Austin's Downtown Alleys

Austin's current downtown alley network goes back to the Waller Plan of 1839, which laid out Austin's downtown street grid and set out a comprehensive network of alleys throughout downtown, with one alley per block (typically 20 feet wide), with only a few exceptions, such as the four blocks with public squares.ⁱⁱ As the current Downtown Austin Plan notes, this grid and open space pattern has formed the "DNA" of the city:

Waller's street pattern laid out in the 1839 City Plan contributes significantly to the form and character of Downtown Austin. The orthogonal grid of streets allow for walkable blocks (measuring 276 feet in each direction), with alleys that contribute to the fine-grained urban fabric.ⁱⁱⁱ

Starting in the 1960s, private development plans focused on the creation of super blocks and recommended the vacation of alleys to accommodate the large-scale redevelopment. In the following decades, the Austin City Council authorized the vacation of many alleys, destroying the connectivity between alleys set out in the Waller Plan and creating "dead ends" in the city's alley network.^{iv} Over one-third of the alleys from the Waller Plan grid in the heart of the Central Business District (at least 23 alleys), have been vacated and redeveloped for other uses.^v

In the midst of these redevelopment pressures, in 1971 an architect named David Graeber proposed repurposing the alley behind 6th Street from the Driskill Hotel to Waller Creek. He submitted a petition to City Council to rename the alley as "Serendipity Alley" and transform it into a year-round social center and major economic stimulant lined with "cafes, boutiques, business offices and unusual shops."^{vi} The plan was never adopted, although that alley remains intact.

The current plan for downtown, the Downtown Austin Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in 2011, envisions preserving the historic grid system, by calling for city actions to "maintain, extend and restore Downtown's grid system of streets and alleys."^{vii} The Plan specifically calls for a ban on vacating and abandoning alleys except in special circumstances.^{viii}

While the Plan calls for "preserving and enhancing alleys," the Plan lays out very little detail in this regard. The specific policies that the Plan lays out for alleys relate to enhancing their role in providing loading, serving, and parking access, such as through eliminating dumpsters and above-grade grease traps.^{ix} There is no tie made in the Plan between alleys and the Plan's core vision of creating a "dense and livable pattern of development that supports a vibrant day and nighttime environment" and forming an "an interconnected pattern of streets, parks, and public spaces that instill a unique sense of place and community."^x Recognizing the dual roles that some alleys can serve

to provide critical off-street services while also supporting a vibrant downtown would help advance the city's vision for Downtown.

Thinking about a broader set of uses for alleys also supports the Plan's vision for preserving and highlighting downtown's historic resources. Currently there are two occasions where the Plan mentions protecting the historical features of alleys: The first is where the Plan calls for including the portion of the north-south alley immediately west of Congress Avenue in the Warehouse District in a possible Local Historic District (this particular alley runs largely intact from Lady Bird Lake to the Capitol), and the second is where the Plan calls for "ensur[ing] a compatible relationship between new development and historic buildings with a landmark designation, including setting towers back from alley to provide appropriate separation."^{xi} We believe the Plan's vision for historic preservation can be extended to include the historic resources found within the alleys themselves.

Citing the work of the Downtown Commission's alley activation workgroup, the Austin City Council adopted a resolution on March 21, 2013, calling for the creation of a Downtown Austin Alley Master Plan. In adopting the resolution, the Austin City Council expressed a commitment to Austin's downtown alleys, by calling upon the council to "strive to preserve possibilities for Austin's urban alleys" and to "refrain from vacating alleys at least until the plan has been completed and reviewed." The master plan will verify existing conditions; analyze alleys and their uses and cultural/historical significance; identify which alleys offer the most potential for ongoing or permanent activation; address the merits of allowing loading and unloading by right; and describe other opportunities and challenges that may exist. However, the master planning process has not begun yet, and no funding has been allocated for the development of the plan.

Map of existing paved alleys in the downtown area.
Produced by Michael Knox, City of Austin, Economic Development Department

III. Planning for the Downtown Austin Alley Activation Project

The Downtown Commission's alley workgroup decided early on that it wanted to be hands-on by doing an actual activation project rather than talking about how to go about creating one. The team started with questions such as:

- "Which city regulations would be supportive?"
- "Which ones would stand in the way?"
- "How difficult would it be to gather private support?"
- "How could the goals best be communicated to adjacent property owners?"

After laying out the questions the workgroup wanted to investigate, the team adopted the following vision statement and goal during its initial meetings:

Vision Statement: A downtown alley will be activated into a vibrant, people-oriented space.

Goal: By end of April 2013, our workgroup will implement a pilot alley reactivation project involving the temporary activation of a downtown alley. The project will allow us to build images of success and also to test barriers and opportunities for future activation of other downtown alleys. We will summarize these findings in a report to City Council.

As the workgroup proceeded, the team also asked what it would mean to create a vibrant, people-oriented space in the context of an alley. Before finding specific programmatic solutions to the project goal, the team outlined its vision for a successful Austin alleyway:

Vision: A successful Austin alley will: be safe and walkable; celebrate nature; foster commercial presence; allow for food and beverages; provide a venue for public art; be augmented with light and sound; stimulate the senses; honor existing historical features; provide family-friendly activities and spaces; be a location for comfort and warmth; provide a clean, functional space; respect current legitimate uses; and makes people want to return again and again. (For good measure the team also added that the alley activation should feel magical.)

After establishing the group's goals and vision, the next step was to find a specific alley for conducting a pilot activation project. The workgroup spent several months developing criteria and selecting the alley for the activation project. To test possible alleys for the project, the workgroup created a set of criteria to evaluate Austin's downtown alleys:

- Ability to accommodate existing services: delivery, garbage pick up, fire, possibly parking

- Surrounded by buildings on both sides (i.e., to have the feeling of an alley)
- Current undesirable activity (that could thus be offset with an activation project)
- Physical interaction with businesses on the alley (i.e., businesses with entrances that faced the alley)
- Support of surrounding businesses (this actually turned out to be a prerequisite)
- Ability for the alley to be cleaned up
- Unique characteristics (architecture, trees, etc)
- Walkability: ability to walk to the alley and within the alley
- Ability to be magical/beautiful
- Current desirable activity
- ADA accessibility
- Connectivity between alleys
- Placemaking potential

In December and early January, the workgroup members spread across downtown to survey the alleys and took pictures, which were uploaded onto a shared Dropbox folder. Using the results, the workgroup narrowed down the list of potential alleys to a few that showed the greatest potential to serve as a pilot project. The group then reached out to the business owners to find out whether they would support an activation project in the alley. Based on the assessment results and conversations with the business owners, the workgroup selected the alley that runs North-South from 9th to 10th streets, between Congress Avenue and Brazos.^{xii} This alley was named “Alley 111,” following the numerical designation for that city block provided on a City of Austin map.

IV. Activating Alley 111: 20ft Wide

After the alley was selected, many weeks of planning went into how to activate the alley. Because of the 20-foot width of the alley—like most of the other alleys laid out in the Waller Plan grid—the activation project was penned “20ft Wide.” There were two main areas of focus for the project: the physical space and the event programming. Fortunately, the team comprised a diverse set of professional partners that included curatorial lead Art Alliance Austin; architects Dan Cheetham (Fyoog) and Michelle Tarsney; Creative Action, a local non-profit group; and TBG Partners Chris Jackson and Nicole Warns, who led the work on the space’s physical design.^{xiii}

Activation through physical improvements:

As a physical space, the workgroup aimed to create a place that was human-scale and had visual interest at multiple levels, while working with a very small budget. The City of Austin Cultural Arts Division provided a grant of \$5,000 for the visual art installed overhead, and TBG provided a grant of \$500 for the physical design on the ground level. The rest of the physical improvements were covered through in-kind donations of materials and time.

The alley was activated with a variety of art, plants, seating, and other elements, while accommodating the existing alley functions for trash disposal and access by KTBC/Fox 7 of the northern half of the alley for the company’s parking.^{xiv} For seating, the alley used primarily donated materials that reflected typical alley functions: painted crates (which also served as book shelves), cut polystyrene shipping foam, and burlap sacks stuffed with second-hand clothes. The space also included two sets of tables and chairs loaned out by Forms + Surfaces, and a variety of plants on loan from a local nursery.



Photo courtesy of Michael Knox, City of Austin, Economic Development Department

For the art elements, Dan Cheetham and Michelle Tarsney designed a temporary aerial sculpture with brightly colored, interwoven twine that was hung across the alleyway, together with a collection of paper origami peace cranes created by children at the Art City Austin festival from the prior weekend under the direction of Creative Action. Additional art installed in the alley included a whimsical temporary mural painting of peppermints (which was coupled with a peppermint scavenger hunt) by Matthew J. Winters, and a series of temporary stencil paintings of birds on the asphalt pavement created by Griffon Ramsey with assistance by Burt Norville. Recordings of bird calls typical to Central Texas, provided courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, were mixed by composer, performer and sound artist Steve Parker into a soundscape that could be heard in the alley during much of the event.

Activation through activities and events:

The workgroup decided that the activation project should offer diverse programming that would appeal to a broad range of age groups and interests and that would showcase many of the different ways in which an alley could be activated as a public space.

The programming consisted of the following:

- **Wednesday, April 17th PM: Opening Night Party.** Hosted by the Fusebox Festival and Art Alliance Austin, this event featured an a capella performance by Convergence. The event attracted over 200 people.
- **Thursday, April 18th PM: Pecha Kucha.** Art Alliance Austin hosted an evening PechaKucha session where 20 presenters showed 20 images for 20 seconds each as part of a fast-moving presentation. The alley was packed, with approximately 300 people in attendance.
- **Friday, April 18th AM: Pop-Up Commuter Breakfast.** Zipcar and Movability Austin hosted a morning commuter breakfast attended by downtown workers and commuters who enjoyed coffee and pastries. The alley remained open throughout most of the day, with WIFI connections, for downtown workers to use as a meeting space and workspace.
- **Friday, April 18th PM: Dining in the Alley.** The alley workgroup and volunteers enjoyed a candlelit dinner in the alley.
- **Saturday, April 19th All-Day: Alley Kids Family Day.** On Saturday, the alley was transformed into an artist-driven playground for kids and adults, including musical performances, acro yoga, jugglers, and hula hoopers, supported with a \$1,100 grant from the City of Austin Cultural Arts Division; storytelling hosted by

the Austin Public Library Friends Foundation; origami hosted by Creative Action; and food trucks. Dozens of families attended.

- **Sunday, April 20th: Open Day.** Sunday was an open day for the public to come and experience the alley without any programming.



Photos courtesy of Michael Knox, City of Austin, Economic Development Department

Key elements to the success of 20ft Wide

There were many components of 20ft Wide that contributed to the success of the project. The first component was the support of the surrounding property owners, which meant maintaining several of the alley's core service features, including trash pick up and service delivery. A second component, which was just as critical, was a multidisciplinary planning team of dedicated and passionate volunteers. Each team member for 20ft Wide had a different skill set that added value to the project and enabled us to overcome the roadblocks we confronted during the project. A third component was the project's diverse programming, which appealed to different, targeted audiences and cut across multiple generations, thus allowing for us to highlight the multiple roles alley can play and allowing us to serve a wide cross-section of the community.

The particular alley we selected was also an important component of the project's success. The alley's scale and rich architectural features, all contributed to the engaging and intimate nature of the space. The support and involvement of City Council and multiple city departments also turned out to be critical—including, but by no means limited to, the funding the City provided for part of the artists' costs, assistance with navigating the special events permit process, in-kind donations of city equipment, and City Council-authorized fee waivers. Other key components that made the project possible included: the in-kind support of numerous organizations and individuals; access to a vacant building space to stage events; and access to electricity and water from the adjacent property owners.

Surveys:

As a test of existing and potential policy measures, the 20ft Wide team understood the importance of collecting data about the activation project, and so a simple survey instrument was created and administered during most of the events.^{xv} Results showed that the alley project drew in tourists as well as residents from outside of downtown: 10% of attendees were visitors to the city, 84% of attendees surveyed did not live downtown, and 57% did not work downtown. Almost half arrived by means other than car.

In addition, the survey showed a great deal of interest in the space both by people who came intentionally to see the installation and by those who just happened to pass by. Some quotes from the surveys:

- "When you see something like this it changes your whole attitude in a positive way."
- "It's like a kiss on the cheek."
- "Got me into a space I otherwise wouldn't."
- "Would love to utilize this space; a place to meet for appointments."
- "This should be done more."

- “Reclaiming an old alley that would have otherwise been a lost space made it fabulous!”
- “Great idea! Great way to turn a space into something inhabitable for both old and young.”
- “Like the feel, like you are walking into a new little world, like Dr. Seuss; should be permanent.”
- “Oh, I don’t want to leave this place.”
- “It’s awesome, very relaxing, makes downtown more exciting.”
- “It’s fun, a great idea, they should make this permanent. I’m from Germany and there’s much more going on there in the streets.”
- “Love the concept of using alleys for public spaces.”
- “Charming and a lot of potential. “
- “Beautiful, brightens up the alley, could be a great public space.”
- “Great initiative; we want more public space.”

Public Relations and Press

20ft Wide received a lot of recognition in the press. The project was featured on the cover of the Urban Land Institute’s Tactical Urbanism magazine, on KUT,^{xvi} the Austin Business Journal,^{xvii} KEYE-TV,^{xviii} and in other media outlets. The City of Austin’s Channel 6 created a time lapse video showing the installation and first series of events in the alley: <http://youtu.be/j2VGSiu6ZPQ>. A video summary of the activation project, also created by Channel 6, is available at <http://youtu.be/fxx1q5oPbVk>.



Photos courtesy of Michael Knox, City of Austin,
Economic Development Department

V. Why Activate Austin's Downtown Alleys

In embracing the transformation of alleys into vibrant public spaces, cities throughout the world have recognized that activated alleys can play a central role in enhancing the character and livability of a dense urban core and facilitate the ability of cities to offer a diverse range of public spaces. Cities such as Seattle and San Francisco—which have strong support for alley activation projects—have also found that alleys, compared to other urban spaces such as streets and parks, provide inviting, intimate, and human-scale experiences that are hard to provide with other types of public spaces. Cities have also found ways to activate alleys—with their broad range of potential uses and economic benefits—through a relatively small investment of public resources.

In Austin, as the downtown area experiences ever-increasing population growth, new public spaces are needed more than ever to fulfill the needs of current residents and to meet the expectations of new residents, including those arriving from cities where smaller-scaled urban public spaces are the norm. When looking at Austin's downtown alleys as possible public space amenities, it must also be remembered that these spaces are needed to accommodate existing functions that are integral to the operations of downtown businesses and organizations. Downtown alleys allow for functions such as trash pick up and service deliveries to be handled without disrupting traffic on streets. Other urban infrastructure functions that alleys provide, depending on the alley, include: secondary pedestrian and bikeway routes, fire lanes, and access to loading docks and parking garages.

Working within the Downtown Austin Plan

The Downtown Commission workgroup's vision for reinvigorating Austin's alleys draws from the goals and vision statements set forth in the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP), whereby, "[i]f Downtown is to continue to attract new residents, businesses and visitors, excellent parks, open spaces and streetscapes will be essential to its success."^{xix} As the Plan states, the "quality and interconnectivity" of our public spaces "defines to a great extent our day-to-day urban experience and the overall livability and identity of Downtown."^{xx}

Specifically, the activation of Austin's downtown alleys directly supports the following vision statements set forth in the Downtown Austin Plan, as laid out on the City's home page for the Plan:^{xxi}

- A dense and livable pattern of development that supports a vibrant day and nighttime environment.
- An interconnected pattern of streets, parks, and public spaces that instill a unique sense of place and community.
- A beloved fabric of historic places, buildings, and landscapes that celebrate the unique journey Austin has taken over the past 200 years.

- An array of innovative businesses – small and large – that are attracted to Downtown by its rich human capital and unique sense of place.
- A variety of districts and destinations that support the creative expression of Austin's citizenry through art, music, theater, dance, and performance.^{xxii}

Additionally, and related to the last vision statement above, the revitalization of Austin alleyways supports the Downtown Austin Plan's goals of providing for new cultural facilities and live music venues, incubator spaces for artists, rehearsal and performing spaces, and other creative culture uses and businesses.^{xxiii}



San Francisco Alley.

Photo courtesy of Heather Way, Downtown Commission

VI. The Potential for Future Alley Activations in Austin

Over the past decade, Austin has transformed from a small city with a low-key downtown to a major urban center known for its features like the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail at Lady Bird Lake and its entertainment districts. As Austin matures as a city, the city's downtown must develop in ways that support a full and rich urban experience—particularly if we are to remain competitive as a destination for new residents and new businesses.

We know from the work done by other cities that the development of alleys holds a tremendous potential for a relatively small investment—as spaces that already exist in the public realm. Some benefits that other cities have found from activating alleys, include the following:

Benefits of activating alleys:

- Improving public safety and beautification of downtown.
- Providing opportunities for engaging public spaces—places for people to visit, relax, and enjoy being with other people.
- Providing affordable opportunities for new small businesses and expansion of existing local businesses (e.g., Sydney, Australia small business program for alleys).
- Supporting green corridors (Austin,^{xxiv} Chicago).
- Celebrating visual and performing arts by creating areas to showcase the work of local artists.
- Expanding the pedestrian network and connectivity to other parts of downtown.
- Highlighting historical assets.
- Enhancing pedestrian experiences through car-free, intimately-scaled spaces.
- Providing intimate retail zones.

The revitalization of Austin's alleys can be supported through both physical improvements and the support of specific programming opportunities.

Potential Physical improvements:

Learning from other cities, we can see that the size of alleys is one of their greatest assets. They provide an intimate scale that serves as a sharp contrast to whole block developments and surrounding streetscapes. Meanwhile, the features of alleys that limit positive pedestrian engagement—such as dumpsters lining the walls, limited lighting, and an overall grimy atmosphere—can be easily addressed with a range of physical improvements.

The type of physical improvements needed to activate an alley will be unique to each alley and should draw upon existing positive features of the alley. Some may be activated with very small-scale and inexpensive changes such as suspended artwork or

engaging lighting. Others may need more extensive improvement to allow for both utilitarian and social uses.



Seville, Spain Alley.

Photo courtesy of Heather Way, Downtown Commission

Examples of potential improvements to enhance public engagement and public safety in alleys include:

- Plantings and window boxes
- Opening up of existing doors to allow entranceways into the alley
- Incorporating permanent or temporary art overhead and on building facades
- Lighting
- Paving upgrades; incorporating a variety of paving: can make an alley more inviting to pedestrians and provide a clearer signal to cars to not enter or to drive more slowly
- Seating and tables
- Signs at the entrances to the alleys, with the name for the alley
- Canopies to provide shade
- Physical upgrades to building facades to facilitate location of cafes, retail, and other businesses
- More visually appealing dumpsters

- Addressing the concentration of garbage dumpsters such as through moving or consolidating dumpsters in one part of alley, or offering alternative disposal methods (e.g., Seattle bans dumpsters in city right-of-way and offers bag service with frequent pick ups).
- Entry gateways where alley meets street to invite exploration.

Potential Programming and Activities:

Once the physical space in an alley has been modified to enhance the public's engagement while preserving the alley's utilitarian service functions, a broad array of different programming and activities can be imagined, which could be offered temporarily or permanently in the alley. Other cities have activated alleys for a number of different activities and uses, such as:

- Walking tours: historical tour, art tour, etc.
- Historical programs to highlight historic elements in the alley, such as historical signs and walking tour app
- Movies
- Televised sporting events
- Live music
- Places to meet, work, relax
- Outdoor dining: permanent restaurants as well as cafés that pop up for lunch and/or dinner
- Bike lanes and pedestrian passageways
- Shopping districts
- Retail and small business venues
- Art events
- Art galleries
- Family-friendly events



San Francisco Alley.
Photo courtesy of Heather Way,
Downtown Commission

Importantly, what many other cities have shown is that these uses can often be “layered” depending on the time of day. Thus, an alley that provides for garbage pick-up and deliveries during the morning hours and retail during business hours, can turn into an art event space at night and a family-oriented space on the weekends.^{xxv}

In her master’s thesis for the University of Texas, Sarah Hammerschmidt identified three different typologies for activating Austin’s downtown alleys:^{xxvi}

- *Activity Thoroughways*: alleys that serve as nodes for activities such as cafes, bars, and retail.
- *Pedestrian and Bicycle Thoroughways*: alleys that prioritize pedestrian and bicycle access to provide connections to parks, businesses, and retail.
- *Green Thoroughways*: alleys that expand park space in downtown through the addition of grass and other plantings, or a hybrid model that incorporates both grass and pavement.



San Francisco Alley.
Photo courtesy of Heather Way, Downtown Commission

VII. The Logistics of Activating Alleys

While the 20ft Wide project helped to identify potential roles for Austin's alleys as engaging public spaces, the project also identified many of the challenges that others will face when looking to do similar types of projects. When working on a future activation project, whether temporary or permanent in nature, it will be important to consider the following:

1. **Heavy concentration of dumpsters.** Many of the alleys in downtown alley are lined with large dumpsters. For the 20ft Wide installation, we were able to work with Austin Resource Recovery to temporarily move one of the dumpsters to the other side of the alley near a big concentration of dumpsters, which cleared up space for event programming and made the space more conducive to pedestrians.
2. **Poor lighting.** Austin's downtown alleys typically have poor lighting, making it difficult to create a stronger sense of safety in these spaces.
3. **Parking (legally and illegally).** Several alleys we surveyed contain permanent parking spaces for surrounding businesses and entrances to parking garages. We also observed several instances of cars parked illegally in alleys.
4. **Fire code.** Two primary issues related to fire safety arose during the 20ft Wide installation process: 1) a bar on utilizing any materials overhead that could be considered flammable; and 2) the issue of ensuring fire truck access through alley. It is unclear at this point how other cities handle fire truck access in activated alleys. This is an issue that will need to be explored further.
5. **Alley entrances and traffic control.** During the 20ft Wide installation, one of the primary concerns was traffic control and the maintenance of pedestrian safety in an area typically inhabited by cars. The City required us to erect large traffic barricades, but these barricades then made the alleyway less inviting and deterred cyclists and pedestrians from entering the space. Other cities have addressed safety concerns with less obstructive barriers. This is an issue that should be explored further by figuring out a way to maintain safety while also enhancing aesthetics and facilitating access by pedestrians and cyclists.
6. **Special Events permit process.** Our project highlighted the need for a separate Special Events permit process that is calibrated for smaller events such as our 20ft Wide installation. The Special Events permit process we utilized—which is in the process of undergoing changes—assumes heavy crowd concentrations and increased life safety hazards brought about by a festival atmosphere. Although the City of Austin Special Events team cooperated to help the 20ft Wide take place, we found the following requirements to be overly taxing and recommend they be eliminated or reduced.

- a. Traffic engineer-certified parking control plan. Standard details and procedures should be created for alley closures in lieu of requiring an event sponsor to pay an engineer to certify a traffic control plan, which can run more than a thousand dollars.
 - b. Requirement to hire police. Even though the Special Events office required us to hire police to guard the barricades during the 20ft Wide alley events (a fee which the Council waived), the police ended up not showing up to the events and the requirement seemed unnecessary.
 - c. The 180-day “minimum” City of Austin permit review period. This period is unnecessary for a small passive installation like 20ft Wide. We also found that the special events permit costs were not calibrated for small events.
 - d. The Special Events permit requirement to provide a fully-detailed drawing of the alley closure should be replaced with a Special Events permit checklist for small installations and events, similar to the checklist used for expedited building permit requirements and the site plan exemption process.
7. **Supported Services.** Alleys serve a critical infrastructure function for the downtown area and these services must be maintained. Some of these services include the passage of delivery trucks and dumpster trucks. Any future project will need to understand what and when service activities occur in the alley to carefully coordinate any temporary installation with the schedule for those services.
8. **Wayfinding.** The City of Austin recognizes the need to improve wayfinding for the downtown area for the benefit of both residents and visitors. Currently a plan is being formulated to address this critical need. During the production of the 20ft Wide event it was recognized that additional urban design elements, such as street signage, could improve the visibility of alleys and help people find and access them as part of their urban pedestrian experience.
9. **Funding.** Financial support is critical for creating vibrant urban spaces. While the 20ft Wide event was produced with relatively little money, the volunteer-based model used by the working group is not a sustainable model for creating lasting urban benefits. Larger budgets will be needed in order to provide permanent investments for alleys to become both economic and cultural assets for the city.
10. **Access to electricity.** Alley spaces not only need to support a wide range of infrastructural, logistical, and cultural needs, but they also need to take advantage of the various types of urban users that might use alleys at different times of day/night/week/season. Supporting nighttime activities (which come relatively early during the winter months), and daytime events (such as music) necessitates having access to electricity. Future event planning will need to establish early on in the planning process mechanisms for creating access to electricity.

11. Adjacent Property and Business Owners. As the team worked through the logistics of setting up the 20ft Wide event, we discovered that while adjacent business owners may support an activation project, the land owner may not. Many property owners are out of town and may not feel comfortable with a new idea for the space. From the 20ft Wide project, the team identified the need to work closely with business owners from day one in order to ensure support for the project.

From a regulatory standpoint, one of the most critical discoveries was the fact that the City of Austin does not actually own many the alleys downtown but instead only owns an easement. The surrounding property owners own the alleys. Any project involving a permanent activation of an alley will need to explore the exact parameters of the City's easements and what type of legal documentation is needed to facilitate the permanent activation.

It is also important to say that not every alley is appropriate for an activation project. Some bear a heavy reliance on delivery trucks throughout the day as well as others that have parking garage entrances that remain active at all times.

Next Steps for Planning Alley Events

To activate Austin's alley network, it will take support from both elected officials and staff to create an overall vision for how alleys can support Austin as economic and cultural resources, and to administer the future efforts to bring such a vision to life. We recommend that any future efforts begin with a mapping exercise that would identify alleys that are ripe for activation projects and the individual private property owners that are needed to catalyze successful events.

After the team's experience with creating the 20ft Wide project we offer the following checklist to project managers looking to support future alley activation events.

Alley Activation Checklist:

- Identify supporting property owners and businesses along alley.
- Talk with City Special Events permit staff at least 4 months prior to event.
- Plan for space to accommodate food trucks and delivery vehicles for the event.
- Work with local businesses to accommodate expected flows of vehicular traffic.
- Address need for barricade requirements and search for possible new solution that would address aesthetic concerns as well.
- Address requirement for police presence at barricades.
- Meet with City of Austin Fire Department reviewers early in the process to identify any potential issues concerning flammable materials.
- Provide liability waivers for installation so the City is not held accountable beyond normal property protection.

VIII. Examples of Alley Activation Programs in Other Cities

In cities around the world, alleys that once served as areas for trash and illicit activities have been transformed into engaging public spaces, economic engines, urban art galleries, and major tourist draws. The following are examples of cities that have been at the forefront of activating alleys in and around the downtown urban core:

Fort Collins, Colorado.^{xxvii} After a pilot project that renovated two downtown alleys, the Downtown Development Authority in Fort Collins commissioned an alley master plan in 2008, through a process that included workshops with building owners and other downtown stakeholders. The Authority plans to renovate a total of 14 alleys utilizing tax revenue from a downtown public improvement district, with the goal of enhancing the alleys aesthetically, providing safe pedestrian access, and stimulating economic vitality and use of the spaces. So far, at least 5 alleys have been renovated, at a cost of approximately \$900,000 each, through a series of physical improvements including special pavers, lighting, flower pots, and storm water management improvements. New trash enclosures were built, and benches were placed in the alleys. An Art in Public Places program provided for 40 granite pavers engraved with children's drawings. Following the renovations, private improvements swiftly followed, including several new small business storefronts and a beer garden. The renovated alleys now serve as lively pedestrian walkways, new retail spaces, and gathering spaces. With an increase in pedestrian traffic and customers, the reception of local businesses has been very positive.

Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne is a worldwide leader when it comes to transforming its alleys (called laneways in Australia) into engaging amenities providing a broad range of experiences. The activation of the city's alleys is a central part of the Melbourne City Plan and began in the 1980s as a way to improve livability in downtown through engagement of public spaces. Since then, dozens of alleys in the city have been revitalized into an urban network of alleys with art installations, small cafes, residences, and retail.^{xxviii} Today, the alleys, which cover 3.5 kilometers (22 miles), are a vital part of the city's urban landscape and attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. To support the alley transformation, the City operates a "Love your Laneway" project,^{xxix} which partners with local stakeholders to improve and revitalize alleys through waste management, amenities and access, public lighting and road surfacing, and artistic and cultural uses. The City has adopted a number of planning policies to support the transformation of the alleys. In 2001, the City created a Laneways Commission Program, which commissions artists each year to transform alleys into contemporary art galleries, and in 2007 adopted a policy addressing building form and frontages and other design elements in alleys. The City Council's current "Lanes policy" calls for on-going alley preservation and revitalization through the coupling of service functions and pedestrian amenities. The city has also provided grants to businesses to locate in alleys.

San Francisco: The City of San Francisco has made the preservation and activation of alleys a citywide priority, recognizing their important role in dense urban neighborhoods for creating human-scale space and pedestrian-oriented spaces, while breaking up the scale of large blocks and creating a more useable development pattern.^{xxx} Dozens of alleys in the urban core have been renovated and transformed into spaces actively utilized by small businesses, retail, and dining/entertainment establishments. Belden Place in the financial district is one of the city's most famous alleyways, with multiple restaurants and outdoor seating—the alley has become a magnet for residents and visitors. Some of the alleys are open for services during the early morning hours, and then closed to vehicular traffic during the day. Maiden alley, for example, has two beautiful white gates at end of the alley, which are used to close off the alley to vehicles starting in the late morning, when the alley is transformed into a shopping esplanade with high end boutique stores. New alleys are also being included in new development to break up super blocks and provide opportunities for small business opportunities and enlivened public spaces, and the City has developed height limits and step backs along alleys to allow light and air to circulate. The City's general plan bans the selling off of alleys, and the city routinely incorporates the makeover of alleys in its public works projects.



San Francisco Alley.
Photo courtesy of Heather Way, Downtown Commission

Sydney, Australia: To activate its alleys (aka laneways), the City of Sydney provides a number of programs, which grew out of a 1993 study evaluating the potential of Sydney's alleys and recognizing their role as economic engines for the city. The City is upgrading paving and installing a range of physical improvements including lighting, street furniture, signs, and permanent and temporary art installations in its alleys. The City sponsors a Laneway Art Program, which each year commissions seven different art projects for alleys, resulting in a range of art installations attractive to a broad range of age groups.^{xxxii} The City sponsors a walking guide of laneway art in the central city to showcase these installations. Sydney also offers business incentives via "fine grain" matching grants to small businesses to encourage the activation of alleys through cafes, retail, and galleries.^{xxxiii} For development adjacent to alleys, the City has adopted development guidelines requiring that new development reinforce the role of the alley as public open space and enhance pedestrian access, encourage pedestrian use by providing for retail or other activity, and provide for service access as appropriate.

Brisbane, Australia: Through Brisbane's Vibrant Laneways and Small Spaces program, which is part of the City's Centre City Master Plan, Brisbane is leading a number of alley activation projects to transform alleys into "imaginative, fun and engaging" spaces.^{xxxiii} The program includes a new art program showcasing the work of nine artists in alleys and physical improvements such as new lighting, seating, art work, and paving. The city has completed more than three activation projects and is currently leading five more projects.

Perth, Australia: In 2008, the City of Perth adopted a formal strategy to revitalize the city's alleys, followed by an action plan for each of the alleys targeted for revitalization.^{xxxiv} The City evaluated each alley and its potential for revitalization and then identified priority projects. The project has resulted in the revitalization of several alleys and stimulated commercial interest in previously neglected spaces.

Seattle: Seattle has revitalized a number of alleys in the city's urban core and adopted policies to promote future activation projects. The City of Seattle adopted new special permit policies to make it easier for nonprofit groups and businesses to host special events in alleys, and a nonprofit created a guidebook on how to put on events in alleys. One major step the City took was to address the concentration of dumpsters in its alleys through the adoption of the Clear Alleys Program.^{xxxv} The program removed 700 dumpsters in downtown alleys and replaced them with smaller color-coded bags and small containers, coupled with increasing garbage collection to multiple times a day. The City also banned permanent storage of containers in the City's right of way, including alleys. The initiative was aimed at increasing the attractiveness of alleys for pedestrians; allowing better alley access for business services and possible expansion of commercial activity; and creating cleaner, safer alley spaces. Much of the alley activation work in Seattle has been lead or spurred by two nonprofits, the Alley Network Project and International Sustainability Institute, which have developed partnerships with surrounding businesses and stakeholders in the Pioneer Square area. The City of Seattle

has also adopted a stringent street and alley vacation ordinance to ensure that alleys are not vacated if they address purely private concerns such as acquiring additional property for development.^{xxxvi}

Chicago: As a city, Chicago has more alleyways than any other city in the world. Improving these alleys is recognized as being essential for both the environment and for the quality of life of the residents. One of the alley initiatives the city has spearheaded is the Chicago Green Alley Program, which began in 2007. This initiative lays out a series of recommended design features that can help homeowners and businesses develop their alleys in a way to more effectively deal with the issues of storm water management, urban heat island effect, materials recycling, and lighting to reduce nighttime glare. By creating a guidebook of best management practices, the city shows how accessible design options can create alley spaces that will work better as infrastructure and have the added benefit of being beautiful spaces as well.

Los Angeles: Los Angeles has recently activated a number of urban and neighborhood alleys into engaging public spaces. One of the most recent transformations was the EaCa Alley in Hollywood. The alley was originally a crime-ridden area, but then transformed into a pedestrian thoroughfare and dining space in 2012. The idea for transforming the alley grew out of a UCLA student's master thesis. The transformation was made possible through a collaboration of the City Council, the local redevelopment association, and the support of the surrounding business owners, who formed an alley association after seeing the value in attracting pedestrians into the alley and using the alley for dining space. The transformation cost \$800,000 and included repaving with red bricks, storm water and drainage improvements, lighting, and elimination of trash bins. The city issued permits to the surrounding businesses to offer seating up to ten feet into the alley along with serving food and alcohol in the alley.

IX. Policy Recommendations

There are a number of new policies and practices that Austin could adopt to support the activation of Austin's downtown alleys. Additional information on the examples referenced below is available in Appendix C.

DOWNTOWN PLAN AMENDMENTS

1. Amend the Downtown Austin Plan to add the following policy goal: With support of the surrounding businesses, establish a program for renovating and enhancing downtown alleys to serve as lively pedestrian walkways, new spaces for artists and small businesses, and vibrant gathering spaces.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

2. As part of the Downtown Alley Master Plan under development, adopt and implement a comprehensive ten-year strategy to revitalize five to ten of Austin's downtown alleys as vibrant, activated public spaces. See, for example, the plans adopted by Fort Collins, Colorado, and Perth, Australia. We recommend the master plan assign typologies based on the potential each alley offers for being activated, based on the recommendations in Sara Hammerschmidt's thesis discussed above. We also recommend the master plan process include one or more community charrettes to capture the community's vision for downtown's alleys.
3. Through the Public Works Department and in collaboration with downtown stakeholders, develop a template for design standards to facilitate the installation of physical improvements in alleys across downtown to enhance safety and create more pedestrian-oriented experiences, such as better lighting, special paving, and seating. See, for example, the design standards promoted in Activating Alleys for a Lively City. We recommend the City explore additional partnerships with the UT School of Architecture for leading the charrettes, developing the master plan, and assisting with other aspects of these policy recommendations.
4. In partnership with the surrounding businesses, the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association, and other stakeholders, select one to two alleys as "catalyst" projects for permanent activation in the next two years.
5. While preserving the role of alleys for trash pick up, create a program to remove and consolidate trash dumpsters located in alleys downtown and, over time, to change the appearance of the remaining dumpsters to make them more attractive. Explore a program similar to Seattle's Clean Alley program for removing of the large-scale dumpsters and replacing them with trash bins and more frequent pik-ups.

6. Ensure that the unique historical features and facades of alleys are incorporated into the City's historic preservation programs for downtown.
7. Adopt a process for naming Austin's downtown alleys and creating street signs at the entrances of the alleys.
8. For new development: adopt design standards or guidelines for new development along alleys. The standards could address the design of the "backside" of the building facing the alley to facilitate a pedestrian-oriented environment and encourage small businesses, cafes, and retail in the alley. Consideration should be given to banning blank facades in new development facing alleys. See, for example, the City of San Francisco's alley design standards.
9. Include funding in the next transportation bond initiative for improvements to alleys and the creation and implementation of the downtown alley master.

PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT

10. Develop a plan for how city staff could support temporary and permanent alley activation projects. One possibility is the development of a team of existing city staff from across departments, including Economic Development Department, Planning and Development Review, and Parks and Recreation, to work collaboratively on creating and enhancing public open spaces, including alleyways.
11. Evaluate the new changes to the City's special events permit process to ensure that they facilitate the ability of organizations to host special alley activation events. See, for example, the special permitting process for alleys adopted in Seattle. In facilitating events in alleys, Austin's special events office should adopt a policy allowing for the placement of alternative kinds of barricades during alley activation events, rather than the traditional orange and white large street barricades which impede pedestrian access into the alley. See, for example, Seattle's alley activation projects, which utilize small orange cones or no barricades at all, and San Francisco's artistic Maiden Lane gates.^{xxxvii} The policy regarding the placement of police officers at the barricades should also be reviewed; this is not a practice followed by other cities we identified with activated alleys.
12. Create an alley event handbook to highlight how to navigate the city permitting process and put on an alley activation event. See, for example, the special permitting process and handbook for alleys adopted in Seattle.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

13. Create a grant and loan program to facilitate the location of small businesses in alleys. See, for example, the “fine grain” grant program adopted in Sydney, Australia.

THE ARTS

14. Commission artists and partner with property owners to install permanent and temporary public art in alleyways and examine the creation of additional public and public-private relationships that would foster permanent and temporary public art installations in alleys. Potential sources of funding could include outside fundraising, foundation support, hotel/motel taxes for promotion of tourism (especially the new taxes that will be generated from the multiple hotels under development), the Art In Public Places (AIPP) 2% allocation from capital improvement project budgets (such as for repairs made to surrounding streets), downtown Public Improvement District dollars, and partnerships with local businesses (such as establishing a matching grants program with the AIPP and local businesses). For example, see the robust public art alley programs offered in Sydney and Melbourne as models.

TOURISM

15. Create a downtown alley walking tour mobile app for residents and tourists to explore Austin’s downtown alleys and discover their historical and architectural features.

Appendix A: Project Participants

Downtown Alley Conversion Workgroup Members (“Team Alley”)

Melissa Barry, Downtown Austin Alliance
Thomas Butler, Downtown Austin Alliance
Dan Cheetham, Fyoog
Megan Crigger, City of Austin Economic Development Department, Cultural Arts Division
Ann S. Graham, Community Arts Consultant
Shannon Halley, Councilmember Kathie Tovo’s Office
Chris Jackson, TBG Partners
Kit Johnson, City of Austin Public Works Department
Michael Knox, City of Austin Economic Development Department
Michael McGill, Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole’s Office
Matt Parkerson, Councilmember Chris Riley’s Office
Meredith Powell, Art Alliance Austin
Lynn Osgood, Downtown Commission and Parks Board
Kevin Shaw, City of Austin Economic Development Department, Cultural Arts Division
Michelle Tarsney, Architect
Rachel Tepper, University of Texas, School of Community and Regional Planning
Nicole Warns, TBG
Heather K. Way, Downtown Commission
Bart Whatley, Downtown Commission and Design Commission
Barbara Brown Wilson, University of Texas Center for Sustainable Development

Creative and Project Partners:

Art Alliance Austin
Creative Action
Fyoog
TBG
The Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Austin Public Library Friends Foundation and Badgerdog
City of Austin Channel 6
City of Austin Cultural Arts Division
City of Austin Downtown Commission
City of Austin Economic Development Department
City of Austin Public Works Department
Downtown Austin Alliance
Fusebox Festival
Movability Austin
UT Center for Sustainable Development
Zipcar

Non-Profit and Business Contributors and Supporters:

Art Seen Alliance
Anderson's Coffee
Austin Club
Austin Magic Camp
BuildaSign
Capitol Center
City of Austin Street and Bridge
Clean Scapes LP
Co-Lab
Colibri Cuisine
Convergence
Coolhaus Ice Cream
Forms and Surfaces
Nelsen Partners
Shermin Nurseries Inc.
Texas Juggling Society
Texas Public Policy Foundation

Individual Artists, Contributors, and Supporters:

Ibrahim Aminou
Brittany Andrews
Cameron Beauchamp
Lillian Beckwith
Ron Berry
Tammy Bishop
Greg Budney
Miyoko Chu
Taylor Dinkins
Zack Dryer
Julie Finney
Matt Fisher
Glenn Gadbois
Sean Gaulager
Jenna Jasso
Shirley Johnson
Jeremy Kee
Jena Kirkpatrick
Shane Kistner
Tommy Lather
Pat Leonard

Mike Lewis
Jim Maxwell
Lana McGilvray
Warren McKinney
Brad Nelsen
Burl Norville
Brian Ott
Aaron Parker-Fasel
Steve Parker
Hugh Powell
Erika Ragsdale
Griffon Ramsey
Ken Richardson
Keith Reeves
Kenneth Rosenberg
Cecily Sailer
Sandra Turner Saldana
Greg Sindelar
James Stanley
Oliver Steck
DJ Stout
Zac Tolbert
Sallie Trout
Dalton Wallace
Mike Webster
Matthew Winters
Steve Wiswell
Sue Young
Cara Zimmer

Special Thanks to:

Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole
Council Member Chris Riley
Council Member Kathie Tovo
Council Member Laura Morrison
Frances Hargrove and the City of Austin Special Events Permits Office
Howard Lazarus and the City of Austin Public Works Department

Appendix B: 20Ft Wide Survey Instrument and Results

20ft Wide Alley Activation Survey Evaluation

How did you hear about 20ft Wide? _____

Was this event a destination ☐ or did you chance upon it ☐ ?

Are you a Resident ☐ or Visitor ☐ Zip Code: _____

Do you work downtown? Yes ☐ No ☐ Do you live downtown? Yes ☐ No ☐

How did get to the event (walk, bike, bus, drive, etc.)? _____

What else will you do while downtown? _____

Do you have any comments to share about the event? _____

How did you hear about 20ft Wide? _____

Was this event a destination ☐ or did you chance upon it ☐ ?

Are you a Resident ☐ or Visitor ☐ Zip Code: _____

Do you work downtown? Yes ☐ No ☐ Do you live downtown? Yes ☐ No ☐

How did get to the event (walk, bike, bus, drive, etc.)? _____

What else will you do while downtown? _____

Do you have any comments to share about the event? _____

How did you hear about 20ft Wide? _____

Was this event a destination ☐ or did you chance upon it ☐ ?

Are you a Resident ☐ or Visitor ☐ Zip Code: _____

Do you work downtown? Yes ☐ No ☐ Do you live downtown? Yes ☐ No ☐

How did get to the event (walk, bike, bus, drive, etc.)? _____

What else will you do while downtown? _____

Do you have any comments to share about the event? _____

20Ft Wide Survey Results									
	How did you hear about 20ft Wide?	Was this event a destination or did you chance upon it?	Are you a resident or visitor?	Zipcode	Do you work downtown ?	Do you live downtown ?	How did you get the the event?	What else will you do while downtown?	Do you have any comments to share about the event?
1	Do 512 Family	Destination	Resident	78745	No	No	Drove	Might go eat	Neat small space
2	Art City Austin	Destination	Resident	78705	No	N/A	Bus	Lunch	Glad we came
3	Facebook	Destination	Resident	78745	No	N/A	Drove	Nothing	Great!
4	Imagine Austin & Radio	Destination	Resident	78722	Yes	N/A	Bike	Starbucks, Arthouse & Work	Great initiative, we want more public space
5	Instagram	Destination	Resident	78705	Yes	No	Walk/ Bus	Working	Good use of space; "I feel at peace"
6	Friend	Destination	Resident	78704	No	No	Car	N/A	Should be permanent
7	Friend	Destination	Resident	78757	No	No	Car	Wander/ Adventure	Like the feel, like you are walking into a new little world, like Dr. Suess, Should be permanent
8	Fusebox	Destination	Resident	78702	No	No	Car	N/A	Great to see under utilized spaces being used for community spaces; transformed into a beautiful place with art. Relaxing. More plants!
9	Friend-Facebook/Instagram	Destination	Resident	78705	Yes	No	Bike	Go to work at 4:30	I wish more people would have known about it. I don't think people will believe me "Oh I don't want to leave this place"
10	Work next door	Destination	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Working	A couple of the club's members wondered "how much money the City was wasting on this."
11	Email Newsletter	Destination	Resident	78723	Yes	No	Walk	Errands	It's awesome, very relaxing, it makes downtown more exciting
12	Live Downtown	Destination	Resident	78701	Yes	Yes	Walk		It's fun, a great idea, they should make this permanent. I'm from Germany & there's much more goin on there in the streets.
13	Ad at Art Festival	Destination	Resident	78759	No	No	Car	Maybe go for drinks	Impressive- everything should look like this.
14	Heather Way	Destination	Resident	78704	No	No	Bus	Farmers Market	Not Yet.
15	Friend & TV	Destination	Resident	78704	No	No	Bus	Farmers Market	It's great! Nice to see the city continue to mature. Just need to get more people involved. Thought it would be a fence block.
16	Heather Way	Destination	Resident	78703	Yes	No	Drove	Library Visit	Cool idea. We should do more of these
17	DAMA closures	Destination	Resident	78732	No	No	Drove	Breakfast, Farmers Market, Shopping	Love creative movement open to the public
18	Facebook	Destination	Resident	78757	No	No	Drove	Coffee	It's great!
19	Free Fun Austin	Destination	Resident	78748	No	No	Drove	Walk around	It's great. This is Austin, we love it!
20	Tv News	Destination	Resident	78705	No	Yes	Walk	Ballet Austin Class	Seems nice
21	N/A	Visiting from Nashville	N/A	N/A	No	No	Drove	N/A	N/A
22	Do512.com	Destination	Resident	78704	No	No	Drove	Unknown	It's great, creative use of space you usually avoid
23	Project Involvement	Destination		78736	No	No	Drove		So far so good
24	Looking for something else	Chance	Visitor	Houston					It's neat. It has a feeling like Europe

20Ft Wide Survey Results									
How did you hear about 20ft Wide?	Was this event a destination or did you chance upon it?	Are you a resident or visitor?	Zipcode	Do you work downtown ?	Do you live downtown ?	How did you get the the event?	What else will you do while downtown?	Do you have any comments to share about the event?	
25 Art City Austin	Destination	Resident	78701	No	Yes	Walk	Renew library card, lunch	Nice to do these kinds of things- hope there are more of them	
26 Drive by DANA	Chance			Yes	No	Drove	Market	Awesome. Could have done a dinner last, might do one behind me	
27 Walking by	Destination	Resident		Yes	Yes	Bike	Breakfast Tacos	Arts Mural Program	
28 Austin Biz Journal	Chance	Visitor	NA			Walk		Fantastic Idea	
29 Facebook Friend	Destination	Resident	78721	Yes	No	Drove	Brunch	Cool Idea- interested to see id this happens again	
30 Newspaper	Destination	Resident	78745	No	No	Drove	Farmers Market	Love the concept of using alley's for public spaces	
31 Free fun in Austin.com	Destination	Resident	78704	No	No	Drove	None	Charming and a lot of potential	
32 Free fun in Austin.com	Destination	Resident	78729	Yes		Drove	Toy Joy	Liked creative writing & wanted more	
33 Free fun in Austin.com	Destination	Resident	78727	No	No	Drove	None	Like- Something for Families	
34 Free fun in Austin.com	Chance	Resident	78707	N/A	Yes	Drove	Pipy Longstocking & Accordion Fest	N/A	
35 Email	Destination	Resident	78751	No	No	Scooter	Looking at condo	Pleasant & Appreciate place to sit and relax	
36 Walk by	Chance	Resident	78732	No	No	Drove	Walking Dogs, Visit Capitol, meet friends for lunch	Beautiful, brightens up the alley, could be a great public space	
37 Sue Lambe & AIpp	Destination	Resident	78703	Yes	Yes	Drove	Lunch	It's great, want more.	
38 AAA	Destination	Resident	78746	Yes	No	Drove	Lunch	Fantastic! Exceeded Expectations	
								Incorporate lights into boarded up bldgs to illuminate.	
39 Email	Destination	Resident	78705	Yes	No	Walk	No Plans. Lunch	"when you see something like this it changes your whole attitude in a positive way"	
40 Facebook	Destination	Resident	78751	No	No	Bike	Movie	Love to see more of it!	
41 KUT	Chance	Resident	78756	Yes		Walk	Lunch	"it's like a little kiss on the cheek" Maybe go a little deeper, more edgy, more alleys, etc	
42 DAA Social Media	N/A	Resident	78754	Yes	No	Walk	Working	Great Idea	
43 Downtown Austin Blog	Destination	Resident	78701	No	Yes	Bike	Walk/Bike Around	Hope city goes through with it for more places	
44 DAA	Destination	Visitor	N/A	Yes	No	Walk from Office	Working	"It's silly" we should focus on the parks we have already	
								Got me to go into a space I otherwise wouldn't-safe & clean	
45 Word of Mouth	Destination	Resident	78701	Yes	Yes	Walk	Lunch	Love it, fun. Don't think people know that they are welcome, barricades and signage	
46 City Council Agenda	Destination	Resident	78702	Yes	No	Walk	Forget the world	Love the concept. Rich history in alley. Might not be sustainable on a large scale without business involvement	
47 DAA Newsletter	Destination	Resident		Yes	No	Walk	On break from work	Reminds me of Joey Santori. Would like to see more	
48 Walk by	Chance	Resident	N/A	Yes	No	Walk	Working		

20Ft Wide Survey Results									
How did you hear about 20ft Wide?	Was this event a destination or did you chance upon it?	Are you a resident or visitor?	Zipcode	Do you work downtown ?	Do you live downtown ?	How did you get the event?	What else will you do while downtown?	Do you have any comments to share about the event?	
49 Works @ Austin Club	Destination	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	Walk	Working	Is the art done? Like it built like there could be more art.	
50 Walking by	Chance	Resident	78704	No	No	Walk	Coffee	He added something to the defunct electrical box- three black bats	
51 Facebook/Blog	Chance	Resident	78751	Yes	No	Walk	Coffee	When are you going to do this again?	
52 City Employee	Destination	Resident	78704	Yes	Yes	Drove	Meetings/Lunch	Would love to utilize this space, a place to meet for appointments	
53 Here & There	Destination	Resident	N/A	Yes	No	Walk	Event at City Hall on way home from work	The photos drew me to it. Great use of an unused street.	
54 512 Family Fusebox	Chance	Resident	78703	No	Yes	Bus	Bus Ride	Interesting- Downtown needs more quiet places to hang out at lunch & after	
55	Destination	Resident	78704	No	No	Drove	Lunch	Cool! Glad you guys are doing this.	
56 Word of Mouth	Chance	Resident	78759	Yes	No	Long Board	Fusebox Talk	Great!	
57 Sister in law/ Facebook	Destination	Resident	78745	No	No	Drove	Unknown	This should be done more	
58 Chronicle	Destination	Resident	78703	No	No	Drove	Lunch	Should have more art in public spaces & love art commissioners	
59 Pecha Kucha- AAA	Destination	Resident	78746	No	No	Drove	Lunch	Fantastic/ Also went to Pecha Kucha	
60 Chronicle- AA Statesman	Destination	Resident	78746	Yes	No	Drove	Lunch	Fabulous use in urban space	
61 Heather Way	Destination	Resident	78733	No	No	Car	Lunch	Reclaiming an old alley that would have otherwise been a lost space made it fabulous!	
62 Friend	Destination	Resident	78748	No	No	Car	Eat, go to a few museums	Great idea! Great way to turn a space into something inhabitable for both old & young	
63 Friend	Destination	Visitor	14467	No	No	Car	N/A	I think its cool. Love the colors in the dead space. Wish it could stay up all the time	
								Would like to see the businesses, more projects to do and take home. Love the interactiveness and want to be involved in making.	

Appendix C: Resources on Alleys

Alley Event Handbook and Alley Network Project: www.alleynetworkproject.com;
<http://alleynetworkproject.com/what-weve-learned/activating-your-alley/>.

City of Austin, Downtown Austin Plan (Dec. 8, 2011):
<http://www.austintexas.gov/downtownplan>

City of Austin, Green Alley Demonstration Project Website:
<http://austintexas.gov/page/2012-demonstration-project>

City of Brisbane, Australia, Vibrant laneways program:
<http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/planning-building/planning-guidelines-and-tools/urban-design-projects/vibrant-laneways-small-spaces/index.htm>.

City of Fort Collins, Downtown Alley Enhancement Project and Alleys Master Plan (Dec. 1, 2008): <http://www.downtownfortcollins.org/alleys.html>.

City of Melbourne, Arcades and Lanes Website:
<http://www.thatsmelbourne.com.au/Gettingaroundthecity/walks/Pages/ArcadesandLanes.aspx>

City of Melbourne, Love Your Laneway Project:
<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/ForResidents/StreetCleaningandGraffiti/Pages/LoveYourLaneway.aspx>

City of Perth, Australia, Forgotten Spaces—Revitalizing Perth’s Laneways Initiative:
<http://www.perth.wa.gov.au/planning-development/city-initiatives/city-laneways-enhancement-and-forgotten-spaces>

City of San Francisco, Living Alleys Project: <http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/reclaiming-roadway-space/living-alleys/>.

City of Seattle, Clear Alley Program: <http://seattlecap.wm.com>.

City of Sydney, Australia, “Policy for the Management of Laneways in Central Sydney”:
http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/120375/ManagementOfLaneways.pdf

City of Sydney, Australia, finegrain matching grants program:
<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/business/business-support/grants-and-sponsorship/finegrain-matching-grants>

Mary Fialko and Jennifer Hampton, Activating Alleys for a Lively City:
<http://greenfutures.washington.edu/publications.php>.

Joann Greco, "Why Alleys Deserve more Attention," Atlantic Cities: (Feb. 16, 2013):
<http://m.theatlanticcities.com/design/2012/02/why-alleys-deserve-your-attention/1249/>

Sara M. Hammerschmidt, "New Life for Downtown Alleys: Creating an Open Space Network in Downtown Austin, Texas," Master's Report for Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning, University of Texas at Austin (May 2009):
http://soa.utexas.edu/work/publicspace/home/SaraHammerschmidt_MastersReport_May09.pdf

End Notes

-
- ⁱ See Appendix A for a list of the workgroup members and other project partners.
- ⁱⁱ Sara Hammerschmidt, in her UT master's thesis, chronicles the history of Austin's downtown alleys up to 2009". Sara M. Hammerschmidt, "New Life for Downtown Alleys: Creating an Open Space Network in Downtown Austin, Texas," Master's Report for Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning, University of Texas at Austin (May 2009), available at http://soa.utexas.edu/work/publicspace/home/SaraHammerschmidt_MastersReport_May09.pdf.
- ⁱⁱⁱ City of Austin, Downtown Austin Plan (Dec. 8, 2011), p. 9, <http://www.austintexas.gov/downtownplan>.
- ^{iv} Hammerschmidt, *supra*, p. 36.
- ^v Hammerschmidt, *supra*, p. 41.
- ^{vi} "Renovation of Downtown Alley Proposed," *Daily Texan* (circa 1970s; exact date of article unknown).
- ^{vii} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, Policy 3.1, at 24.
- ^{viii} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, pp. 134, 146.
- ^{ix} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, TP-1.3, pp. 146-47.
- ^x Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, p. 2.
- ^{xi} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, pp. 36, 115.
- ^{xii} Because of Fox News's use of the northern section of the alley for entering the station's parking lot, the workgroup limited the activation project to the southern half of the alley.
- ^{xiii} A more complete list of partners and participants for 20ft Wide can be found in Appendix A.
- ^{xiv} Chris Jackson, "The Biggest Party Ever in Alley Number 111," *Urban Land Magazine* (Aug. 2013), <http://urbanland.uli.org/Articles/2013/Aug/JacksonAlleys>.
- ^{xv} See Appendix B for a copy of the survey instrument.
- ^{xvi} Joy Diaz, "Can the Lowly Alleyway Transform Downtown Austin?" *KUT News* (Mar. 18, 2013).
- ^{xvii} Jan Buchholz, "Here's an art demo up your alley," *Austin Business Journal* (Apr. 18, 2013), available at <http://www.bizjournals.com/austin/blog/creative/2013/04/heres-an-art-demo-thats-up-your-alley.html?page=all>.
- ^{xviii} "Austin's Alleys Could Come Become the Next Art Spot," *KEYE TV* (Apr. 12, 2013), available at <http://www.keyetv.com/news/features/waste-local/stories/austins-alleys-could-come-next-art-spot-69.shtml>.
- ^{xix} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, p. 119.
- ^{xx} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, p. 119.
- ^{xxi} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*.
- ^{xxii} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, p. 119.
- ^{xxiii} See Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, p. 91.
- ^{xxiv} City of Austin, "Green Alley Demonstration Project," <http://austintexas.gov/page/2012-demonstration-project>.
- ^{xxv} For an excellent example, see Mary Fialko and Jennifer Hampton, *Activating Alleys for a Lively City*, p. 28-29, <http://greenfutures.washington.edu/publications.php>.
- ^{xxvi} Hammerschmidt, *supra*, p. 62-66.
- ^{xxvii} City of Fort Collins, Downtown Alley Enhancement Project and Alleys Master Plan (Dec. 1, 2008): <http://www.downtownfortcollins.org/alleys.html>.

-
- ^{xxviii} For a brief overview of Melbourne's laneways, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lanes_and_arcades_of_Melbourne.
- ^{xxix} City of Melbourne, "Love Your Laneway," <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/ForResidents/StreetCleaningandGraffiti/Pages/LoveYourLaneway.aspx>.
- ^{xxx} City of San Francisco Planning Department, "San Francisco's Alleys," <http://www.sf-planning.org/modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=1961>; and City of San Francisco, "Living Alleys Project," <http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/reclaiming-roadway-space/living-alleys/>.
- ^{xxxi} City of Sydney, "Laneway Art Program," <http://www.cityartsydney.com.au/cityart/projects/lanewayart/>.
- ^{xxxii} City of Sydney, "Central Sydney Laneways," <http://sydneyyoursay.com.au/laneways>; City of Sydney, Fine Grain Matching Grant Program, <http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/business/business-support/grants-and-sponsorship/finegrain-matching-grants>.
- ^{xxxiii} City of Brisbane, Australia, "Vibrant laneways program," <http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/planning-building/planning-guidelines-and-tools/urban-design-projects/vibrant-laneways-small-spaces/index.htm>. <http://www.planning.org.au/documents/item/3253>
- ^{xxxiv} City of Perth, Australia, "Forgotten Spaces—Revitalizing Perth's Laneways Initiative," <http://www.perth.wa.gov.au/planning-development/city-initiatives/city-laneways-enhancement-and-forgotten-spaces>.
- ^{xxxv} City of Seattle, "Clear Alleys Program," <http://seattlecap.wm.com>.
- ^{xxxvi} City of Seattle, "Street Vacations," <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/streetvacations.htm>.
- ^{xxxvii} For an image of the gates in Maiden Alley, see <http://sanfrancisco.about.com/od/photogalleries/ig/Photo-Tour--Barbary-Coast/Maiden-Lane.htm>.

4 Arcades and Lanes

Lanes, alleyways, little streets, arcades, café society and fascinating shops.

Walking time 1.5 hours

Distance 2.5 Kilometres



Melbourne's little laneways began life as rear access to properties facing big streets. Many were later roofed as 'arcades' to provide refuge from the weather and crowds and to provide more space for shops. Today, some lanes have been reborn and hum to the rhythm of daily city life. Others are still waiting to be discovered.

Begin your walk by crossing from **Federation Square** ① to a traditional meeting place 'Under the Clocks' ② at **Flinders Street Station** ③. Cross Flinders Street, turn left and continue on. Turn right into Degrares Street where William Degrares' steam flourmill pumped away in the 1850s. Nowadays, it's espresso.

Degrares Street ④ is a mecca for Melbourne's café society. Check out the healthy delights at the organic shop or the juice bar. Order a coffee at Degrares Espresso Bar, where the seats are recycled cinema seats and benches from a former magistrates court.

At the end of Degrares Street, on the other side of Flinders Lane, is the **Majorca Building** ⑤ – still as stylish as in its 1920s heyday. The building's terracotta has Spanish or Moorish influences, reflecting the exotic destinations that captured imaginations at that time.

Centre Place ⑥ is a breeding ground for cafes – some so small you can barely stretch to stir your coffee. Ask for the delicious soup of the day at pocket sized Jungle Juice Bar, squat on the box seats and enjoy noodles at Yen or retreat upstairs to dimly lit Hell's Kitchen and look down on the passing throng. This area is also a must see for those interested in street art.

Step up to **Centre Way** ⑦ (1913) – an early steel-framed building with a post-modern makeover – then cross Collins Street and turn left before entering the exquisite 19th century **Block Arcade** ⑧. The arcade was named after the fashionable Collins Street block between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets where 19th century Melburnians liked to promenade or 'do the block'. Today, it is still a hive of activity, with its mosaic floors and fascinating shops to explore.



Under the clocks at Flinders Street Station

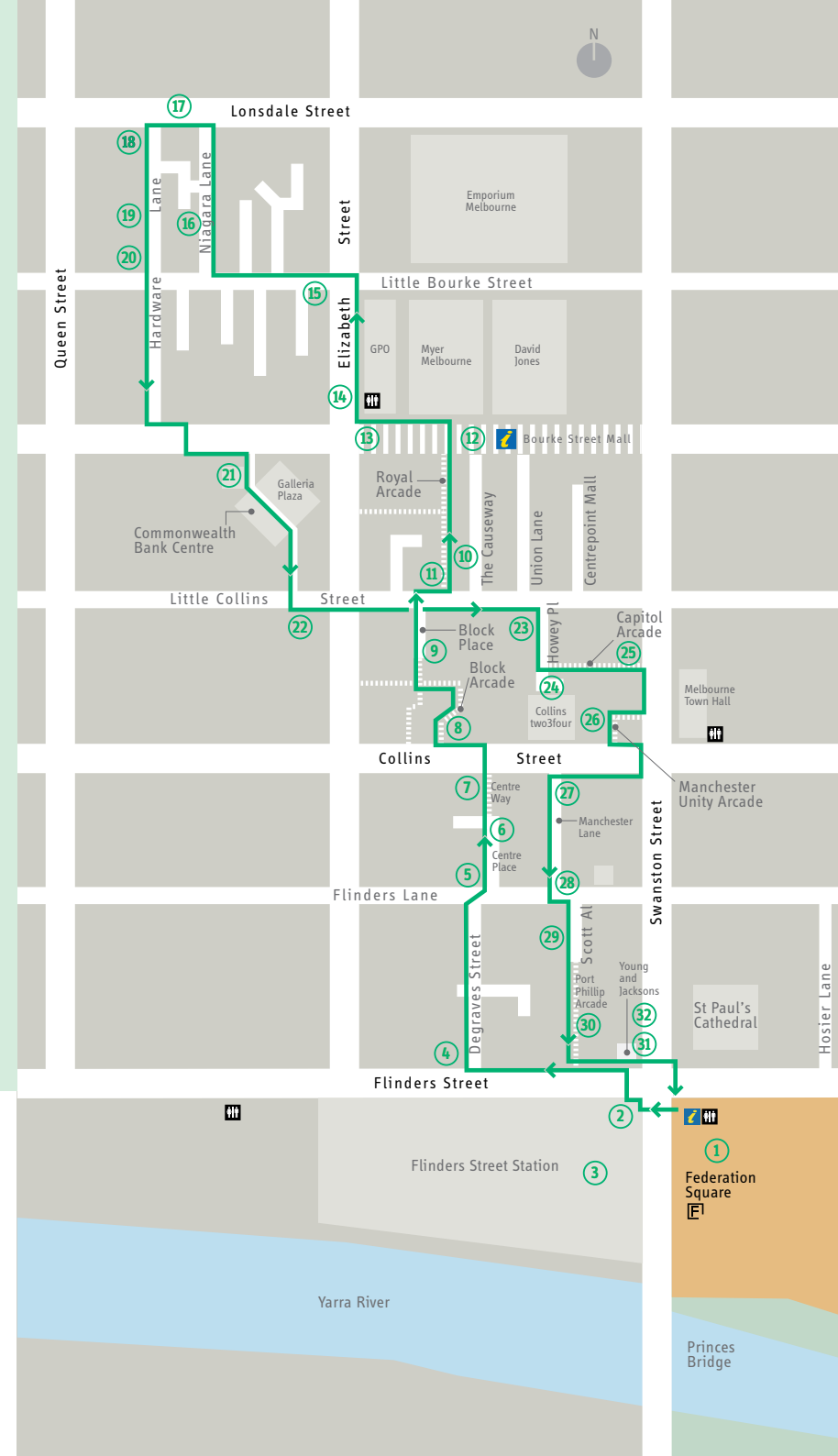


Gog and Magog



Hardware Lane

Pick a table at **Block Place** ⑨ and grab a bite to eat before you cross over Little Collins Street to the elegant **Royal Arcade** ⑩ (1869) – the oldest shopping arcade in Australia. Don't forget to look back up to **Gog and Magog** ⑪, the two legendary giants of the ancient Britons who have struck on the hour since 1892.





Niagara Lane



The famous Block Arcade

Reaching Melbourne's shopping heart at **Bourke Street Mall** (12), turn left and cross the Bourke Street Mall, pass the sculpture the **Public Purse** (13) outside **Melbourne's GPO**, then turn right to continue along Elizabeth Street. The **Underground Public Toilets** (14) are historic: the men's were built in 1910, while the ladies waited longer, until 1927.

Go left up **Little Bourke Street** (15) and cross two laneways before you discover a superb group of 1880s warehouses at **23-31 Niagara Lane** (16). Look for the picturesque barrel hoists. The lane was named in the 1860s after the Niagara Hotel in **Lonsdale Street** (17).

Round the corner, after a short walk up Lonsdale Street, bustling **Hardware Lane** (18) epitomises Melbourne's laneway renaissance. With cobbled stones underfoot and café umbrellas overhead, stay awhile and enjoy the lane's alfresco seating, fascinating façades and small specialty shops.

At 63-73 Hardware Lane, look up through the café umbrellas to check the date of **Dynon's Building** (19), a set of four (originally five) warehouses designed by William Pitt, the celebrated architect of Princess Theatre and some of the finest gothic revival buildings in Collins Street. Named after **Hardware House** (20) in the 1920s, Hardware Lane was built on land formerly occupied by Kirk's Horse Bazaar.

Stroll back down to Bourke Street, cross over and take a short cut through **Galleria Plaza** (21) – then turn left onto **Little Collins Street** (22) where the serious fashion begins. Pass a dozen lanes and arcades before reaching the delightful **Howey Place** (23). Between the 1890s and 1920s, the western side of Howey Place was part of Cole's Book Arcade, which stretched from Collins to Bourke Streets and was probably the 'biggest bookshop in the world' with over two million books.

Continue on through **Capitol Arcade** (24) to Capitol House, opened in 1924 and designed by Walter Burley Griffin (architect of Canberra) and Marion Mahony Griffin. Upstairs, the **Capitol Theatre** (25) was once an extraordinary 'picture palace'. These days during term-time, you may see students from RMIT University, attending lectures in the impressive auditorium.

Walk through historic **Manchester Unity Arcade** (26) and then cross Collins Street to **Manchester Lane** (27) and Flinders Lane. Once the centre of the city's rag trade, **Flinders Lane** (28) is now a unique shopping destination for the hip and happening, as well as home to some of the best galleries and bars in the city.

As you head back to Federation Square, stroll down **Scott Alley** (29) and pass through **Port Phillip Arcade** (30) and turn left at Flinders Street. Your final stop is **Young & Jackson's** (31) where the beer has flowed for over a century. Upstairs is the nude portrait **Chloe** (32) that shocked conservative Melbourne and made the hotel famous. Enjoy one last drink here as you take in the grand view of **Federation Square** (1).

Federation Square



The Ian Potter Centre NGV Australia

Australian Centre for the Moving Image

Arts and Culture

Artplay
Bookings essential,
artplay.com.au
Tel: 9664 7900

Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI)
Mon to Sun
10am to 5pm

NGV Studio
Sun to Wed
10am to 5pm
Thurs to Sat
10am to 10pm

No Vacancy Project Space
Tue to Sat
11am to 5pm
Sun 12pm to 5pm

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia
Tue to Sun
10am to 5pm

Restaurants, Cafes and Bars

Optic Kitchen & Bar
Mon, Tues and Sun
8.30am to 6pm
Wed to Sat
8.30am to 10pm

Arintji
Mon to Fri
10am to late
Sat & Sun
9am to late

Beer Deluxe
Mon to Sun
7am to late

Bokchoy Tang
Mon to Sun
11.30am to late

Café Chinotto
Mon to Sun
10am to late

Chocolate Buddha
Mon to Sun
noon to late

Feddish
Mon to Sun
noon to late

Il Pom Italian
Mon to Sun
11am to late

In a Rush Espresso
Mon to Sun
7am to 5pm

Riverland Bar and Café
Mon to Sun
7am to late

Time Out Café
Mon to Sun
8am to late

Transport
Mon to Sun
11am to late

Taxi Kitchen
Mon to Sun noon to 3pm
and 6pm to late

Transit Cocktail Lounge
Sun, Wed & Thurs
from 5pm
Fri to Sat from 4pm
Mon to Tue closed

Shops and Retail

Best of Victoria
Best of Souvenirs
Open same hours
as Melbourne Visitor
Centre

Kirra Galleries
Mon to Sun
10am to 6pm

7-Eleven
Mon to Sun
Early to late

Visitor Information

Melbourne Visitor Centre at Federation Square
Open seven days a week 9am to 6pm
(excluding Christmas Day)

Melbourne Visitor Booth in the Bourke Street Mall
Open seven days a week 9am to 5pm
(excluding Good Friday and Christmas Day)

Fitzroy Gardens Visitor Centre
This centre provides information services, touch displays, and free Wi-Fi and café facilities. Purchase your Cooks' Cottage tickets and merchandise, or take part in the free guided garden walk which departs from the centre every Saturday at 10am.

City Ambassadors
Keep an eye out for the City Ambassadors dressed in their distinctive red uniforms in the central city.
Mon to Sat 10am to 4pm, Sun noon to 3pm

Melbourne Greeter Service
Discover from a local what locals love about Melbourne. English orientations available seven days per week. Other languages on request. Bookings are essential. 03 9658 9658 (M-F only)

Melbourne Visitor Shuttle
Hop on and off at any of the 13 stops along the route at key city destinations, guided by an informative on-board commentary. The complete trip takes approximately an hour and a half. The bus runs every 30 minutes between 9.30am and 4.30pm daily excluding Christmas Day.

For further information, visit
melbourne.vic.gov.au/visitor

Useful Numbers

Best of Victoria Booking Service	9928 0000
Public transport queries	1800 800 007
Travellers' Aid – Flinders St Station	9610 2030
Travellers' Aid – Southern Cross Station	9670 2072
Airport Bus – Skybus	9335 2811
Ticketmaster	13 6100
Ticketek	13 2849
Directory Assistance	1223
Emergency – police, fire and ambulance	000

There are a number of self-guided walks in this series. These walks were developed by Federation Square and the City of Melbourne.

For more information, call the City of Melbourne Hotline 03 9658 9658, visit melbourne.vic.gov.au/melbournebrochures or go to the Melbourne Visitor Centre at Federation Square



CITY OF MELBOURNE

TM 02/15



International Sustainability Institute

314 1st Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 397-8638
www.isiseattle.org
www.alleynetworkproject.com



Cover photo by Jordan Lewis, courtesy International Sustainability Institute

WHY ALLEYS

Alley Network Project draws on the energy and ideas of neighbors, businesses, colleagues and community groups to transform Pioneer Square's alleys into one of its unrivaled assets. Alleys offer the opportunity for Pioneer Square to boost healthy activity on its streets, feed its vibrant arts culture, and draw people to local businesses.

The Neighborhood's Advantage.

The scale of the buildings, narrow alley passageways and architecture make Pioneer Square's alleys visually alluring. Once the City of Seattle's Clear Alley Program removed the dumpsters (see link, pg 12), the alleys became a potential space for people walking through the city, neighborhood events and micro-storefronts.

Neighborhood Enthusiasm.

When the International Sustainability Institute began holding events in the alley behind its offices, the response was overwhelming. Since 2008, more than 5,000 people attended alley events, University of Washington students devoted hundreds of hours to design work, and the Historic South Downtown and City of Seattle Neighborhood Matching Fund programs awarded funding for art installations and events. Neighborhood residents and businesses recognize the potential of alleys and are working to reclaim them still more.

A Unified Effort.

Alley activation requires a community to work together and draws it closer. A diverse cross-section of members is required to plan events that everyone is excited about. Everyone must chip in to help organize these screenings, parties and art displays, and, often these events can support other good work going on in the community. In 2011, a party in the Nord Alley, for example, helped the King County arts group 4Culture thank all the artists displaying their work in nearby Occidental Park.

Alley projects leverage funds from the government, private foundations and local businesses. They tie together professionals and citizens with a wide variety of talents, including public space experts, community organizers, marketing professionals and research students - to jointly problem solve and, most important, create communal spaces.

WHY EVENTS

Put people in your alley.

Putting people in your alley is a first step. People breath new life into spaces that have long been used for illegal activity or dumping trash.

Our approach was to throw unique events. After hosting numerous events over several years, we can see Pioneer Square's alleys transforming. A bicycle repair shop recently moved into one alley - with its front entrance in the alley. Plants and flower pots are starting to sprout up in the nooks and crannies of alleys. And some shops now feature their signs and menus on alley doors.

All of these steps are collectively starting to change how these spaces are perceived and used.



Photo by Erika Schultz, courtesy International Sustainability Institute

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This Alley Event Handbook is designed as a 'step by step' guide to plan and host an alley event. The steps for obtaining a permit are specific to Seattle, but you can use this as a guide if you live elsewhere.



Photo by Mira Poling, courtesy International Sustainability Institute

Reclaim your alleys! Explore! Create!
Have Fun!

PLAN YOUR ALLEY EVENT

When people come to an alley event, they're often amazed to be watching a film, hearing great music, or simply hanging out. Changing the perception of alleys as places for crime or garbage into places to be used by everyone is not only possible, but happening all over the country and the world.

Alleys in Melbourne, San Francisco, Chicago and Seattle – to name a few – are being changed into usable and creative public spaces. Opening stores and restaurants into the alleys, installing lighting, arts, and plants, or finding ways to treat stormwater are all part of the realm of possibilities.

Here in Pioneer Square, The Alley Network Project has learned the nuts and bolts of hosting events in alleys. We would like to share that knowledge for anyone interested in learning about cleaning up their alley and hosting events. Below is a guide in helping you throw a great event!

PLANNING SCHEDULE

at least 2 months prior

- ☐ **SET THEME:** art or visual installation, music, food tastings, film, performance
- ☐ **SET DATE:** check if other events are happening on same day to piggy-back
- ☐ **COMMUNICATE** with neighbors on the block
- ☐ **PARTNER** with volunteers and assign roles
- ☐ **RAISE** funds
- ☐ **SEEK** donations
- ☐ **START** permit application
- ☐ **SEND** save-the-date

1-3 weeks before event

- ☐ 3 weeks: send out invitation
- ☐ 3 weeks: distribute postcards, flyers at local businesses
- ☐ 1 week: send reminder
- ☐ 1 week: get signed permit

2 hours before event

- ☐ close alley and place barricades
- ☐ clean and set up alley (see 'preparing the alley', next page)

Setting Up Food and Drink

- ☐ Estimate food quantity
- ☐ Food options
 - food cart vendor
 - potluck
 - local business donations
- ☐ Table suggestions
 - 6 foot table for food
 - 6 foot table for beverages
 - 6 foot table for community displays
- ☐ Alcoholic beverages
 - The Washington State Liquor Control Board can give you permits for serving alcohol indoors or outdoors.
- ☐ Display table for community participants
 - event information, sign-up sheets and other information



Photo by Mira Poling, courtesy ISI

Decorations and Other Ideas

- ☐ Flowers
- ☐ Lights, candles
- ☐ Seating (moveable chairs invite people to stay and sit)
- ☐ Photography: assign a volunteer or hire a professional to take pictures

Preparing the Alley

- ☐ Barricades or cones to close the alley
 - Ensure access to parking garages (partial alley closure)
 - Remind neighbors and businesses what areas will be blocked off so that deliveries can continue as scheduled
- ☐ Request cleaning the alley from the Metropolitan Improvement District (if downtown Seattle) or the waste company that serves your area
 - Cleanscapes: 206.859.6700
 - Waste Management: 206.505.9057
- ☐ Volunteer cleaning: enlist volunteers to clean your alley if you're unable to find service providers (need hoses brooms, etc.)
- ☐ Guide people into your alley. Some suggestions:
 - A-boards
 - Balloons
 - Signage

After the event make sure you leave the alley
CLEANER than you found it!

HOW TO GET AN ALLEY EVENT PERMIT

This application isn't as hard as it might look. We've tried to give you all you need to get through the on-line process.

Step 1. Set up an account with Seattle Department of Transportation
http://olp.seattle.gov/DP1/Metroplex/Seattle/login/WIZ_LOGIN.asp

- Page 1 - Click on Create an Account
- Page 2 - Skip Contact ID - click next
- Page 3 - Create a user name & password; enter email address, first name, last name, company name (if applicable), address, and phone number - click next
- Page 4 - Review information you created - click finish if all looks correct

Step 2. Create an Application. This process will take approximately 5 minutes. Follow the prompts. You may see a term that you don't recognize. Below are a list of prompts and terms with our suggested response.

Begin by entering your user name and password from account set up
http://olp.seattle.gov/DP1/Metroplex/Seattle/login/WIZ_LOGIN.asp

- **Start an Application**
- **Permit Type and Details**
 - Application Type - Select Simple Street Use Permit
 - Select Work Type - Other Use of Right of Way
 - Description of Work - explain what you are planning. "ALLEY EVENT" will be sufficient - click next
- **Permit Site Address**
 - Enter the address for *the street in front* of your alley
 - Street Use Permits Only – skip this field- click next
- **Details: Simple Street Use Permit**
 - Click on Add Type of Use – This brings up a box of options
 - Select "STR BARRICADING- PRIVATE, TEMP (3A)"
 - Enter Start Date
 - Enter Duration
 - Enter square footage (approximate area) - click save & continue
 - Arterial or Non Arterial box - Select "non-arterial"
 - Mobility Impact - check all that apply; Alley Closed or Partially Blocked
 - Time of Day - check the one that applies to your event

-
- Impacted Infrastructure - click alley
 - Job Number - skip and click next

- **Applicant, 24 hour Contact, and Additional Contacts**

- Applicant's relationship to the permit - if you are managing the event, you can click on "MANGER"
- Permittee - choose applicant, other individual or company (company could be a not-for-profit) - click Add Contact
- 24-Hour Contact - choose applicant or other individual - click Add Contact

- **Application Information Confirmation**

- Review your information
- If everything is correct, click Finish

- **Fee Status - this will be the deposit amount**

- Select your method of payment. If you select pay in person, you are finished - just print a copy and take to:
Seattle Department of Transportation
700 5th Avenue, 23rd floor, Street Use, Seattle, WA 98124

If you select pay by credit card - hit next and you will be taken to an online credit card page- complete the form and click continue - you will be taken to the next page to review and complete.

ITEMS: Once you receive your permit number, assemble the information below and email it to: annualpermits@seattle.gov. Be sure to reference your permit number in the email.

- *signatures* from all building owners located on the that alley acknowledging that you will close for the event (see example in this handbook, pg 10)
- *map and site plan of alley closure* showing locations of alley closed signs and barricades (see example in this handbook, pg 11)
- *proof of a \$1,000,000 liability policy*, City of Seattle named as an additional insured and a special endorsement - information found at:
<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/cams/cam2102.pdf>
<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/cams/cam2500.pdf>

sample PERMISSION LETTER

Your name, alley name or logo here
RE: Letter of approval - Temporary Alley Closure for Alley Event

We're going to have an ALLEY EVENT!

Date: 00/00/000

Time: 00:00 am/pm

During this period, the alley will be closed to through traffic. One end of the alley will be open to allow for parking garage access.

If the applicant representative is different than the building or business owner (i.e. property manager), fill in both columns.

Applicant Representative Name: _____ Business/Building Owner Name: _____

Company: _____ Company: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Mailing Address: _____

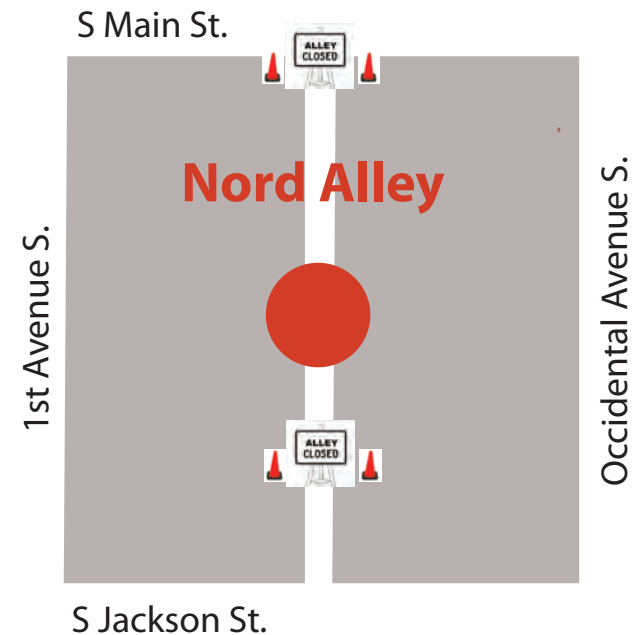
E-mail: _____ E-mail: _____

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please contact **your name** at 206-000-0000 or **me@emailaddress.com** if there are any questions or concerns regarding this letter.

sample MAP & SITE PLAN

Below is a sample map needed for your application. This map shows one "alley closed" sign partially blocking the alley to allow parking garage access.



Map adapted from The City of Seattle Department of Transportation Street Use Permits - Roadway Closure Barricade Requirements.

ALLEY RESOURCES

Alley Network Project (This site has a list of other alley resources.)

www.alleynetworkproject.com

Alleys of Seattle Blog - Daniel Toole

www.alleysofseattle.com

International Sustainability Institute

www.isiseattle.org

The City of Seattle's Clear Alleys Program

www.ci.seattle.wa.us/util/Services/Garbage/CommercialGarbage/ClearAlleyProgram/index.htm

The City of Seattle Department of Transportation - Permits

http://olp.seattle.gov/dp1/metroplex/seattle/login/wiz_login.asp

The Seattle Integrated Alley Handbook

www.greenfutures.washington.edu/pro-publicspaces.php

NOTES

NOTES

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Waste Management Clear Alleys User Guidelines

CREATING CLEANER, SAFER BUSINESS DISTRICTS

As part of the City of
Seattle's Clear Alleys Program,
Waste Management offers
dumpster free service to
commercial and multifamily
customers in Seattle's
Pioneer Square and
International District
neighborhoods.

www.wmnorthwest.com
1-800-592-9995

Seattle
 Public
Utilities



THINK GREEN.®



CLEAR ALLEYS PROGRAM

How it Works

Waste Management offers color-coded bag collection to help businesses and residents comply with Seattle’s Clear Alleys Program.

Pre-paid Bags

Special Clear Alleys garbage and recycling bags from Waste Management* can be set out three hours before a scheduled pick-up.

Frequent Collection

Waste Management will provide service every day, seven days a week, 24/7. Bags are collected at least twice a day in the Pioneer Square neighborhood and the International District.

Bulky Items

Customers can purchase disposal tags for items that cannot easily fit in a Clear Alleys plastic bag. These tagged bulky items may also be set out 3 hours prior to collection.

Waste Management’s Clear Alleys Program service area maps are shown on pages 5 and 6.

***Collection Bag Pricing** (All collection bags are sold in rolls of 30. The 2014 prices are listed below.)

Commercial & Multifamily Garbage Bag	Green 33-gallon Green 15-gallon	\$5.85 per bag / \$175.50 per roll \$4.10 per bag / \$123.00 per roll
Commercial Recycle Bag	Yellow 33-gallon	\$4.10 / \$123.00 per roll
Multifamily Recycle Bag	Blue 33-gallon Blue 15-gallon	Included with purchase of garbage bags
Bulky Items Tags	Sticker (sold in packs of 5)	\$5.85 per tag

The Clear Alleys Program Rules can be viewed online at www.seattle.gov/util, search “Clear Alleys.”



CLEAR ALLEYS PROGRAM

How to Start Service

Please call Waste Management Customer Service at **1-800-592-9995** to set up your account and place your first order. Subsequent orders can be made online at **www.wmnorthwest.com/seattlecap**. Please click on the bag icon.

Billing

Commercial customers will also be billed for a monthly service fee of \$23.00. Multifamily customers will also pay a monthly service charge of \$33.15. All major credit cards are accepted.

Bag collection costs and shipping via USPS are included in the purchase fee. Expedited shipping is available upon request for an extra fee. Minimum bag order is \$100. Minimum bulky items tag order is \$25.

Recycling and Food Composting Customers interested in starting or expanding food waste collection should contact Waste Management at 1-800-592-5995.

Set Out Instructions

Customers may set out securely tied bags and/or tagged items up to three hours before the collection time window for their neighborhood. Flatten and bundle cardboard or put it inside a blue recycling bag.

STEP 1

Order collection bags online or by calling Waste Management Customer Service.
www.wmnorthwest.com/seattlecap
1-800-592-9995

STEP 2

Line indoor containers with prepaid Clear Alleys Collection bags

STEP 3

Securely tie corners of bags
Limit 60 lbs

STEP 4

Set out bags for collection.
See **www.wmnorthwest.com/seattlecap** for set-out times or call **1-800-592-9995**



**Properly
set out
collection
bag**



**Do not
set out torn,
untied or
overstuffed
bags
Limit 60 lbs.**

CLEAR ALLEYS PROGRAM

Recycle

Clean items only. No Sorting Necessary



Paper & Cardboard



Shredded Paper in Clear Plastic Bags

*Place bagged shredded
paper in blue recycling bag.*



Glass Bottles & Jars



Metal (Limit 2ft. x 2ft. x 2ft.)



Plastic Containers



www.wmnorthwest.com
1-800-592-9995



www.seattle.gov/util

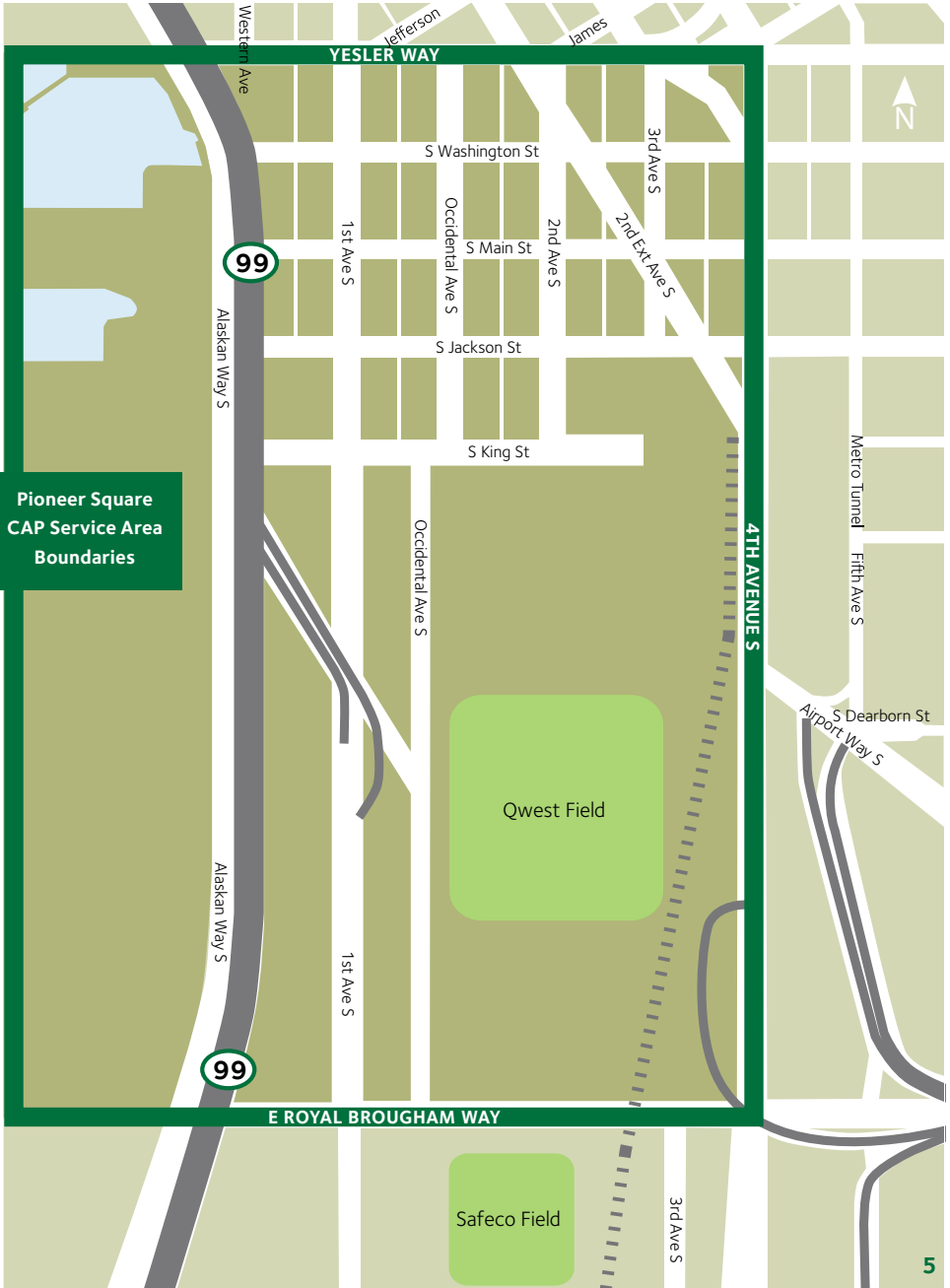
PIONEER SQUARE SERVICE AREA

Clear Alleys Program

Please set out Clear Alleys bags by 5am for morning service and 6pm for evening service.




Seattle
Public
Utilities




INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT SERVICE AREA

Clear Alleys Program

Please set out Clear Alleys bags by 5am for morning service and 6pm for evening service.

 Phase I to Begin April 1, 2013

 Phase II to Begin April 1, 2014



Seattle
Public
Utilities





LIVING ALLEYS
MARKET OCTAVIA

TOOLKIT

**Mayor**

Edwin M. Lee

Board of Supervisors

John Avalos
London Breed, *President*
David Campos
Julie Christensen
Malia Cohen
Mark Farrell
Jane Kim
Eric Mar
Scott Wiener
Katy Tang
Norman Yee

Planning Department

John Rahaim, *Planning Director*
Gil Kelley, *Director of Citywide Planning*

Planning Commission

Michael J. Antonini
Rodney Fong, *President*
Rich Hillis
Christine Johnson
Kathrin Moore
Dennis Richards
Cindy Wu, *Vice President*



LIVING ALLEYS

MARKET OCTAVIA

TOOLKIT



PROJECT TEAM & PARTNERS

The Market Octavia Living Alleys Program is a collaborative effort led by the San Francisco Planning Department, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, and San Francisco Public Works. The project was funded by a Community-Based Transportation Planning grant from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The project team would also like to thank Professor Antje Steinmuller and her CCA architecture studio for collaboration with the project.



San Francisco Planning Department

David Winslow, LEED AP
Jessica Look, AICP
Ja Young Kim
Justin Panganiban
Neil Hrushowy
Adam Varat
Gary Chen
Adrienne Aquino
Sheila Nickolopoulos



San Francisco Public Works

Michael Rieger, RLA, ASLA
Jasmine Kaw, RLA
Bassam Aldhafari
Cliff Wong
Lynn Fong
Nick Elsner
Kevin Jensen, AIA CSI



San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Will Tabajonda, P.E.
Patrick Golier
Laura Stonehill
Adam Gubser

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Vision	02
1.2 Context	03
1.3 Project Overview	04
1.4 Goals	04
1.5 Implementation Priorities	05

2 WHAT IS A LIVING ALLEY?

2.1 What is a Living Alley?	10
2.2 Case Studies	11
2.3 Best Practices	16

3 DESIGNING A LIVING ALLEY

3.1 Design Considerations	20
3.2 Toolkit Goals	30
3.3 Design Tools	31
3.4 Prototypes	68

4 IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCES

4.1 Community Organizer Checklist	86
4.2 Organizing	88
4.3 Research	88
4.4 Estimating Costs & Fundraising	92
4.5 Funding Sources	94
4.6 Public / Private Partnerships	96
4.7 Permit Process and Responsibilities	100

A APPENDIX

A.1 DIY Survey Kit	106
A.2 SF Public Works Cost Estimates	110

INTRODUCTION

1

1.1 VISION	<i>p. 02</i>
1.2 CONTEXT	<i>p. 03</i>
1.3 PROJECT OVERVIEW	<i>p. 04</i>
1.4 GOALS	<i>p. 04</i>
1.5 IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES	<i>p. 05</i>

Vision

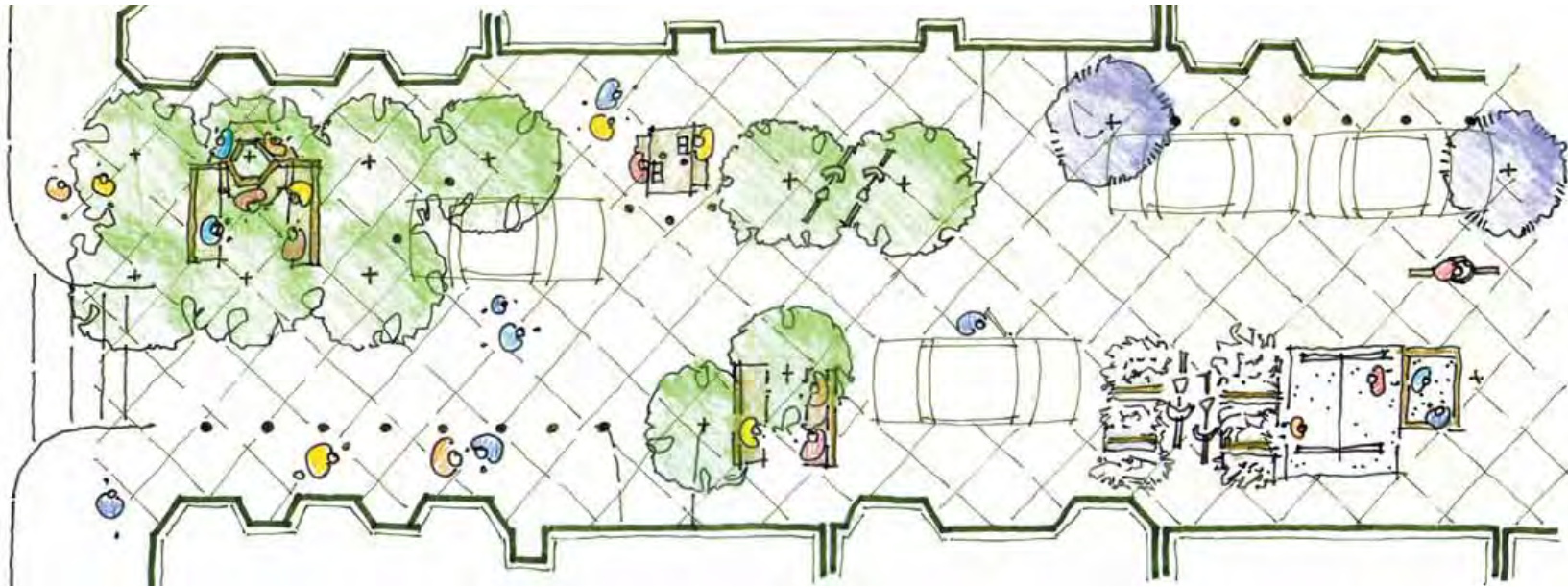
The 2008 Market Octavia Area Plan balances housing and transportation choices with neighborhood livability by enhancing the physical and social fabric that gives people access to basic needs and encourages interaction with one another. The Plan builds on the strengths of the physical context and the cohesiveness of the community. While some of the work laid out in the Plan has been implemented or is under construction, parts of the vision have yet to be completed.

“Living alleys” were one of the anticipated public improvements in the Plan area, which will be funded in part by impact fees from new development and created in partnership with public and private support.

This toolkit is a resource for community members and designers to develop and implement living alleys. The toolkit includes 20 design tools and well as example prototypes, to give community members a range of options and inspiration for creating living alleys in the Market Octavia Plan Area, though much of this information is applicable to

alleys throughout San Francisco. In addition to the design tools, constraints and opportunities are discussed so project designers and residents can understand the full breadth of the project.

Implementation of living alleys will rely on public private partnerships, partly because the City has limited appetite to accept maintenance and liability for non-standard streets, and partly to ensure that improved alleys are tended by the people who are vested in their creation.



Conceptual living alley design from the 2008 Market Octavia Area Plan

Context

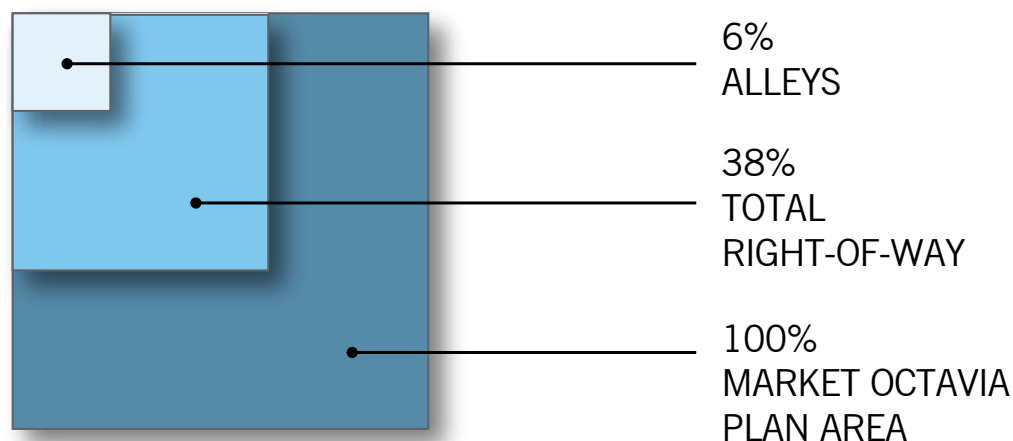
Major regional transportation corridors grid the Market Octavia Plan area, carrying over 100,000 vehicle trips daily. Interspersed between these are the small and quiet alleys that occupy about 6% of the total area of the Market Octavia Plan – a significant spatial resource in a dense urban area. The Market Octavia Plan identified the relative slow pace of alleys as places for open space and calm pedestrian environments to counterbalance the bustling traffic on the surrounding arterial streets. Fronting these are a mix of “back of house” uses and housing, along with some commercial uses. The Market Octavia Plan called for the development of prototypes and a process for residents to participate in the design and implementation of improvements to their alleys. Dubbed “living alleys”, these improvements create shared, multipurpose public spaces.

The main goal of living alleys is to create safe and active public places for people especially where there are narrow sidewalks or little open space. In doing so, they add vitality to the street and to the block. Living alleys are also part of a pedestrian and bicycle network. Living alleys improve pedestrian safety by designing streets as places first and roads second by creating expectations that reinforce slower speeds and more careful driving behavior.

Living alleys should engender active uses like walking and bicycling, and community activities but they should also embody sustainable best practices, such as stormwater management. A living alley is a street that is activated, safe for pedestrians and greened to support environmentally sustainable functions.

Most of the alleys identified in the Market Octavia Plan are the smallest parts of the street network, but they differ. Some are fronted by

quiet, small-scale residential buildings, while others have a mix of lively commercial uses, and still others are dominated by garages. The amount of garage and service functions varies and can inhibit the long term adaptability of these alleys to become active, livable places. Some alleys, due to their location between arterials, function as traffic short-cuts. These conditions should be considered when contemplating whether and how to make improvements.



Comparison of street and alley areas to the Market Octavia Plan Area

Project Overview

The **Market Octavia Living Alleys Program** includes a design and implementation toolkit to facilitate the creation of Living Alleys. The toolkit builds on elements of other programs such as the **Better Streets Plan**, the **Parklet Program**, **Green Connections** and the City's Public Works **Sidewalk Landscape Program** to create a network of active, safe, and walkable alleys. But living alleys go further by claiming and rebalancing entire streets for both **bike** and **pedestrian-priority zones**, and by providing a range of **public open spaces**.

Accomplishing these goals requires changing expectations. Trade-offs are inevitable. Alleys cannot maintain their current amount of parking, traffic, and back-of-house service functions, and simultaneously provide usable open space and a comfortable pedestrian realm. A living alley is a holistic transformation of the use and function of the alley.

Goals

Although the concept of living streets has been in practice for well over thirty years in Northern Europe, adapting it to an urban American context presents a set of issues such as accessibility. The core goals and values of living alleys in San Francisco emerged from a series of community workshops. These core goals are:

GREEN

A street with opportunities for landscaping to soften the environment and invite social gatherings.

SHARED

A calm street that balances the priorities of pedestrians and bicyclists with automobiles.

VIBRANT

A street that supports the activities of neighbors, community, and businesses. This includes passive and active space for recreation, actively programmed uses such as temporary events, or daily commerce, and spontaneous activities.

CLEAN & SAFE

A street that is cared and tended for, well-lighted and maintained.

Achievement of these will create places where people feel welcomed, comfortable, and safe.

The City anticipates about \$2,000,000 in Market Octavia Plan impact fees to implement Living Alleys. Funding will be distributed through a Community Challenge Grant, and will prioritize projects that leverage other funding and efforts to allow the city to realize an extend a living alley network.

Implementation will be driven by priorities, funding, and community support for improvements. Implementation of much of the network will be achieved organically through community-initiated improvements in coordination with ongoing streetscape work delivered by the City and new development projects.

Many living alleys may start with small improvements that grow over time. For example, community members could first install string lighting, landscaping, and seating in an alley, and later install traffic calming features. Enhanced road alterations and paving could follow. Over a ten year time frame, a living alley network could emerge from incremental enhancements by public private partnerships. Coordination of private efforts with public project are generally more efficient and encouraged.

Implementation Priorities

A number of criteria influence which alleys are prioritized for implementation. This section details criteria for prioritizing improvements.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED, NEIGHBORHOOD-LED PROJECTS

A living alley project designed and led by community members will best serve the people who use it daily. When the community take the initiative to improve public spaces, everyone benefits – participants help ensure that projects meet local needs and preferences, neighbors get to know one another, and over time residents may develop a greater sense of pride in their neighborhood, paving the way for additional community-building ideas and projects. This investment fosters a public ownership that ensures that places are well used and maintained.

With this in mind, the Market Octavia Living Alleys Program envisions neighborhood-led projects will be the primary implementation approach. This toolkit is designed to enable

local residents, business owners, and other community members to actively lead in building the network in close collaboration with the City. The approach is similar to other programs designed to leverage the creativity and initiative of individuals in the development of the City's public spaces. For instance, property owners can create sidewalk gardens in front of their homes, replacing swaths of concrete with landscaped areas that enliven their streets and reduce stormwater runoff through the Public Utilities Commission's Watershed Stewardship program and the Sidewalk Garden Project.

In cases where community members plan and implement streetscape improvements and other place-making elements, the Market Octavia Living Alleys Program encourages the City to prioritize complementary traffic calming and related improvements.



CONTINUITY: CREATE A NETWORK TO CONNECT ALLEYS, OPEN SPACES, AND BIKE ROUTES

In addition to creating great local places, the Market Octavia Living Alleys Program aims to improve connections between alleys. This will create an alternate pedestrian network to the bustling arterial streets. To best enhance usability and accessibility, connectivity should be an important consideration. Connecting to parks, community gardens, and school yards, and other public open spaces should be prioritized.

A challenge is the current physical separation between alley segments. The isolation that contributes to their quiet charm also means they stop and start, interrupted by busy major streets.

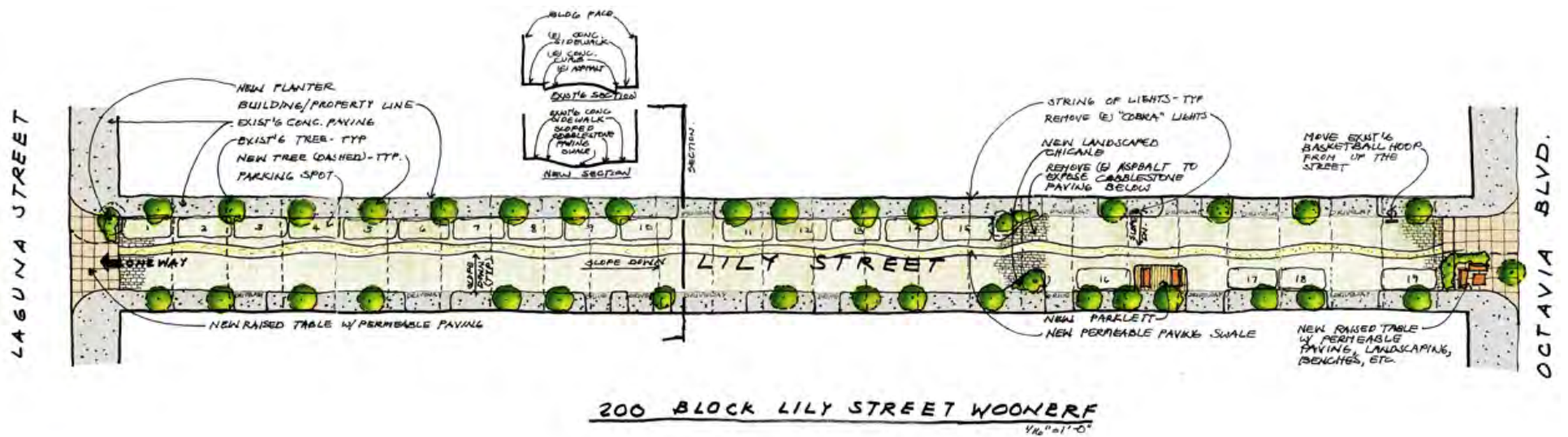
Where an alley intersects a larger street it may be possible to connect alleys with crossing

treatments. Depending on various factors, crossings may vary from painted zebra crossings to signalization devices. A living alleys network could be used for short neighborhood trips, as well as a network that safely links to a wider portion of the City.

BENEFIT SENIORS AND CHILDREN

Living alleys that provide open space adjacent to schools and senior centers for the benefit of seniors and children should be prioritized. Schools and senior centers also provide an opportunity for education and community building programs. They could steward specific portions of the living alley network adjacent to their spaces, resulting in excellent additions to the living alley network, such as sidewalk gardens, artwork, and educational installations about species and habitat.





A resident's conceptual sketch of Lily Alley in San Francisco

WHAT IS A LIVING ALLEY?



2.1 WHAT IS A LIVING ALLEY ?	<i>p. 10</i>
2.2 CASE STUDIES	<i>p. 11</i>
2.3 BEST PRACTICES	<i>p. 16</i>

What is a Living Alley?

A **living alley** is a street designed as a place for people. It can be considered an “Urban Living Room”. Its design can reconfigure the geometry and surfacing of the street, or simply add low cost amenities for residents while maintaining the traditional curbed right-of-way. Whatever approach, living alleys prioritize the entire public right-of-way for pedestrians and bicyclists with alternative but clear physical boundaries. A living alley also has areas of exclusive pedestrian use and areas where vehicles are allowed to share space with pedestrians and bicyclists.



Case Studies

The Market Octavia Living Alleys Program relies on resident-initiated design and implementation of alley improvements.

This program drew inspiration from successful alley programs throughout North America and the world. The descriptions and photos here present just a few notable examples. In some instances, the team looked within our own backyard, as San Francisco has many reclaimed alleys.



Jack Kerouac Alley, San Francisco

JACK KEROUAC ALLEY

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Jack Kerouac Alley is a short, 18 foot wide, one-way alley in San Francisco's Chinatown that connects Grant Avenue and Columbus Avenue. Before the alley was revitalized, it was a common place for illegal dumping and as a short cut for vehicles. The Chinatown Community Development Center and businesses fronting spearheaded the alley revitalization effort. Completed in 2007, hard costs were approximately \$350,000.

The redesign of the alley created a pedestrian only right-of-way with unit pavers, pedestrian scale lighting, and bronze cast plaques inscribed with Eastern and Western poetry. The City also negotiated a "Quit Claim" with property owners, which forfeit vehicular access to their property in exchange for making the right-of-way pedestrian only.

FOR MORE INFO:

SF Public Works: Chinatown Alleyway Master Plan Improvements

<http://sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=55>

LINDEN ALLEY

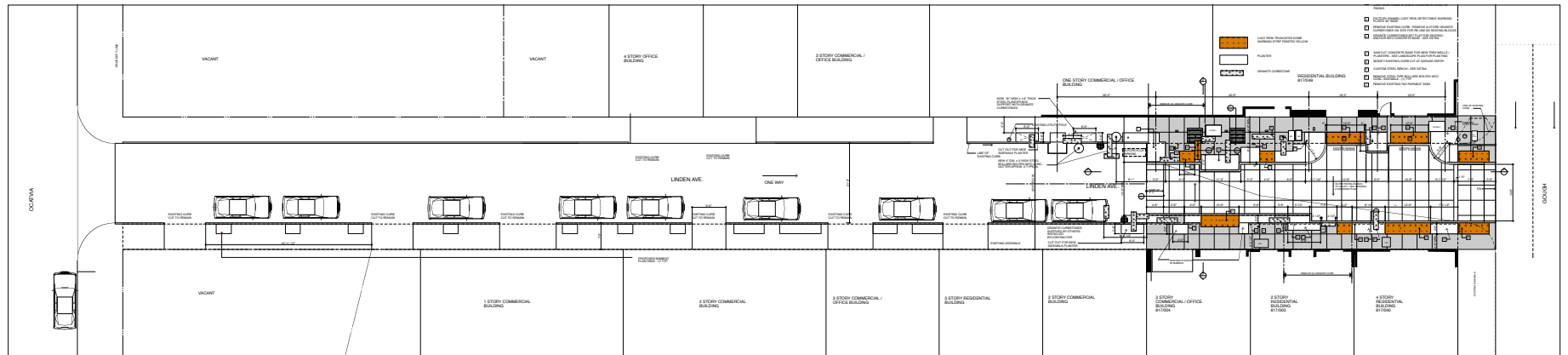
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

In a neighborhood with few parks and gridded with high-volume traffic corridors, the conversion of this portion of Linden Alley in Hayes Valley into a pedestrian-friendly, “green” street creates an intimate social setting for people to linger and relax. The raised and narrowed curbside roadbed slows traffic and puts people on the same footing as cars. Paved with single surface concrete, the widened pedestrian areas are separated and defined from the vehicle lane by plants and granite curbstone seating. A coffee shop and several stores brings people and life to the alley. The surrounding property owners pool together \$5,000 annually for maintenance costs.

FOR MORE INFO:

Winslow Architecture

http://www.winslowarchitecture.com/urban_design/02/



ANNIE ALLEY

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

The Yerba Buena Community Benefit District's (YBCBD) Yerba Buena Street Life Plan created a vision and road map for the next generation of public spaces in the Yerba Buena district. The plan, which took two years to develop through a community process, identified the alleys as “special streets” and that some alleys could be redesigned as shared streets or pedestrian only plazas that could ultimately serve as new, much needed, public open spaces for this dense neighborhood.

Annie Alley, a narrow alley that connects Market and Mission Streets between Third and New Montgomery Streets, is the first of the alleys in the Street Life Plan to be closed to cars. The project creates an active and comfortable plaza, encourages pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and brings people and events to this overlooked alley.

The YBCBD collaborated with the San Francisco Planning Department's Pavement to Parks program, which is testing the plaza concept by temporarily closing the alley to cars. The alley hosts on-going weekly programming, such as picnics, film screenings and dance and music performances. CMG Landscape Architecture designed the space to include trellises with hanging plants, benches, and cafe tables. The temporary improvements were completed in 2014. Maintenance and stewardship are provided by the YBCBD.

The cost of capital and construction for the temporary improvements was roughly \$128,000 and the cost of design was roughly \$60,000.



Source: Sergio Ruiz, SPUR



Source: CMG Landscape Architecture

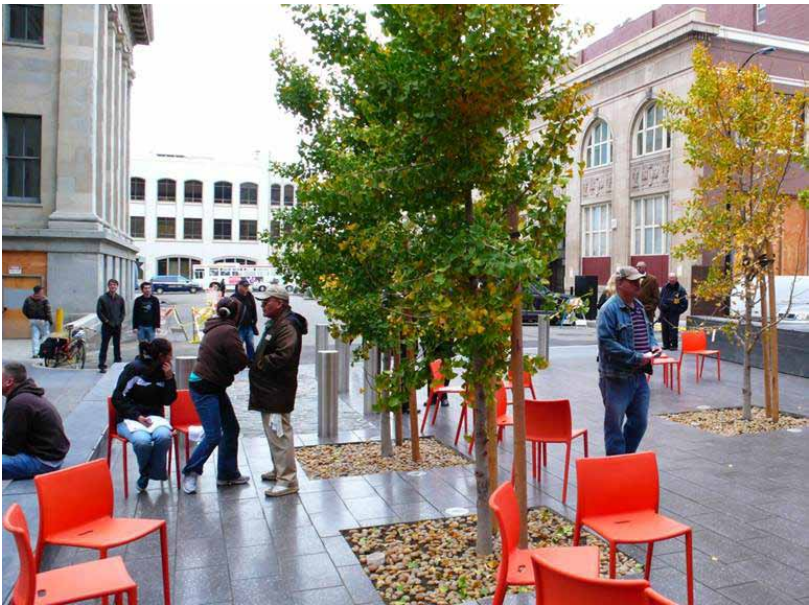
FOR MORE INFO:

San Francisco Pavement to Parks

www.pavementtoparks.org

Yerba Buena Community Benefits District

www.ybcd.org



Mint Plaza, San Francisco



Temescal Alley, Oakland



Bell Street Park, Seattle

Image by Nate Cormier, SvR Design Company

MINT PLAZA

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Completed in 2009, Mint Plaza is in the South of Market neighborhood in the former Jessie Street public right-of-way. The catalyst for the project was an adjacent development, which physically improved the right-of-way and donated the finished improvements to the City of San Francisco. Mint Plaza is now maintained by a nonprofit organization, Friends of Mint Plaza (FoMP).

Mint Plaza was designed to be a public plaza in an area that was in need of open space. The design is simple and encourages a variety of uses. It features an open center, free of permanent fixtures, but with bright orange, movable chairs. The plaza restricts vehicle traffic, which encourages safe pedestrian and bicycle use. A café and integrated bench seating line the edges of the plaza. The plaza includes a stormwater management system that captures runoff in two rain gardens.

A community benefit district was created to assess property owners and fund events and maintenance operations.

FOR MORE INFO:

Friends of Mint Plaza

www.mintplazasf.org

TEMESCAL ALLEY

OAKLAND, CA

Temescal Alley and Alley 49 are in the Temescal neighborhood in North Oakland, just east of Telegraph Avenue at 49th Street. The alley formerly served as horse stables for historic horse drawn trolleys, but today contains eighteen small retail shops and artisan workspaces. The alley has been transformed into what some call a “miniature village” and has an organic and easygoing feeling about it. The right-of-way is a shared street free of curbs and contains planters and moveable chairs and benches.

FOR MORE INFO:

Temescal Alleys

www.temescalalleys.com

BELL STREET PARK

SEATTLE, WA

Located in the Belltown neighborhood of Seattle, Bell Street Park transformed a typical street into a vibrant, safe and green public space. The “street park” idea was a result of community activism and inter-departmental collaboration. The goal was to provide additional public open space in an underserved urban neighborhood. The project was funded through a park levy.

The shared street design balances the need for outdoor living space for diverse users with vehicular access for cars, buses, emergency vehicles and on-street parking. A curbless meandering roadway is bounded by pedestrian zones with generous spaces for vegetation, cafe seating, public art and more. The resulting shared space accommodates the neighborhood’s daily rhythms and accommodates special events such as art markets, popup playgrounds, and salsa dancing. The City of Seattle and a friends group are working together to program and activate Bell Street Park.

FOR MORE INFO:

SvR Design: Bell Street Alley

<http://www.svrdesign.com/bellstreetpark>

Best Practices

This toolkit is informed, in part, by the best practices of cities that have successfully implemented similar projects. While each city tailors projects to fit city and state policies and the specific needs of the community, many of the core values and strategies for alley improvements are shared.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Chicago's Green Alley Program, established in 2006, promotes sustainable practices, such as stormwater management, heat reduction, material recycling, and energy conservation. Their handbook analyzes and provides detailed illustrations of the outcomes of different sustainable design approaches. It also provides cost estimates for more individualized strategies that can be implemented in different alley types. Projects are funded by the Chicago Department of Transportation and individual Alderman (similar to San Francisco Supervisors) funds.

FOR MORE INFO:

City of Chicago: The Chicago Green Alley Handbook

http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/cdot/Green_Alley_Handbook_2010.pdf



Source: Chicago Department of Transportation, 2014

LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA

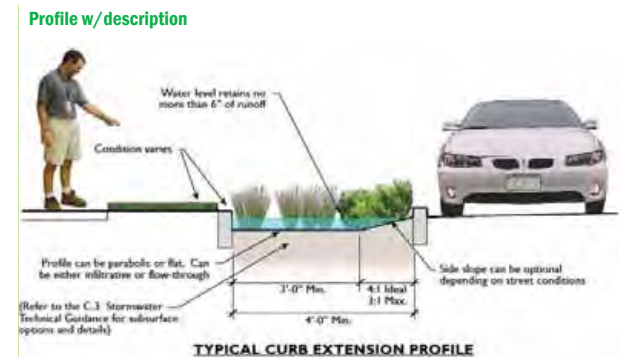
The Los Angeles Green Alley Program (also referred to as Green Streets and Green Alleys Program) is closely related to the Green Streets Guidelines proposed by Los Angeles' Board of Public Works to support watershed health, neighborhood safety, and pollution reduction, amongst other objectives. Their handbook develops a matrix of green street Best Management Practices (BMPs) that concisely explains the application, costs, effectiveness, and challenges of different green infrastructure strategies.

FOR MORE INFO:

National Association of City Transportation Officials

<http://nacto.org/docs/usdg/>

[green_streets_and_green_alleys_la.pdf](#)



Source: City of Los Angeles, Rainwater Harvesting Program

AUSTIN, TEXAS

The Public Interest Design summer course at the University of Texas developed an informative toolkit (“An Action Guide to Greening Austin’s Alleys”) that contains ideas, resources, and directions for improving Austin’s alleys. This toolkit is designed for residents, government officials, and designers to establish a collaborative process amongst these stakeholders. The toolkit proposes strategies and conceptual models, and introduces related design projects done by local students that can be tied to alley improvements, such as mobile food stands, outdoor sheds, and neighborhood place making.

FOR MORE INFO:

The Center for Sustainable Development and The Public Interest Design Studio

http://www.soa.utexas.edu/files/csd/CSD_PID_2011_AdvocacyBook.pdf



Source: University of Austin, Public Interest Design Studio

PORTLAND, OREGON

Portland’s “Alley Allies” toolkit is a step-by-step guide for alley improvements specifically geared toward local residents. The toolkit proposes accessible strategies that can be implemented on a neighborhood level.

FOR MORE INFO:

Mill Street Planning

<http://dsdauphin.wordpress.com/2013/12/25/alley-allies/>



Example of a Portland Pedway



Source: Mill Street Community Planning

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The Alley Network Project is a partnership of community institutions, nonprofits, and community groups organized to transform Pioneer Square’s alleys into “one of its unrivaled assets.” The project supports community involvement to help make alleys great pedestrian spaces. The Alley Network Project has leveraged funds from government, private foundations and local business to host alley activities and events and community design projects. Their inspiring website includes practical information on best practices for alley activation and how-to guides for alley events.

FOR MORE INFO:

Alley Network Project

www.alleynetworkproject.com



Seattle, Washington

DESIGNING A LIVING ALLEY



3.1 DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS *p. 20*

3.2 TOOLKIT GOALS *p. 30*

3.3 DESIGN TOOLS *p. 31*

3.4 PROTOTYPES *p. 68*

Design Considerations

We identify the following six design considerations that should be addressed in any alley improvement project. Please refer to these considerations as you begin your living alley design.

HYDRAULICS

The capacity of the public right-of-way to transmit surface water and storm runoff without flooding adjoining or downstream properties is a fundamental consideration in determining the feasibility of Living Alleys. This requirement may significantly impact the cross-section profile of an alley, construction and maintenance costs. At a minimum, SFPUC and SF Public Works hydraulic engineering staff must be consulted to find options and review proposals for hydraulic design.

Hydraulic engineering deals with the conveyance of waste and storm water through the City drainage system. In San Francisco, all streets are part of an interconnected drainage system, which includes combined sewers that collect storm and sanitary flow. The street conveyance system is intended to reduce the chances of hazards and damage from flooding. The primary parts of the systems are catch basins and storm water sewers, which are designed to accommodate a

5-year storm (3 hours of rain at 3.1 inches per hour), and the streets themselves, which are designed to convey water to a drainage inlet, and to carry flow from a 100-year storm event (3 hour storm with a peak intensity of 4.6 inches per hour). Generally, streets are required to convey up to the 100-year storm, but not all city streets can. (Some streets are in a depression area and have little conveyance capacity). These are special locations, the majority of streets in the city should follow the 100-year overland flow conveyance criteria.

The hydraulics of a street is analyzed at two scales. The first is the local drainage of the street itself and from the adjacent properties, and second, from cumulative flows within the system (overland flows) because streets receive flows from streets up-stream.

Green infrastructure, such as permeable paving, and rain gardens, etc., are elegant solutions to

stormwater management, but to be effective they depend on several conditions. Their efficacy depends on the soil type and percolation capacity, the depth of the existing water table, and potential for ground water to contribute to liquefaction, or basement infiltration. Green infrastructure has a benefit in collecting stormwater runoff. The benefits are quantifiable when assessed on long term scale (usually applying yearly rainfall time series data). They can augment the stormwater system if they are limited to relatively local and small amounts of stormwater; or have large amounts of open space dedicated. They also require higher levels and frequency of maintenance.

Any time the geometry of a street is altered -- a sidewalk widened, a road tabled, or road way landscaped -- the hydraulics are altered and must be analyzed for its impact on the system. The level of impact may determine type and cost and feasibility of hydraulic treatment.



Rain garden (bioretention planter)



Water diverted from storm drains into a rain garden



Permeable paving on Cass Farms Green Alley, Detroit

Source: <http://alleysofseattle.com/tag/green-alleys/>

Single-surface alleys present stormwater opportunities and challenges. Tabling an alley may divert or trap water flows depending on the location of the street and location of tabled portion. If the design diverts overland flow and transforms the alley into a localized collector, drainage solutions may be easier and more cost effective. A tabled solution that traps water will require the installation of new catch basins and a manhole, which are costly.

Tabling an alley may take some of the 100 year storm capacity out of the alley and may present a challenge or render it infeasible. Tabling an alley may cause a reduction in overland flow conveyance capacity and would be assessed under the 100-year storm event. The design can be altered or mitigation developed to offset reduction in capacity if such case arises. It may be also be possible that single surface alleys can be designed to carry the equivalent amount of water.

HYDRAULICS PARAMETERS

1. Determine the drainage profile of the alley. Is it primarily local or will the alley receive cumulative flows from other streets?
2. Assess the existing sewer system components; are they adequately sized and located, or will new catch basins, manholes, and sewers be required?
3. Assess the capacity of the street to accommodate a 100 year storm.
4. Analyze how much do impervious features contribute to the stormwater management. What is the scale and how much will they cost?
5. Trench drains are not generally acceptable as an alternate means of conveying water. The potential for them to become clogged and back up is dependent on the maintenance of the responsible party.
6. It is SFPUC policy to maintain responsibility of side sewer laterals from the curb line to the main (however Public Works code states that it is property owners responsibility from house to main). It will be important to identify the original curb line in single surface streets.

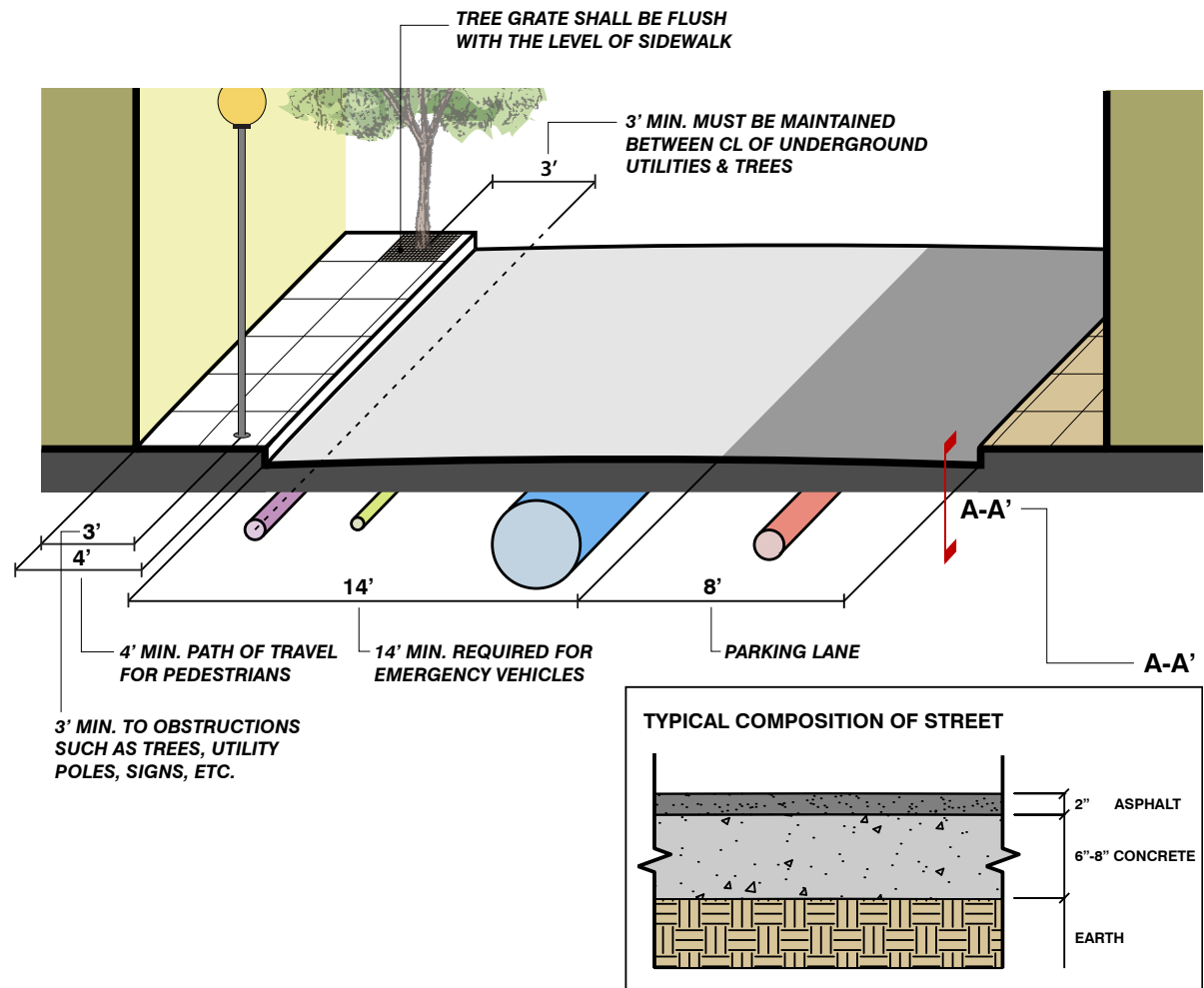
ROAD COMPOSITION & UNDERGROUND UTILITIES

Assessment of underground utilities that may be at the end of their life cycle is critical. Deteriorated underground structures that require excavation to repair will quickly undo what took years to plan and construct. The SFPUC can help scope the subsurface conditions early in the design review process.

Location of underground utility lines may determine design. For example, trees must be located at least three feet away from underground gas and water lines.

Permeable paving is also dependent on the composition of the existing roadway and the underlying soils. In some cases the existing road may have a 6"-8" thick concrete base, which is costly to remove if permeable paving is envisioned. Also, in places with a high water table, permeable paving may not improve stormwater management.

ADA/Accessibility considerations will include the possible re-grading and resurfacing of the roadway to make pedestrian areas accessible to persons with disabilities. For example the cross-slope (crown) of the roadway must be reduced to be 2% or less and the surface made smooth and non-accessible manhole covers replaced with accessible covers.



EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS

Emergency services are concerned with minimizing response time to an emergency and maintaining access to buildings as close as possible. Since emergency vehicle access has a high impact on feasibility of alley improvements, projects should be reviewed early by the Fire Department for any issues that could impact the design. Any new obstructions or change to the road geometry that decreases the response time and access for emergency vehicles is of critical importance.

The SF Fire Department reviews street improvements on a case-by-case basis, assessing a variety of factors such as:

1. The ability for emergency vehicles, as well as conventional large vehicles, to turn into an alley. Chicanes and turning radii should be designed to allow a SU30 to clear.
 2. The existing effective travel lane width of many alleys in the Market Octavia area is around 14' feet. To maintain access for emergency vehicles, this width generally should not be reduced. Specific zones may be reduced if a lesser width will not affect operations and access.
 3. Access to building access points, standpipes, and fire-hydrants.
 4. Street area to operate equipment and deploy outriggers. Accommodation of ladder trucks to deploy outriggers may require some areas with a clear width of 18 feet.
 5. Street width to building heights for ladder access. Existing overhead utilities or proposed overhead structures may impede ladder operations.
 6. Other frontages to access the buildings.
- For emergency responders, low mountable obstacles such as planters and traffic-calming features like speed tables and humps will not delay response time. However, transitions to and



Source: Jirka Matousek

from street tables should be gradual to prevent damage to fire trucks. This is also a consideration to prevent abrupt vertical jolts for people with spinal injuries. Pavement loads should also be designed for standard fire truck weights.

There may also be other emergency service operational considerations that affect design. Some of the design tools presented here should accommodate the typical needs of emergency vehicles, while some may require more involved collaboration with the Fire Department to develop designs. With an eye toward these concerns, a carefully designed shared street with no curbs and elimination of obstructions like parked cars could actually improve fire access.

ACCESSIBILITY

Living alleys aim to increase pedestrian comfort and safety by giving more space to people and less to cars. On small alleys, the removal of barriers like curbs between pedestrians and cars, to create a “shared street” can feel more pedestrian friendly. However, providing universal accessibility for all people, regardless of ability, may mean reinforcing conventional barriers and way-finding cues to serve people who are blind or have low vision. Designing and regulating around this paradox is one of the most difficult tasks. Therefore, a clear understanding of the principles involved and agreement on the means of achieving a shared space within this context is paramount.

The California Building Code (CBC) includes minimum accessibility criteria, as does the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. At its heart, however, accessibility is a civil right defined in several areas of federal and state statutes including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the California Civil Code (Unruh Civil Rights Act). Integrating people with disabilities into the life of the community is a right affirmed in these statutes. The design and maintenance of living alleys is required and is an opportunity to make these areas work for all members of the neighborhood, including the young and the elderly.

A mid-alley crossing between a school and playground on Hickory Street, San Francisco

ACCESSIBILITY DESIGN PARAMETERS

While not comprehensive, here are some basic accessibility considerations:

- » Accessible pedestrian paths of travel should typically not be less than 5 to 6 feet in clear width, and in no case may be less than 4 feet wide. The maximum cross slope along a path of travel should be 2%.
- » Sidewalk entries should have level landings (no greater than 2% slope) and be approximately 4'x4' minimum.
- » Surfaces for pedestrian use must be firm, stable and slip-resistant. Joints and surface level offsets must be small enough to not create an accessibility barrier. Surface roughness should be limited in order to avoid possibly harmful whole body vibrations and discomfort.
- » A boundary area that is clearly detectable to persons with disabilities shall be provided between areas where vehicles are allowed to travel and pedestrian only areas and accessible paths of travel that are required along the length of each side of an alley typically. These pedestrian accessible routes shall connect with individual accessible entrances and exits along the block and with the accessible sidewalk network of the city where the living alley intersects with a street.
- » Seating and table areas shall incorporate areas for wheelchair users and for persons who need armrests and backrests.



PARKING AND TRAFFIC

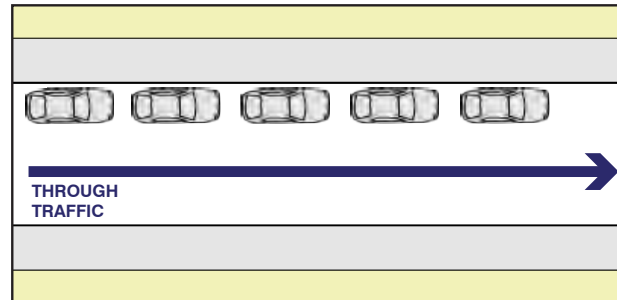
Typically, the alleys in the Market Octavia Plan area have a parking lane on one side of the street. The ability for cars and trucks to turn into and out of the alley needs to be maintained, as does existing garage access. These will determine what and where design features can be located.

Parking configuration can be used to calm traffic. In alleys wide enough for only a single parking lane it may be possible to alternate the sides of parking lanes to create a chicane, which is a change of the road geometry that requires drivers reduce speed to negotiate the lateral displacement in the vehicle path.

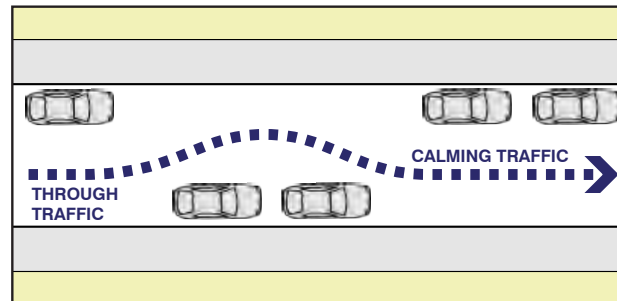
Living alleys can also replace space for street parking with space for people, activities, and landscaping. Removing street parking in exchange for a public amenity requires community support.

Furthermore, maintaining vehicular maneuverability and emergency vehicle access may determine the design and location of traffic calming features. Access and maneuverability of large trucks, such as trash and recycling pick up, should also be considered in the design.

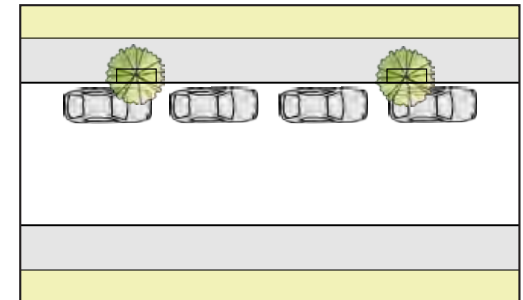
Incorporating parking and passenger loading areas that are accessible to persons with disabilities may be required.



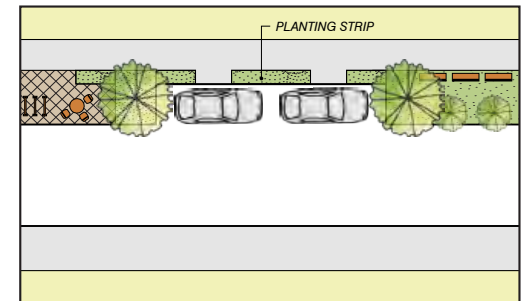
EXISTING



PROPOSED



TYPICAL SINGLE SIDE PARKING WITH NARROW SIDEWALKS



SUGGESTIONS FOR INTEGRATING LANDSCAPE & IMPROVEMENTS/SIDEWALK WIDENING IN PARKING LANE



STREET CROSSINGS

To help create a network of living alleys that is safe, visible, and convenient to use, connectivity across what might be challenging crossings is key. This section summarizes considerations for connecting across streets.

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) provides guidelines for design and installation of marked crosswalks within San Francisco. Crosswalks exist at all non-alley intersections that meet at approximately right angles, whether marked or unmarked, except where pedestrian crossing is specifically prohibited. Marked crosswalks alert drivers to expect crossing pedestrians and to direct pedestrians to safe crossing locations. At mid-block locations and at alley intersections¹, crosswalks only exist where marked. In this case, it is the crosswalk markings that legally establish the crosswalk.

Creating a successful network of living alleys depends on connecting them across arterials streets.

SFMTA will need to determine whether a crosswalk should be marked.

1. Per the California Vehicle Code, alleys are general minor street that are 25 feet or narrower in width.

CROSSING PARAMETERS

- » Determine if the site is an alley or a street as defined by SFMTA
- » Vehicular speeds from both directions on street perpendicular to alley
- » Vehicular volume and density
- » Vehicular turning movements
- » Pedestrian volumes
- » Roadway width
- » Day and night visibility by both pedestrians and motorists
- » Directing pedestrians in an identifiable direction is desirable to clarify pedestrian routes for sighted or sight impaired pedestrians
- » Discouragement of pedestrian use of undesirable routes
- » Consistency with markings at adjacent intersections or within the same intersection

Specifically for marking crosswalks at mid-block or alley intersections, crosswalks should only be established if the following conditions apply:

- » There is sufficient demand at the midblock or alley location; AND

More than 40 people are expected during the peak hour of pedestrian demand OR,

Significant pedestrian trip generators (such as a school, park, or commercial building) are on both sides of the street between controlled intersections.

- » The location is more than 300 feet from a controlled crossing location; AND
- » Adequate stopping sight distance exists between approaching motorists and pedestrians starting to cross the street at the proposed crosswalk; AND
- » The location has adequate street lighting to illuminate the proposed crosswalk; AND
- » Safety considerations arising from roadway configuration, vehicle volumes, or vehicle speeds do not preclude establishing a crosswalk².

2. SFMTA Crosswalk Guidelines elaborate more on when to mark crosswalks at mid-block or alley locations as they pertain to roadway configuration, vehicle volume and vehicle speeds.

The above guidelines are desired practice, subject to engineering judgment on a case-by-case basis. They are not meant to supplant the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD), which should also be consulted when installing marked crosswalks.

If adding crosswalks is not feasible, living alley designs can explore ways to make improvements that will help people get to the nearest marked crosswalk. Some improvements include sidewalk extensions, sidewalk amenities, signal timing upgrade, and day lighting.

From initial SFMTA analysis, mid-block crossings at major arterials like Gough and Franklin would need to be justified by pedestrian demand and most likely require installing signals due to their high volume of traffic. These are capital intensive (\$250,000), and would need to meet several other criteria for SFMTA to implement. Although the alleys in the Market Octavia Plan Area do not currently generate foot traffic to justify this investment, a possible scenario over the next several years as living alleys develop may look like this:

PHASE 1

A building owner converts an alley fronting back-of-house function (e.g. garage) to an active use like a retail store or restaurant that attracts more pedestrian traffic. Another building owner sees the commercial success and decides to follow suit. Depending on the popularity of the new uses, i.e. restaurants, it may only take a few new businesses to change the character and use of the alley.

PHASE 2

The commercial success of the alley may inspire building or store owners to invest in extensive and high-quality physical alley improvements. If there are similar destinations on the next alley block, then a case may be made for a mid-block crossing.

PHASE 3

Community members request an SFMTA study to determine if a mid-block crossing is warranted.



Linden Alley Street Fair, San Francisco



Alley in Copenhagen

MID-BLOCK ALLEY CROSSING PREFERENCES IN THE MARKET OCTAVIA NEIGHBORHOOD

The map on the following page illustrates the community preferences for potential mid-block crossings from a living alley public workshop in October 2013. Participants were asked to mark intersections for crosswalk prioritization based on their experiences of the area.

To establish a living alley network linking Linden Alley from Buchanan to Franklin Streets should be prioritized based on several factors:

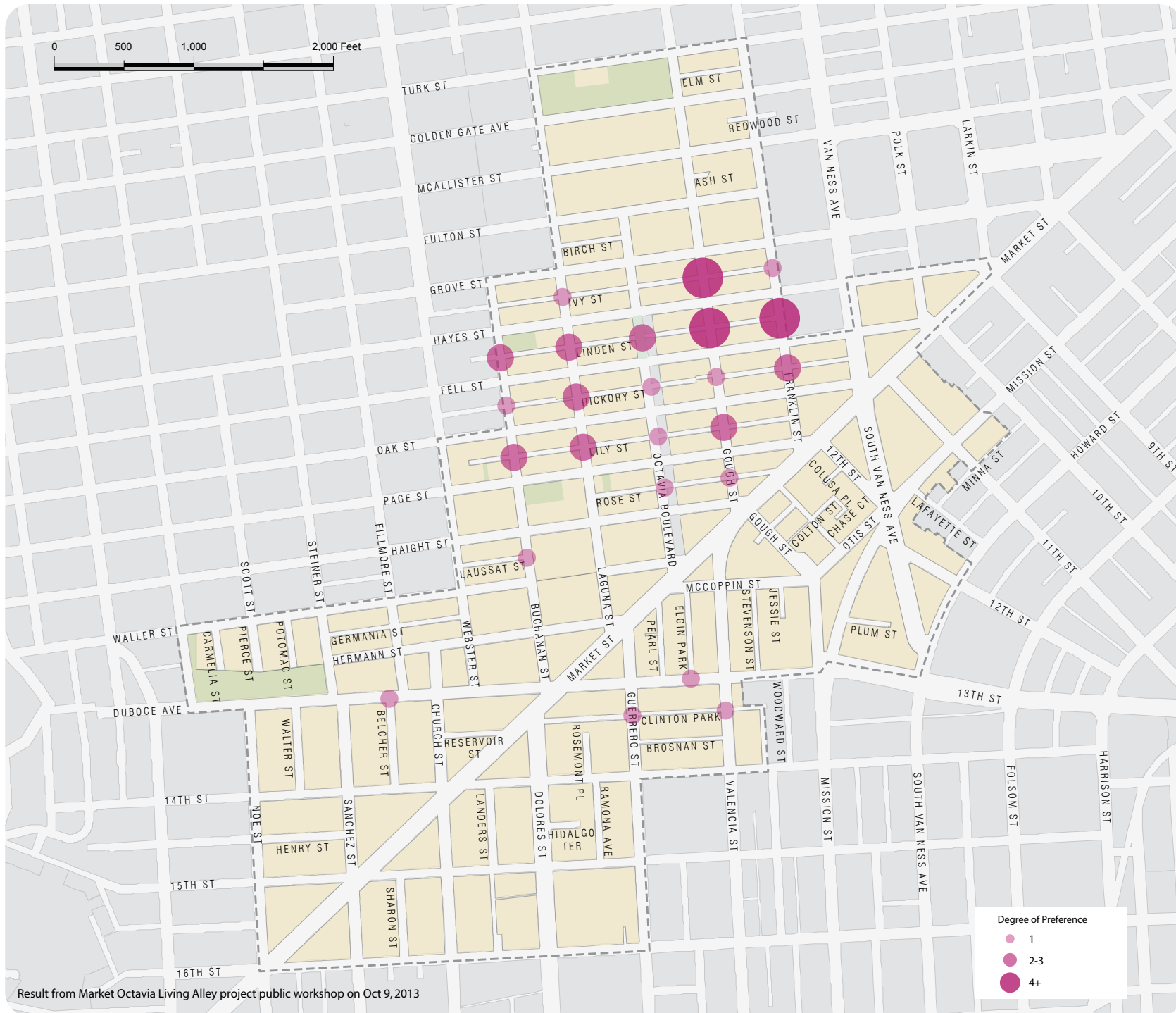
- 1) The community preferences expressed mid-block crossings at Gough and Franklin.
- 2) It is one of longest continuous alleys in the Market Octavia Plan area.
- 3) It transects a mix of uses from residential to commercial and institutional.
- 4) It connects two public parks.
- 5) It is relatively flat for multiple uses including bike, walking, and other uses.
- 6) It has existing alley improvements on the 300 block.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In San Francisco, any installation of marked crosswalks should be accompanied by an evaluation of accessibility across the crosswalk. This could lead to additional costs for the project sponsor including, but not limited to the need for ADA compliant curb ramps.

If an alley intersection marked crosswalk is not feasible, designers should look at strengthening the network by using other existing nearby controlled crossings.





Mid-Block
Alley Crossing
Preferences
in the Market
Octavia
Neighborhood

Toolkit Goals

The Living Alleys Toolkit focuses on four goals identified by stakeholders during a series of community workshops from July to November 2013. Community groups can choose to focus on one goal or incorporate all four goals into their living alley designs.

Each goal is presented with a set of design tools. Design tools are interventions or strategies to transform an alley into a living alley. Each tool requires varying levels of public involvement, from individual alley residents to entire neighborhoods and City agencies. Understanding the various costs, key players, and outcomes will guide communities in determining which tools will best accomplish their vision. While every design tool is associated with a single goal, many design tools support other goals as well. Thus, a single design tool can support multiple goals simultaneously. On some pages of the design tools there is a 'policy section' that aim to guide decisions and achieve desired outcomes.

THE DESIGN TOOLS INCLUDE:



FURNISHINGS



LIGHTING



LANDSCAPING



PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED DESIGN



ACTIVE USES

GOAL 1 LANDSCAPING FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

GREEN ALLEY



GOAL 2 IMPROVEMENTS FOR SAFE PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITIES

SHARED ALLEY



GOAL 3 ACTIVATING PUBLIC SPACES AND LOCAL BUSINESSES

VIBRANT ALLEY



GOAL 4 MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

CLEAN & SAFE ALLEY



GOAL 1**LANDSCAPING FOR A
SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT****GREEN ALLEY**

Emerging research and intuition suggest the importance of nature in our everyday lives to enhance our physical and psychological health and well-being. There are many creative and productive ways to incorporate flora and fauna within an alley. Green Alley strategies promote green infrastructure and activities that promote diverse vegetation, from edible produce to habitat-friendly vegetation and trees.

INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES *(Non-Design Related)*

Place potted plants outside your home

Participate in seed swaps

DESIGN TOOLS **FOR GREEN ALLEYS** **ABOVE GROUND PLANTERS** **LIVING WALLS** **SIDEWALK GARDENS** **STREET TREES**

INDIVIDUAL

NEIGHBORHOOD
& COMMUNITY

CITY

Sidewalk Gardens



LANDSCAPING

Alley Goals:

GREEN

CLEAN & SAFE

Cost: \$1,000 - \$8,000

Involvement:

A sidewalk garden is a relative low-cost and easy way to start a transformation. Gardens add habitat and biodiversity in urban areas, and can provide attractive green space for people to use and enjoy. They can be used to define and provide comfortable seating areas.

Sidewalk gardens, especially when used in single surface alleys with only local stormwater surcharge, may be effective stormwater management tools. Sidewalk gardens reduce runoff volumes by collecting and slowing down storm water. Allowing storm water to infiltrate into the soil increases the capacity of sewer systems during periods of heavy rainfall.

If soil infiltration is not possible, rain gardens may instead collect runoff in temporary pools that are then slowly released into the sewer system. Aesthetically, rain gardens are also designed as landscape features that works well with other streetscape elements and vegetation. Rain gardens can be engineered to improve the water quality by removing or reducing pollutants before the water enters the sewer system and discharges into the ocean or bay.

Planters can also be integrated into curb extensions, chicanes, and extra wide sidewalks, sitting below the ground as a container for street trees.



Source: Nate Cormier, SvR Design Company



Sidewalk Gardens

LOCATION CRITERIA

Planting strips and sidewalk gardens are suitable for many alleys. Planting strips can be located in sidewalks, parking lane planters, and sidewalk extensions. They are most appropriate where there is not frequent pedestrian traffic between parked cars and the sidewalk or where a pedestrian path can be provided between the sidewalk and parked cars.

This simple and inexpensive addition to the streetscape adds aesthetic, habitat, and ecological value to the city's rights-of-way.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Design sidewalk gardens to define seating areas and integrate seating. Most alleys have limited sidewalk widths of 7 feet or less, but usually they can accommodate planting strips. On narrow sidewalks, the landscaping or “furnishing zone”, is 2 feet or less.
- » Planting strips must maintain the minimum clear sidewalk width (“throughway zone”) adjacent to the planting strip for the street type per Better Streets Plan Section 4.2. Per ADA regulations, in no case may this be less than 4 feet in width.

- » Where parking occurs, a 2 foot wide curb side edge strip must be provided to access cars from the sidewalk.
- » Plantings should not interfere with visibility at street intersections.

Most plants are acceptable for sidewalk landscaping; however, ivy and other invasive groundcovers should be avoided as they can provide protective cover for pests. Tall, dense bushes and hedges should also be used sparingly as they can limit visibility and accessibility. Drought-tolerant species should be explored.

Where sidewalk width allows, planting adjacent to the buildings should be considered. Planting strips less than 3 feet may be adequate for narrow plants or vines adjacent to building facades. Property line planting strips that do not include trees may be as narrow as 6 to 12 inches. These can be used as cut-outs in the sidewalk for vine plantings, or can be used for planter boxes or other containers.

Shallow-rooted landscaping such as groundcovers, grasses and small shrubs should be used to minimize the risk of root damage to building foundations if planting next to a building.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Living alleys can be beautiful and attractive places planted with vegetation appropriate to the street, microclimate, and context of the built environment. Living alleys can also enable and encourage community members to take ownership in the look and feel of the street.

RESOURCES

SF Public Works Sidewalk Landscape Permit

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=1532>

SF Better Street Plan: Sidewalk Landscaping

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/greening-and-stormwater-management/greening-overview/sidewalk-landscaping/>

SF Plant Finder

www.sfplantfinder.org

Above Ground Planters



LANDSCAPING

Alley Goals:

GREEN

CLEAN & SAFE

Cost:



Involvement:



Above ground planters on Lily Street, San Francisco

Planters are containers that hold different types of plants, and can be integrated with the streetscape in multiple ways. Free-standing planter boxes and pots on an alley sidewalk can be spaced out to separate pedestrians and cars. Planter boxes can also accommodate seating. Hanging planters can provide greenery overhead, and are typically fixed to walls or light poles to decorate these utilitarian street features.

Shrubs or trees in planters can increase comfort levels within an alley by providing passive shading and cooling throughout the day. They also increase safety and privacy by screening pedestrian activities and physically separating pedestrians from cars and bicycles. Raised planters that are designed with seating can also provide places for people to stop, rest, and socialize in the alley. Finally, planters can be tied into urban community agriculture within an alley, providing a space to grow fruits and vegetables. There is an increase in maintenance needs with planters, so a dedicated maintenance plan with adequate water should be provided.

Above Ground Planters

LOCATION CRITERIA

Above ground planters are appropriate where existing sidewalk space or soil conditions do not allow for planting in the ground, such as where major utilities or basements are beneath the sidewalk.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Arrange planter boxes to provide a buffer between the roadway and sidewalks, and to create quiet and comfortable seating areas. Planters should be designed to incorporate seating.
- » Container plantings should follow the same spacing requirements for sidewalk landscaping discussed earlier in this section.
- » Hanging baskets can be used, but are generally discouraged unless a dedicated maintenance plan is in place.
- » Plantings should not interfere with visibility at street intersection.



Alley in Pasadena, California

Trees



LANDSCAPING

Alley Goals:

GREEN

Cost: \$500 - \$5,000

Involvement:



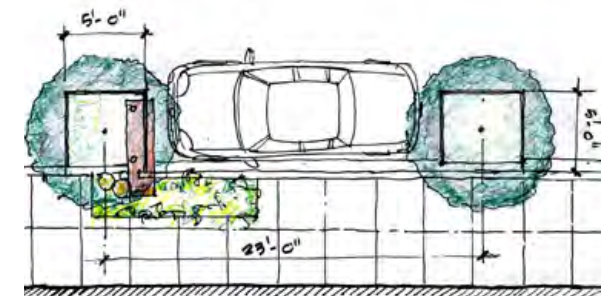
Street trees promote positive outcomes for air quality, stormwater runoff, and urban habitat creation. For pedestrians, street trees promote a safer and more pleasant pedestrian experience by slowing down vehicular traffic and providing natural shade and cooling. Street trees can also be tied into an alley's overall identity if the design of tree guards/grates reflect the area's history, culture, and values.

Planting trees in the parking lane has several advantages. They can be used to claim and define space typically given to parking, and visually narrow the street. Locating tree wells in the street space can increase the storm water

capacity and allow more usable sidewalk space. Parking spaces may be located between trees, but may also be used as placeholders for future sidewalk extensions. Trees can also help mark an alley entrance.

Trees can also become a prominent aesthetic feature depending on the choice of foliage, color, and seasonality (deciduous vs. evergreen). Based on streetscape conditions and the location of existing utilities, trees can be planted in above ground planters or inside tree basins. Street trees are typically outfitted with grates and guards to protect them from pedestrian traffic and provide a decorative element to the space.

The City has approved a variety of tree species that work well on streetscapes. Depending on the alley, a specific type of tree may work better in terms of microclimate, maintenance, and enhancing the alley's overall character.



LOCATION CRITERIA

Street trees are typically planted in tree basins (sidewalk cut outs) within sidewalks. Where planting strips of sufficient width occur between sidewalks and streets, it is not necessary to create independent tree basins for trees. Ground-cover landscaping should be included in planting basins larger than standard size. In limited circumstances, trees may also be planted in above ground planters.

When adding trees to an existing streetscape, movable site furnishings (chairs/benches) should be relocated to allow for street tree planting in an appropriate spacing. If unmovable sidewalk elements interfere with a planting sequence, site the tree a few feet in either direction to accommodate obstacles. When designing a new or renovating an existing street, locate or relocate utilities and other elements where feasible to attain regular tree spacing. Also remember that trees are required to be 5 feet from fire hydrants.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Minimum size requirements for trees to be planted are as follows:

- » Caliper (trunk diameter) of trees to be planted should be a minimum of 2 inches at 8 feet of height.

- » Preferred tree size at planting is a 24-inch box; 15 gallon specimens and smaller caliper sizes are allowed for volunteer efforts and property owner initiated planting.
- » In narrow alleys, trees species should be selected to allow light and not be too dense.
- » Trees should be regularly spaced and contribute to buffering the roadway from the sidewalk. Tree basins should be aligned so that the edges abutting the path of travel form a straight line along the block.
- » Street lighting should also be coordinated with tree selection, placement, and pruning, so that tree canopies do not sit directly below street lighting. Or, pedestrian-scale lighting consistent with the approved SFPUC street lighting catalog that uplifts the tree canopy could be used.
- » On narrow sidewalks, trees should have flush mounted grates that maintains a minimum of 4 feet path of travel.
- » On narrow sidewalks locate trees to not interfere with building projections, such as canopies or balconies.
- » New trees should not interfere with visibility at street intersection.
- » Trees should be selected and maintained to provide a minimum vertical clearance of 80 inches above pedestrian areas.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Street trees are the most important element of the street environment. They should always be included in the design of complete streets.

Appropriate tree species selection and location and design of the planting site ensure the healthy growth and longevity of trees, enhances streetscape character, and maximizes the City and property owner's investment.

RESOURCES

SF Public Works Street Tree Planting Permitting Process

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=649>

SF Public Works Guidelines for Planting Trees

<http://www.sfdpw.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=622>

SF Urban Forest Plan (Phase 1: Street Trees)

http://www.sf-planning.org/ftp/files/plans-and-programs/planning-for-the-city/urban-forest-plan/Urban_Forest_Plan_Final-092314WEB.pdf *GuidelinesForPruningYoungStreetTrees.pdf*

SF Plant Finder

www.sfplantfinder.org

Living Walls



LANDSCAPING

Alley Goals: **GREEN**

Cost: **\$** **\$** **\$**

Involvement: **👤👤👤** + **🏛️**

Living walls make good use of underutilized wall surfaces, and can help green an alley where growing plants on the ground or adding trees may be difficult.

Living walls are vertical gardens in which plants are attached to a structural support system, and then mounted to an exterior wall. The support system includes the necessary water and nutrient systems for plants to grow. Support systems range in function, cost, and water requirements,

and include hydroponic fiber mat systems or loose-soil systems. While many living walls are manufactured, relatively low-maintenance and small-scale living walls can be handmade.

Living walls, like other forms of vegetation, provide natural passive cooling, which is an energy-saving alternative to air conditioning systems. A living wall composed of drought-tolerant plants, such as succulents, can also reduce water and maintenance costs typically associated with

landscape maintenance. Living walls can double as public art or prominent centerpieces in an alley, and can thus become a design feature that draws people into the alley.



Living Walls

LOCATION CRITERIA

Living walls can be placed on both residential and commercial buildings on a variety of support systems. Individuals or groups are encouraged to speak with a living wall specialist who will be able to discuss requirements and design a solution suitable for a living wall within an alley.

Living walls require adequate maintenance. The first few months are critical for establishments, and it is essential to get the irrigation and any other maintenance timing right.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Ensure that there is accessible and adequate space for a living wall. Site planning should also consider structural issues, leakage, and potential damage to waterproofing. Projects should not impede access to fire or emergency vehicles.
- » Living walls should also consider the sunlight, evaporation, and water needs of the plant species.
- » If the person proposing the living wall is not the property owner, permission and a maintenance agreement should be prepared.



POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Due to limited space for sidewalk landscaping, green walls and vertical gardens can provide landscaping for living alleys.

Encourage new buildings that front alleys to incorporate elements of a living wall when feasible.

RESOURCES

Green Roofs for Healthy Cities

http://www.greenscreen.com/Resources/download_it/IntroductionGreenWalls.pdf

GOAL 2**IMPROVEMENTS FOR
SAFE PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITIES****SHARED ALLEY**

Alleys can be a shared place for drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, business owners, residents, etc. Shared Alley strategies promote investment in infrastructure and activities that encourage a mix of uses and activities.



INDIVIDUAL

NEIGHBORHOOD
& COMMUNITY

CITY

INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES *(Non-Design Related)*

Walk and bicycle more often

Supervise children playing in the alley

DESIGN TOOLS FOR SHARED ALLEYS **BOLLARDS** **CHICANES** **SHARED ALLEYS** **LIVING ZONES** **SIDEWALK EXTENSIONS** **MID-BLOCK CROSSING** **RAISED CROSSWALK**

Bollards



FURNISHINGS

Alley Goals:

SHARED

CLEAN & SAFE

Cost: \$4,000 - \$7,000 (stainless steel retractable)

Involvement: +

Bollards are vertical posts that act as barriers or diverters to control vehicle movement. They can be fixed or removable, as appropriate, to allow some vehicles and prohibit others. Bollards can be used to physically separate and protect space for people from traffic and parked cars. In some locations gates may fulfill a similar function of creating a protected area, but allowing access for necessary and occasional vehicles. Limiting auto traffic, while allowing access for emergency and service

vehicles (trash and recycling, etc.) and local residents access is critical for the creation of living alleys.

Bollards may also be equipped with lighting and signage, or be specially designed to double as temporary table supports.

Bollards improve pedestrian safety and comfort of alleys by preventing or redirecting vehicles, allowing for play activities and on-street furnishings.

LOCATION CRITERIA

Bollards should be used at sidewalk locations to prevent vehicles from damaging sidewalk furnishings, trees or plantings. Removable bollards could also be placed at entrances to alleys or at defined zones that are closed to vehicles.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Accessibility considerations for pedestrian areas include placing bollards outside of pedestrian circulation paths and providing bollards that are a not less than 42 inches tall. Bollards should be placed 18 inches from the curb. If there is no parking in the bollard placement area, the bollard may be installed immediately adjacent to the back of the curb. Standard bollard spacing is approximately 10 feet on center, but may be reduced where there is a need to block vehicular traffic, in which 5 feet maybe necessary. Spacing should also vary to sync with the rhythm of lighting fixtures, trees, and landscaping. If removable bollards are used, they should appear sturdy and look permanent.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Bollards in alleys should be designed to add visual interest to streetscapes and help define pedestrian space.

RESOURCES

SF Better Streets Plan: Bollards

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/streetscape-elements/street-furniture-overview/bollards/>

SF Public Works: Sidewalk Pipe Barrier Permit

<http://www.sfdpw.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=125>



Bollards to control cars from alley, Seattle



Bollards to separate cars from bikeway

Chicanes



PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED

Alley Goals:

SHARED

GREEN

VIBRANT

Cost:

\$

\$

\$

Involvement:



Chicanes are an alternating series of curb-extensions that curve the road and reduce automobile speed. For narrower alleys, chicanes may not be feasible due to the required clearance for emergency vehicles. As an extension of the curb, a chicane may reduce available parking spaces. Chicanes create new pedestrian space, which can be filled with seating, landscaping, and stormwater management elements.

Chicanes improve pedestrian safety in alleys by encouraging automobiles to slow down. Chicanes also provide added space for other amenities ranging from street furniture to landscaping, which increases the usability and comfort of an alley for a variety of users.



Chicanes

LOCATION CRITERIA

Chicanes can easily work on alleys with parking on only one side. Chicanes can be created by alternating parking from side to side.

Chicanes must maintain required clearance for emergency vehicle access, which is typically 14 feet on a one-way street and 20 feet on a two-way street.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Chicanes can be designed to have a more gradual transition which would result in an “S” shaped right of way.
- » Chicanes should be placed away from the entrances and exits of an alley and not near driveways.
- » A chicane design should incorporate signage and striping to alert drivers of a bend in the roadway.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Chicanes calm traffic, and can create welcoming space for people. Landscaping, special materials, and furnishings (such as benches or bicycle parking) should be explored to make chicanes a visual and distinct space.

Because chicanes are intended to slow traffic, designs must consider transit and emergency vehicles.

RESOURCES

SF Better Streets Plan: Chicanes

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/pedestrian-safety-and-traffic-calming/traffic-calming-overview/chicanes/>

NACTO Urban Street Design Guide

<http://nacto.org/usdg/street-design-elements/curb-extensions/chicane/>

SFMTA Traffic Calming Program

<http://www.sfmta.com/node/77946>



Sidewalk Extensions



PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED

Alley Goals:

SHARED

GREEN

VIBRANT

Cost: \$15,000 - \$20,000

Involvement:

Sidewalk extensions, also known as bulb-outs, extend a portion of the sidewalk into the roadway, simultaneously narrowing the roadway and widening pedestrian space. They force approaching vehicles to slow down as they turn into it. They also reduce the distance it takes for pedestrians to cross from one corner to another. This may result in a reduction of available

parking spaces. Sidewalk extensions typically include new seating, landscaping, and stormwater management in the new pedestrian space they create.

Sidewalk extensions at intersections improve pedestrian safety by improving their sight lines and their exposure to vehicular traffic, providing waiting

space, and reducing vehicle speed. Sidewalk extensions add space for other amenities, ranging from street furniture to landscaping, which increases the usability and comfort of an alley. They can also prevent alley users from illegally parking at the corners of the street.

LOCATION CRITERIA

Sidewalk extensions can be considered for alleys with high pedestrian volumes and/or high traffic volumes and speeds. They can also be used where alleys intersect with busier thoroughways. Sidewalk extensions should not be used on streets without a parking lane.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Bulb-outs should be designed to maximize pedestrian space and minimize crossing distances as much as feasible, while allowing vehicle turning movements.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Sidewalk extensions should provide community space, while balancing traffic calming goals and vehicle/bike/pedestrian needs.

RESOURCES

SF Better Street Plan: Curb Extensions (Bulb-outs)

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/pedestrian-safety-and-traffic-calming/traffic-calming-overview/curb-extensions/>

NACTO Urban Street Design Guide

<http://nacto.org/usdg/street-design-elements/curb-extensions/>



Raised Crosswalks



PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED

Alley Goals: **SHARED**

Cost: **\$15,000 - \$30,0000**

Involvement:

Raised crosswalks continue a sidewalk across a road, creating a level pedestrian path from one end of the sidewalk to the other, while at the same time signaling to motorists to slow down and take greater care as they enter or leave an alley.

Raised crosswalks can mark the entry to an alley and distinguish the space from the surrounding streets. Raised crosswalks may increase accessibility and safety for all pedestrians. Since raised crosswalks are more noticeable to drivers due to change of elevation and use of different paving or markings, they also encourage drivers to exercise greater caution when passing through a pedestrian zone.



LOCATION CRITERIA

Raised crosswalks can be placed at the alley entry or mid-block. Because raised crosswalks can block or divert natural overland water flows, hydraulic conditions may impact their feasibility.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design raised crosswalks as extensions of the sidewalk with the same material, color, and scoring lines. Narrow the effective width of the crossing if possible, often done by eliminating the parking lane. Designs should include trees and planting. Minimum widths and turning radii should be maintained to allow access for cars and emergency and service vehicles. Where allowed, raised crosswalk profiles must comply with Public Works criteria for vehicle clearances, accessibility, and hydraulic design.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

As important pedestrian safety components raised crosswalks should be a Public Works standard improvement for universal access, where feasible.

RESOURCES

SF Better Streets Plan: Raised Crosswalks

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/pedestrian-safety-and-traffic-calming/traffic-calming-overview/raised-crosswalks/>

Mid-Block Crossings

<div data-bbox="140 324 195 386"> </div> <div data-bbox="205 334 480 363"> PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED </div>	Alley Goals:	SHARED	VIBRANT	Cost: \$300,000 - \$400,000	Involvement:
--	--------------	--------	---------	-----------------------------	--------------

Living alleys can connect to other alleys to create an alternate pedestrian network to the bustling main streets. A challenge is the current physical separation between alley segments. The isolation that contributes to their quiet charm also makes them disconnected. They stop and start, interrupted by busy major streets.

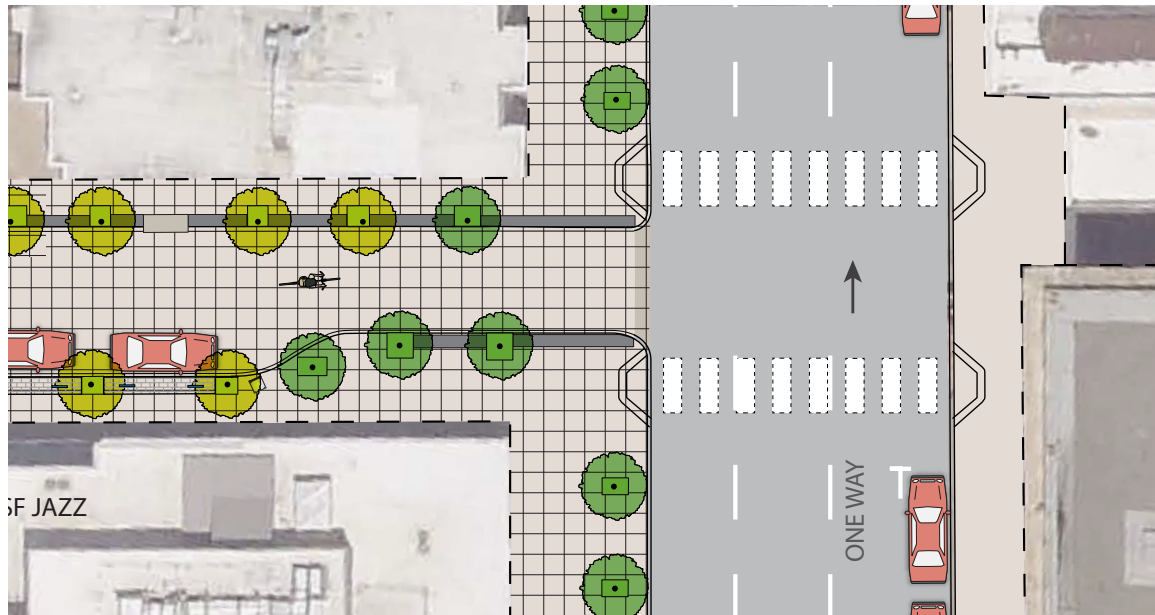
Where an alley intersects a larger street it may be possible to connect to the next alley block with mid-block crossings. Mid-block crossings may vary from painted zebra crossings to signalization devices.



Mid-Block Crossings

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Mid-block crossings should be enhanced with signage, striping, signalization, or other special treatments such as flashing beacons, special paving materials, or raised crossings. Mid-block crossings should be constructed in combination with mid-block curb extensions and, if possible, include pedestrian lighting oriented toward the crossing.
- » Crossings should be at least as wide as the sidewalk, but may be wider in locations with high pedestrian demand or on narrow sidewalks. Crosswalks should be no less than 10 feet in width. Crosswalks must be outfitted with curb ramps and tactile warning strips per accessibility (ADA) guidelines.



POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Where a living alley occupies most of a block, or results in increased public use, SFMTA should prioritize and coordinate the design and implementation of mid-block crossings where feasible.

Living alleys should be designed for safe pedestrian circulation. When feasible and desired, mid-block crossings should support this goal.

RESOURCES

SF Better Streets Plan: Crosswalks

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/pedestrian-safety-and-traffic-calming/crosswalks/>

SFMTA Livable Streets

<http://www.sfmta.com/about-sfmta/organization/divisions-and-units/livable-streets>

Shared Alleys



PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED

Alley Goals: **SHARED**

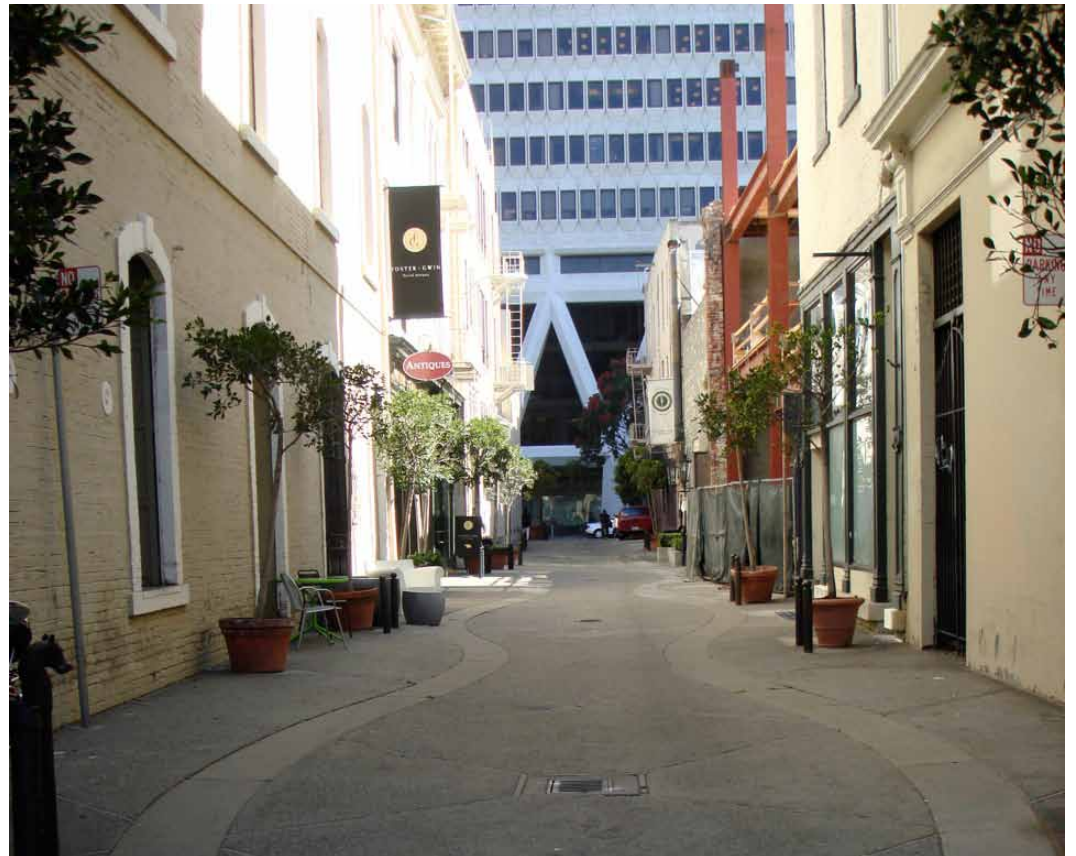
Cost: \$ \$ \$

Involvement:

Shared alleys prioritize the entire right-of-way for pedestrians and bicyclists by providing alternative but clear physical boundaries between accessible areas of exclusive pedestrian use and those where vehicles are allowed to share space with pedestrians and bicyclists. Shared alleys permit limited vehicle use but unify the street space with single-surface paving, landscaping, and amenities, such as seating, combined with traffic calming measures to promote very slow driving speeds that signal to drivers that autos are welcome but not prioritized. Street parking is either prohibited or selectively removed and converted into public social spaces.

Shared alleys are conceived to prioritize pedestrian, but are hybrids that rely heavily on design to accommodate people, slow traffic speed, and signal the intended pedestrian focus of the street. Signage and the design of the street reinforce pedestrian priorities. There are currently no accepted standards for shared alleys or streets that have legal standing.

Primary tools for creating Shared alleys are: Paving; Trees; Raised Crosswalks; Seating; Public Art; Sidewalk Gardens; Bike Racks; and Lighting.



Hoteling Street shared alley, San Francisco

Source: Flickr user vintagehope

Shared Alleys

LOCATION CRITERIA

Mixed-use alleys are best suited for shared alley designs where there are sufficient active uses, like restaurants and shops with many lively storefronts that draw and serve many people on foot. They are best on alleys that primarily serve limited local access and have low traffic volumes, with slopes of 5% or less.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Shared alleys should encourage social interaction. Designs should incorporate seating areas. All features shall maintain the minimum required width for emergency and service vehicle access. All existing effective road widths, with a minimum of 14 feet, should be maintained at all times for emergency vehicle access.
- » Shared alleys are intensive improvements that modify existing sidewalks, curbs, and road lines to create a unified level surface in the public right-of-way that prioritizes pedestrians and bicyclists. They provide alternative but clear physical boundaries between accessible areas of exclusive pedestrian use and those

where vehicles are allowed to share space with pedestrians and bicyclists.

- » Designs should include: special paving, trees and planting, seating and tables, lighting, and art, all orchestrated to create a calm, special, pedestrian oriented place.
- » Through-access would allow cars and full access for emergency and service vehicles (street sweeping, trash and recycling collection).
- » The typical road widths are 21 feet with a parking lane. Removal of some street parking is expected to accommodate other amenities. The entrances of shared alleys should signal to motorists that they are entering a shared alley, but should maintain existing turning radii to accommodate emergency vehicle access. Signage indicating a shared alley should reinforce the design intent.
- » The detailed design of a shared alley must clearly demarcate roadway and pedestrian zones using barriers, color and texture contrast, and detectable tactile warnings.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Shared alleys should emphasize their pedestrian scale and calm traffic. Design should allow for a generous pedestrian realm and create pockets of usable open space especially in neighborhoods with little open space.

RESOURCES

NACTO Urban Street Design Guide

<http://nacto.org/usdg/streets/residential-shared-street/>

AND

<http://nacto.org/usdg/streets/commercial-shared-street/>

SF Better Streets Plan: Shared Public Ways

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/design-guidelines/street-types/shared-public-ways/>

Paving



PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED

Alley Goals:

SHARED

VIBRANT

Cost: \$25,000 - \$60,000

Involvement:

If a living alley is an urban living room, then paving is the floor. Paving materials alone can enhance the overall aesthetics and intentions of the design. While standard street and sidewalk paving consists of asphalt or concrete, other materials may be used to separate spaces, make circulation and navigation more intuitive to promote pedestrian comfort and safety, and create a strong sense of place. Paving can also be a decorative feature to attract visitors into the space, and allow opportunities for street and sidewalk art.

Materials range from textured/colored concrete to brick, stone, or concrete pavers. A permit is required in order to replace standard paving with special paving materials so that it complies with acceptable performance standards. Paving can be used consistently across an entire roadway, or may be used to demarcate specific spaces within the alley.

Permeable paving is different from standard pedestrian paving in both function and aesthetics. Permeable paving on pedestrian and vehicle rights-of-way are made of several layers of porous material to allow for passage of water and air into the soil below. The underlying subgrade of permeable paving on roadways must be engineered to take heavier vehicle loads and still allow water to percolate through. Because of the necessity for different types of layering that extend below the surface, permeable paving requires much more intensive installation and maintenance costs to clean than other paving systems.



Paving

Permeable paving reduces overall stormwater runoff volumes, which improves water quality and prevents the overflow of stormwater. Used in combination with other types of paving, permeable paving can differentiate between pedestrian and vehicular rights-of-way, which can increase pedestrian safety and driver caution. Refer to SFPUC's *Green Stormwater Infrastructure Typical Details* for more information on permeable pavement.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Use paving on shared streets to identify and designate functions such as pedestrian and auto zones, and parking spaces; to define sitting and play spaces and planting areas.
- » Public Works and SFPUC have paver and permeable paving guidelines. Accessible routes must be firm, stable, slip-resistant and be smooth, having a low degree of roughness
- » Use paving to provide human-scale and texture; differentiate paving to provide visual and tactile cues to drivers to slow down, e.g. cobble stone or other textured rumble strips.



- » The design of a shared street must provide clearly demarcate the roadway from pedestrian spaces using barriers, color and texture contrast, such as detectable tactile warnings.
- » Unit pavers and permeable paving systems must account for differential settlement that may cause unevenness or create cracks that become tripping hazards, preventing an acceptable level of universal accessibility.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Living alleys can use special paving to communicate the location of pedestrian spaces, define the edges for parking, playing and sitting, and also highlight the edges of planting areas.

Where a living alley is a pedestrian only space, paving can be used to define and highlight spaces within the public right-of-way and break down the space into a more pedestrian scale.

RESOURCES

SF Better Streets Plan: Special Sidewalk Paving / Permeable Paving

http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/streetscape-elements/sidewalk_paving/

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/greening-and-stormwater-management/stormwater-overview/permeable-paving/>

SF Public Works Sidewalk Surface Permit

<http://sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=1641>

SFPUC Green Stormwater Infrastructure

<http://sfwater.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=6009>

GOAL 3**ACTIVATING PUBLIC SPACES & LOCAL BUSINESSES****VIBRANT ALLEY**

Alleys can be a space where people want to stay and enjoy the amenities and environment, not just simply pass through. Vibrant Alley strategies promote investment in infrastructure and activities that encourage an attractive, diverse mix of commercial and social activities at all times of day. Several studies indicate that more pedestrian traffic generates more retail revenue.

INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES (Non-Design Related)

Spend time in your alley

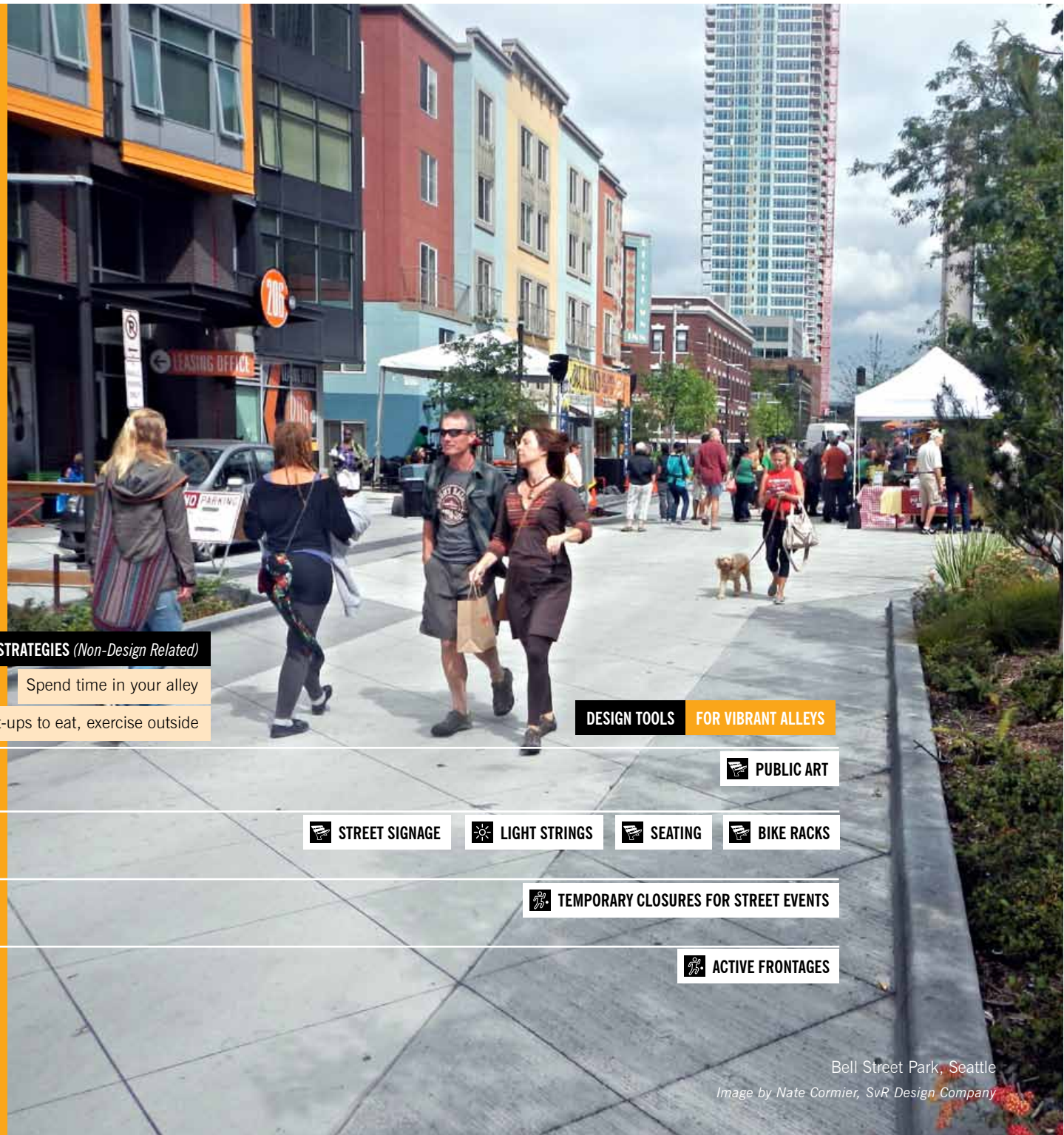
Organize meet-ups to eat, exercise outside



INDIVIDUAL

NEIGHBORHOOD
& COMMUNITY

CITY

DESIGN TOOLS FOR VIBRANT ALLEYS **PUBLIC ART** **STREET SIGNAGE** **LIGHT STRINGS** **SEATING** **BIKE RACKS** **TEMPORARY CLOSURES FOR STREET EVENTS** **ACTIVE FRONTAGES**

Bell Street Park, Seattle

Image by Nate Cormier, SvR Design Company

Signage/Wayfinding



FURNISHINGS

Alley Goals: **VIBRANT**

Cost: \$ \$ \$

Involvement:  + 

Since living alleys are new and unconventional, people need to understand what is expected. Drivers need to know they are entering a non-through-street, or a local traffic only street, or that they are expected to drive slowly and deferentially to pedestrians. Signage helps communicate these expectations.

In addition, wayfinding signage helps visitors identify and locate businesses, amenities, and other destinations in the area. Signage not only can inform and orient, but help draw people to the uniqueness of the alley. A signage program can reinforce a unique sense of identity, and overall image, especially when it incorporates historical or cultural information.



Consider multilingual text, or internationally recognizable graphic iconography. Signage need not be restricted to physical but may also include electronic media. Where an alley design attempts to implement an innovative or ecological component use signage as an educational opportunity. Consider local business, graphic artists, and artisans when designing a comprehensive signage program.

LOCATION CRITERIA

Street signage should identify living alleys that are designed to improve the pedestrian/bicycle realm. Locate signage at alley entries to define the transition from street to alley.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » In some cases consistency is desired and in others eclectic signs of different sizes, colors and materials can add 'energy' to a space. Determine which is appropriate. Signs should not block accessible paths of travel, nor should there be impediments to reading the signage for people of all abilities.
- » Street signage should not be obstructed by other streetscape elements. However, elements such as street trees or light poles should not be moved to accommodate new signage; rather, signs should be placed around existing features and around the ideal locations of plantings, lighting, and site furnishings.
- » Streetscape signage in living alleys can mark edges or entry points or contribute to an overall image of the living alley pedestrian network.
- » Consider signage that explains a relevant design features or historical significance of the alley.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Adopt signage for shared alleys similar to European standards that designate the speed limit and pedestrian priority.

RESOURCES

SF Better Streets Plan: Signage

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/streetscape-elements/street-furniture-overview/signage/>

Public Art

 **FURNISHINGS**

Alley Goals: **VIBRANT** **CLEAN & SAFE**

Cost: **\$** **\$** **\$**

Involvement: 

Public art adds interest and delight to a pedestrian’s experience. Public art promotes foot traffic. Public art can be a catalyst for a community effort to transform an alley. It attracts visitors and brings neighbors together with a visible symbol that shows care for a place. Public art can tell a local story of an area’s historic, cultural, and social values. Public art can also be interactive, and functional. It can be placed on private property (with owner’s permission), such as murals on fences or walls; or on public property, such as sculpture installations in the right of way, or on the pavement. Public art can be either temporary or permanent.

A few cans of paint and a willing group of volunteers can be a quick and inexpensive way to add color and visual interest. Sculptures, murals, and installations commissioned by local artists can define the floor, wall, or ceiling planes and change the alley’s character.

Art can foster awareness of local talent and forge community partnerships between residents, businesses, local artists, and organizations throughout the process, from conceptual planning to installation. Regardless of artistic ability, anyone can join a local public art

project. Public art can also be linked to lower crime since people are less likely to vandalize surfaces where murals are present, and community members who contributed to making public art have greater investment in keeping these murals protected.



Public Art

LOCATION CRITERIA

Public art in alleys should be visible to pedestrians. A piece of art can act as a focal point in the alley, or present a “surprise” further inside an alley, which can reward the passerby with visual interest.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Public art should be accessible to persons with disabilities and should be placed in a way that does not compromise the clear path of travel.
- » Public art and murals should be considered during the planning and design of alley improvements to integrate art with other streetscape elements.



Umbrellas create a luminous and colorful ceiling along a promenade in Águeda Portugal

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The San Francisco Arts Commission should develop a funding program specifically for art associated with community initiated living alley improvements, in partnership with local public artists.

RESOURCES

San Francisco Public Art Map

www.sfpublicart.com

SF Mural Arts

www.sfmuralarts.com

San Francisco Arts Commission

www.sfartscommission.org

Light Strings



LIGHTING

Alley Goals:

VIBRANT

CLEAN & SAFE

Cost:



Involvement:



Light strings are hanging lights connected to one another by a single electric wire. Light strings can provide a “ceiling” to alleys and define space creating a human scaled experience. Light strings are particularly effective in alleys due to their narrower width, where these fixtures easily hang from one wall to the other. Since they are a temporary alternative to light poles and fixed light, they are cheaper, easier to install/remove, and can be easily turned off when necessary.

A well-lit alley can increase the overall safety for residents and visitors alike, and light strings can be installed quickly and inexpensively without extensive help from City agencies. For alleys with high building heights, light strings hung in regular intervals can promote a sense of enclosure, intimacy, and privacy for people in the alleys and residents in upper stories of the building.

LOCATION CRITERIA

Light strings are feasible with the cooperation of property owners who can provide a power source. Lights are typically attached to buildings using bolts. At the date of printing, the City cannot provide a power source for light strings.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Consider low level illumination or downlighting to minimize disturbance to upper story residents. Lights should be at least 15 feet above street level to avoid conflicts with vehicles.

RESOURCES

Pioneer Square Alley Lighting Evolution Guidance

<http://isiseattle.org/files/2013/06/140212-ISI-Lighting-Evolution-Guidance-Hand-Out-Final.pdf>



Source: Lynn Friedman

Temporary Closures for Street Events



ACTIVE USES

Alley Goals:

VIBRANT

SHARED

Cost:



Involvement: 

Any type of short-term event that closes an alley to car and brings people together is a great way to inject life into an alley, explore the potential to change how a community uses the space and make use of benches, chairs, and tables there. Movie screenings, concerts and block parties are small-scale gatherings that do not require a significant amount of legwork. Over time, temporary closures for events can become a key part of the alley's overall identity. Event planners should check with City agencies and residents regarding restrictions on noise, traffic, and

permitted hours to hold events, and should also consider how temporary closures may impact employees and residents on the alley.

Bringing communities together generates camaraderie, excitement, and new ideas about how their living spaces can be better improved. Temporary events provide new opportunities for fundraising and commerce. Finally, temporary closures ensure periods of total user safety from vehicular traffic.

RESOURCES

SF Beautiful: How-to: Event Permitting

<http://sfbeautiful.org/portfolio/permits/>

SF Better Streets Plan: Block Parties and Street Fairs

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/activating-street-space/block-parties-and-street-fairs/>

SFMTA Street Closure

<http://www.sfmta.com/services/streets-sidewalks/apply-street-closure>



Seating



FURNISHINGS

Alley Goals: **VIBRANT**

Cost: \$5,000 - \$8,000 (benches)

Involvement: +

People love to sit, people-watch, eat, and socialize with others. Providing seating in an alley, especially when paired with other active uses, is one of the most functional and qualitative improvements that can be made. An alley is lively when people sit and spend time there. Casual seating can be custom built in and around planters, and made from found materials or it may be bought from standard manufacturers. Seating may be used as a barrier to separate pedestrian zones from vehicular zones on shared streets. Movable chairs can provide flexibility and choice.

Seating increases the alley's accessibility for users who cannot stand for prolonged periods of time. Benches and seats can also add color and form based on their shape, color, and how they are arranged. Seating can be provided at a range of different heights, locations and orientations.

LOCATION CRITERIA

Seating should be located in both sunny and shady spots. Seating usually works best when located at edges of activities, that allow people a sense of refuge,

but with a view of the things going on around them. Seating should be located a comfortable distance from pedestrian, automobile, and bicycle traffic or seating can be arranged to accommodate groups of people, and some to provide for solitary enjoyment. When locating seating imagine where and with whom people might want to sit and rest, eat, or people watch.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Seating can be placed on curb extensions or where sidewalks extend into the parking lane. In general, seating should follow the guidelines in the Better Streets Plan.
- » Consider car overhangs and door swings in seating placement.
- » Seating should accommodate people of all abilities. Accessible seating requires the seat level at 16 -18 inches

RESOURCES

SF Better Streets Plan: Benches and Seating

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/streetscape-elements/street-furniture-overview/benches-and-seating/>

Project for Public Space

<http://www.pps.org/reference/movable-seating/>

high, with area for a user to transfer from a wheelchair to a bench with armrests and backrests.

- » Provide accessible seating with backrests and armrests. Seating and table areas shall incorporate areas for wheelchair users. Seats with open areas below the front edge allow placing feet directly under one's center of gravity when standing or sitting down.



Bicycle Racks



FURNISHINGS

Alley Goals:

VIBRANT

SHARED

Cost: \$3,000 - \$4,000

Involvement:



Bicycle parking plays a key role in supporting a bicycle network. Bicycle racks provide spaces for bicyclists to safely lock and store their bikes while working or shopping. Depending on design, a single rack can accommodate 1-2 bicycles while a bike corral can hold as many as 12. Other bike rack designs can be mounted to a wall so that bicycles can be stored vertically, leaving additional ground space for pedestrian and vehicular activity. Bicycle racks should be spaced and distributed evenly across an alley to promote easier access.



Bicycle racks in alleys can provide a safer space away from more traffic-heavy corridors for residents and visitors to store their bicycles. Bicycle racks on alleys can also help bicyclists who find that street sidewalks hold limited bicycle parking. Bicycle racks can increase the accessibility of alleys and nearby businesses for people with limited access to public transportation or cars. Formal bicycle parking also deters bicyclists from locking their bicycles to trees, benches, or on the sidewalk, which can interfere with the use, enjoyment, and maintenance of these landscape features.



LOCATION CRITERIA

Narrow sidewalks in alleys have a limited ability to accommodate bicycle racks without interfering with the pedestrian path of travel. Bike racks are best located in furnishing zones of curb extensions, or parking lanes and near active commercial frontages, or destinations such as schools, transit stops, or public spaces and amenities.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Please reference the San Francisco Better Streets Plan and the SFMTA Bicycle Parking Standards for more detailed design guidance.
- » Bicycle rack design, location and orientation of bicycle protrusions must be carefully coordinated with the accessible pedestrian route.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Bicycle parking in alleys complements the inherent flexibility of bicycles as a mode of travel and should be incorporated in living alley designs when feasible.

RESOURCES

SFMTA Bicycle Parking: Standards, Guidelines, Recommendations

<http://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/Bicycle%20Parking%20Guidelines.pdf>

SF Better Streets Plan: Bicycle Racks

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/streetscape-elements/street-furniture-overview/bicycle-racks/>

Active Frontages



ACTIVE USES

Alley Goals:

VIBRANT

SHARED

CLEAN & SAFE

Cost: \$ \$ \$

Involvement:  + 



Many alleys are lined with garages that inhibit an active street life. Imagine an alley lined with shops and restaurants filled with people instead of garage doors. More people on the street and less cars entering garages translates into increased pedestrian activity, safety and less crime. Enhancing an alley design in conjunction with converting garages to vibrant commercial uses should be seen as a strategy for economic development.

Since parking is not required in the Market Octavia Area Plan, and commercial uses are allowed on the ground floors along alleys east of Octavia boulevard, and at corner locations throughout the plan area, converting garages into commercial spaces may be the perfect fit for small businesses, and an ideal opportunity to activate alleys. The size of garage spaces and location can attract a diverse mix of specialized or start-up businesses priced out by the main streets. They are also adaptable – more apt to support temporary “pop-up” retail – where a store can easily move in and out, and be converted back into a garage. If there are multiple garages in a row, some spaces can be combined together to create larger retail spaces.

Active uses at the ground floor may inspire enhanced public amenities on the street such as tables and chairs, and landscaping that support a quality pedestrian experience.

New businesses should verify that the proposed use is allowed by the SF Planning Code. Check with San Francisco Department of Building Inspection or a licensed design professional to determine feasibility in a particular structure.

Active Frontages

LOCATION CRITERIA

Areas where zoning allows ground floor commercial. Please refer to Map titled, “Permitted Areas for Commercial Uses” located in the appendix. Please verify zoning and possible required neighborhood notification procedures with the SF Planning Information Center.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Accessibility will be a prime concern. Sidewalks in front of many garages have cross slopes that exceed the 2% standard and level landings at store entries are required.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Encourage active ground floor land uses and activities. Minimize new garage additions or entrances along alleys (when feasible).

RESOURCES

SF Planning Department: Public Information Counter

<http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=2744#pic>

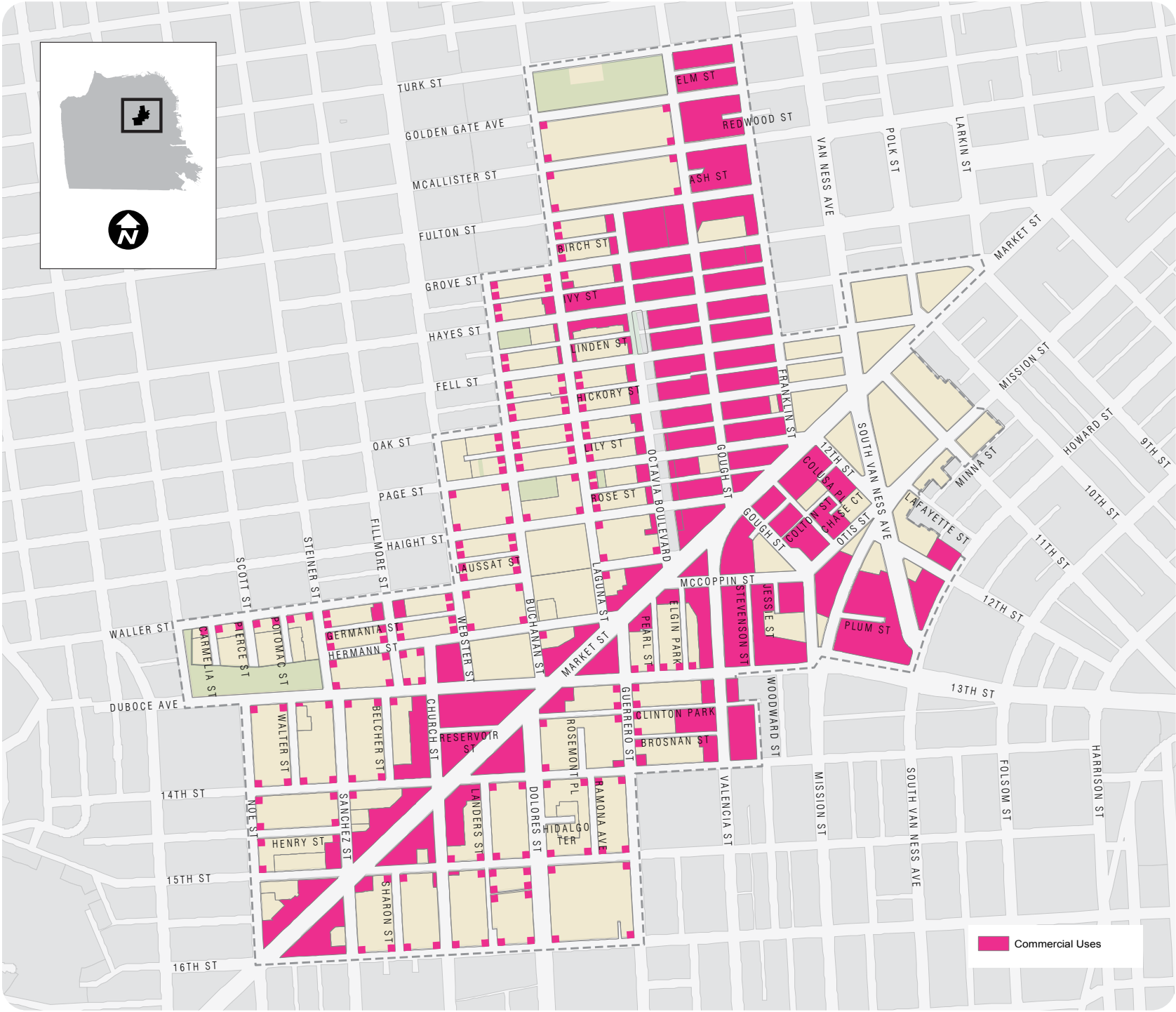
SF Planning: Property Information Map

<http://propertymap.sfplanning.org>

SF Planning: Permit How-To Guides

<http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=2767>





Permitted Areas
for Ground Floor
Commercial
Uses in Market
Octavia Plan
Area

GOAL 4**MAINTENANCE & MANAGEMENT****CLEAN &
SAFE ALLEY**

Alleys that are well-maintained create a safe and healthy space for people to enjoy activities at all times of day. Clean & Safe Alley strategies promote strong investment in infrastructure and activities that ensure alleys reduce opportunities for illegal dumping, crime, and environmental harms.

INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES *(Non-Design Related)*

Organize community clean-ups



INDIVIDUAL



NEIGHBORHOOD
& COMMUNITY



CITY

DESIGN TOOLS FOR CLEAN & SAFE ALLEYS

 **LIGHTING: PEDESTRIAN SCALE**

 **LIGHTING: STREET SCALE**

 **MINIMIZE AND COORDINATE BUILDING SERVICE FUNCTIONS**

Lighting



LIGHTING

Alley Goals:

CLEAN & SAFE

VIBRANT

Cost: \$2,000 - \$20,000

Involvement:  + 

Many alleys can feel dark and neglected or unsafe at night. Most streets have standard overhead lighting that is oriented for general illumination, but does little to create an ambience specific to the space and scaled for the pedestrian. Thoughtfully and purposefully designed, lighting can create a comfortable and welcoming ambience at night. Lighting can define space and contributes greatly to the perception of safety. The SF Public Utilities Commission supplies electricity to standard pre-approved street lighting fixtures. Alternate locations and possibilities to consider are: lighting trees; overhead light strings; installing lights on building walls, which may be motion activated; lighted signage; solar photo-voltaic paving lights (photo); and pedestrian lights on the sidewalk.

Lighting fixtures may be designed to double as bollards or bike racks.

Pedestrian-scale lighting provides lighting lower to the ground than street-level lighting since it is oriented for aiding pedestrians' visual clarity. Pedestrian-scale lighting does not sufficiently light streets enough to replace street lighting, but alleys are favorable places for this type of lighting since they are narrower,

allowing for a number of ways in which pedestrian-scale lighting can be installed.

Pedestrian-scale lighting improves walkability and safety for pedestrians, and can provide exposure to businesses by lighting up signage and other features. Since pedestrian-scale lighting is placed lower to the ground and does not need to be as bright as street lighting/light poles, it can make alleys a more intimate and warm. They are functional at night yet can be visually appealing during the day.



Street-scale lighting or overhead lighting, provides lighting to improve the visual clarity and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers alike. Light poles provide a vertical element where street enhancements like signage and planters can be mounted. Depending on how they are designed, they are both functional at night and visually appealing during the day.

There are typically higher installation, maintenance, and electricity usage costs associated with this type of lighting since fixtures will need



Lighting



to be coordinated with utility equipment above and below ground. Light poles should be spaced consistently and factor in other vertical elements that may affect the lighting, such as trees. Street lighting may also affect the amount of light entering surrounding properties, which could be detrimental to residents and other building users.

LOCATION CRITERIA

Street lighting should be located on sidewalks within the furnishing zone. If pedestrian scale lighting is desired in an alley, it should align with the street lighting poles. Pedestrian scale lighting should be considered in areas with high nighttime pedestrian activity.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » Location and spacing and light distribution for streetscapes and alleys are included in the SF Better Street Plan. On alleys, special consideration should be given to location and light levels due to the narrow street width and tree canopy.
- » Design and select lighting with special consideration to define the entrances of alleys.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Pedestrian street lighting should be adopted into the SFPUC standard fixture palette to help define a unique nighttime environment as well as increase safety and visibility for living alleys.

RESOURCES

SF Better Streets Plan: Street Lighting

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/streetscape-elements/street-lighting/>

SFPUC Street Light Catalogue

<http://sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=712>

Minimize and Coordinate Building Service Functions



ACTIVE USES

Alley Goals:

CLEAN & SAFE

VIBRANT

SHARED

Cost:

\$

\$

\$

Involvement:



Building frontages should maximize active uses and provide space and aesthetic enhancements into an alley. Building service functions, including garage access, loading, trash, utility, and mechanical rooms, detract from the quality of public life, can be a hazard to human health/safety, and do not promote active and diverse uses throughout the day. If service functions can be minimized and relocated away from pedestrian activity, it opens up space for people to use the alley safely and comfortably without interference of vehicles, service equipment, etc.

Minimizing service functions on building frontages allows for commercial and social activities, increasing community vibrancy and commercial vitality while making these spaces more visually attractive. Reducing service functions also protects alley users from services seen in alleys that pose potential safety or health hazards, especially those dealing with automobiles and garbage disposal.



Minimize and Coordinate Building Service Functions



DESIGN GUIDELINES

- » New construction should combine garage, loading, and trash access functions behind a single opening where feasible.
- » Transformers should be located in sub sidewalk vault, where feasible.
- » Consider the location of garage access to limit their frontages.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The size and location of garage access and service functions in new development should consider potential impacts for future living alleys.



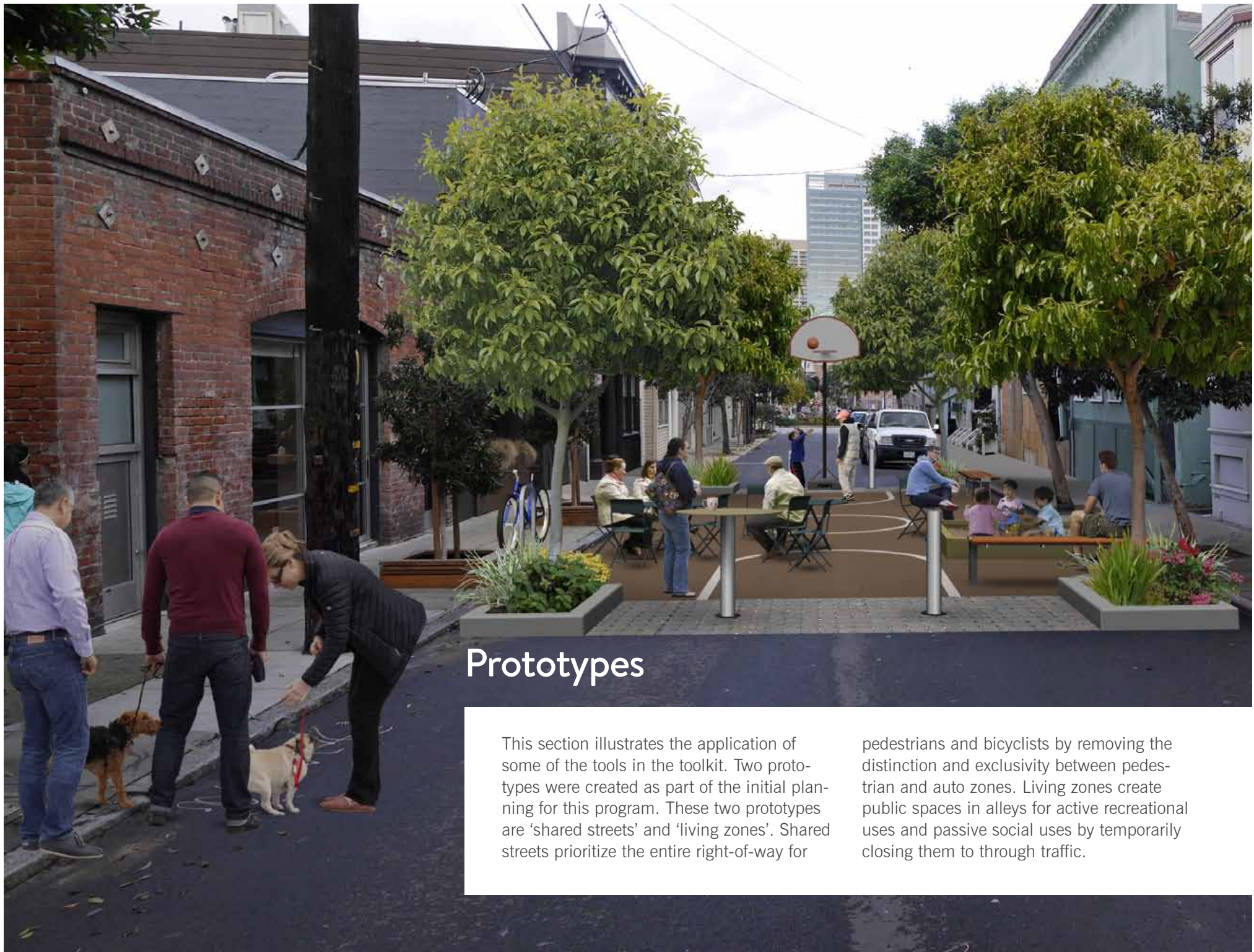
RESOURCES

SF Planning Department: Public Information Counter

<http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=2744#pic>

SF Planning: Permit How-To Guides

<http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=2767>



Prototypes

This section illustrates the application of some of the tools in the toolkit. Two prototypes were created as part of the initial planning for this program. These two prototypes are 'shared streets' and 'living zones'. Shared streets prioritize the entire right-of-way for

pedestrians and bicyclists by removing the distinction and exclusivity between pedestrian and auto zones. Living zones create public spaces in alleys for active recreational uses and passive social uses by temporarily closing them to through traffic.

To understand which prototype would be suitable for an alley, it is important to acknowledge the existing physical and social character of the alley. While all the alleys in the Market Octavia Area Plan are unique, the two general types are Residential and Commercial/Mixed Use. Understanding their characteristics will inform which prototype is more suitable.

RESIDENTIAL ALLEY

A residential living alley supports the activities and needs of those who live nearby. Existing residential alleys are typically lined with rows of garages and residential entrances. Spaces for neighbors to gather, socialize, and plant in front of their homes are often shared with vehicular rights-of-way without any form of traffic calming. Design elements, such as “living zones” or a shared street design (see following pages) in a residential living alley should promote a variety of protected and active uses that encourage neighbors to use the alleys as a front porch. Residential living alleys can include smaller design interventions that residents initiate themselves, such as adding plants, artwork, or additional lighting in front of their home; in this way, residents define the character and identity of their alley.

COMMERCIAL / MIXED USE ALLEY

A commercial living alley draws a mix of visitors, employees and residents to restaurants, cafes, and retailers that either face the alley or are located nearby. Many businesses operating late into the night support a variety of night-time activities (dining, clubbing, concerts, etc.) in the alley. Outside normal business hours, employees use the alley to park their vehicles, handle deliveries, or dispose trash in the early morning and late night.

Commercial alleys often contain service functions that are necessary for day-to-day retail and food operations, like loading docks. Design should not only increase safety of these alleys for all users during both peak and off-hours, but also complement the different types of activities that may spill into the alley as a result of nearby commerce. Commercial living alleys should balance livability and functionality.



SHARED STREET PROTOTYPE

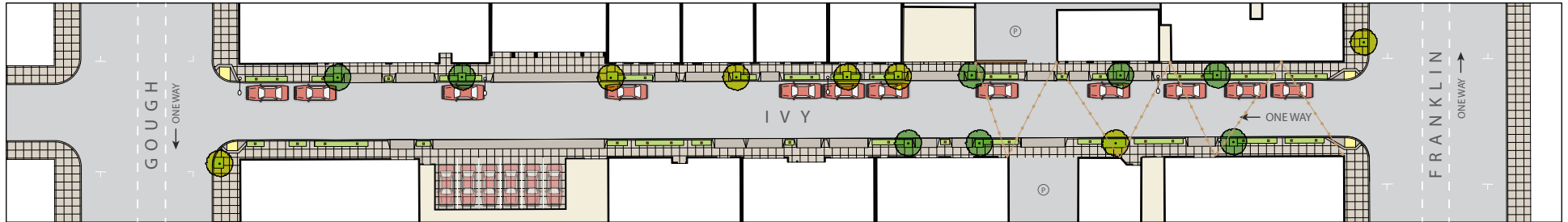
200 Block of Ivy Street

Residents of the 200 block of Ivy Street in the Market Octavia Area Plan are designing the block as a prototype for the living alleys program with the support of the Planning Department's City Design Group. To support commercial activity from nearby cafes, restaurants, and businesses in the area, the following were included in a conceptual design. The design could be developed in phases with landscaping, traffic calming, activating underutilized space, and later shared street design. The different phases are depicted in the following plans.

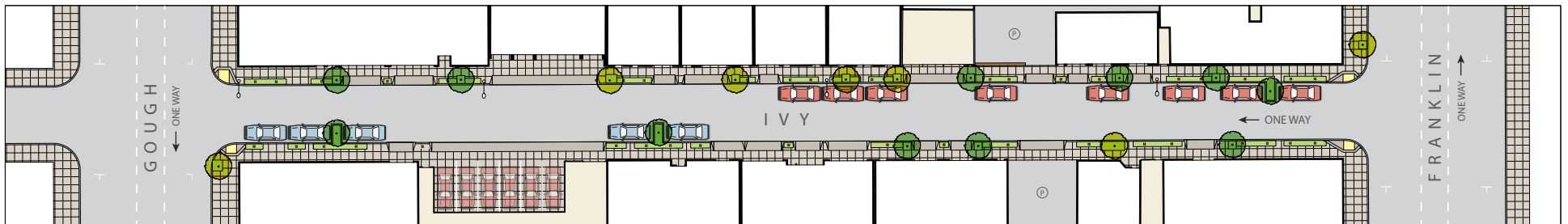


- » A segment of the alley could be made level (curbless)
- » Fixed furnishings, such as bicycle racks and planters
- » Temporary furnishings like chairs and tables that can be set up and put away by the sponsoring organization
- » Planters and additional street trees
- » Traffic calming features such as raised crosswalks
- » Murals (with building owners consent)
- » Potential micro-retail from converted ground floor garages

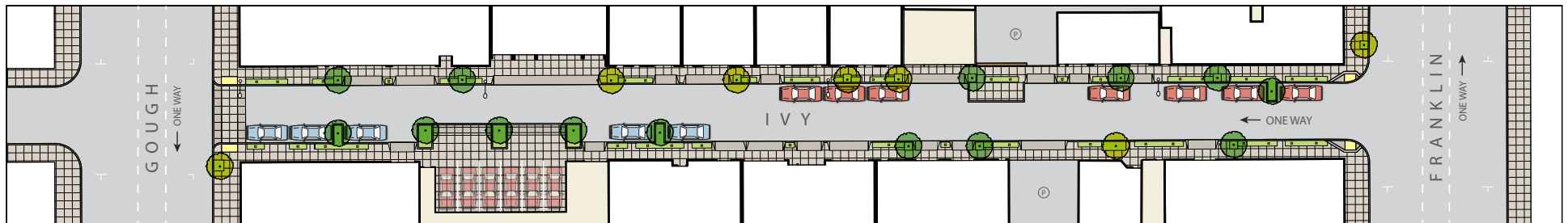
Phase 1: Street Beautification



Phase 2: Vehicle Flow Shift



Phase 3: Open Spaces / Bulb-Outs / Raised Crosswalk

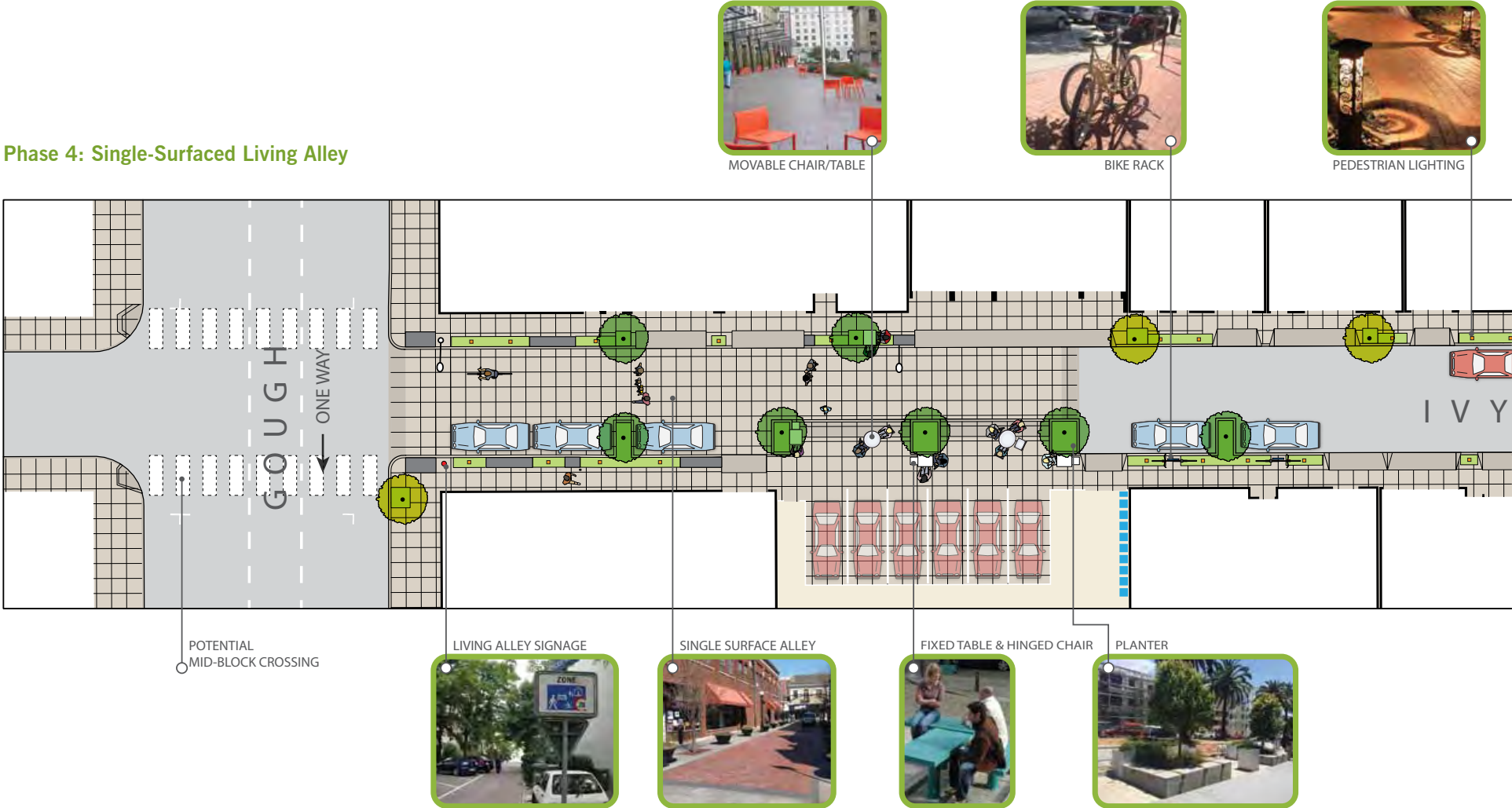


POWER POLE W/LIGHT	EXISTING STREET PARKING
PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING	NEW STREET PARKING
PARKING LOT	2 FEET PLANTING STRIP
DRIVEWAY	NEW TREE
EXISTING TREE	

SHARED STREET PROTOTYPE

200 BLOCK OF IVY STREET

Phase 4: Single-Surfaced Living Alley





SHARED STREET PROTOTYPE

200 BLOCK OF IVY STREET

Existing Condition on
200 Block of Ivy Street



Phase 1: Street Beautification

Depicted with planting strips.





Phase 4: Shared Street Treatment in Day Time

Design includes curbless street, special paving, raised planters with trees, bicycle parking, activation of underutilized space, and some parking removal. Overhead lighting remains.



Phase 4: Shared Street Treatment in Evening

Alley incorporates string lighting and in-paving light.

PROTOTYPE

Living Zones

The Living Alley's prototypes are relatively easy and cost-effective to implement and enable local residents to participate in alley design.

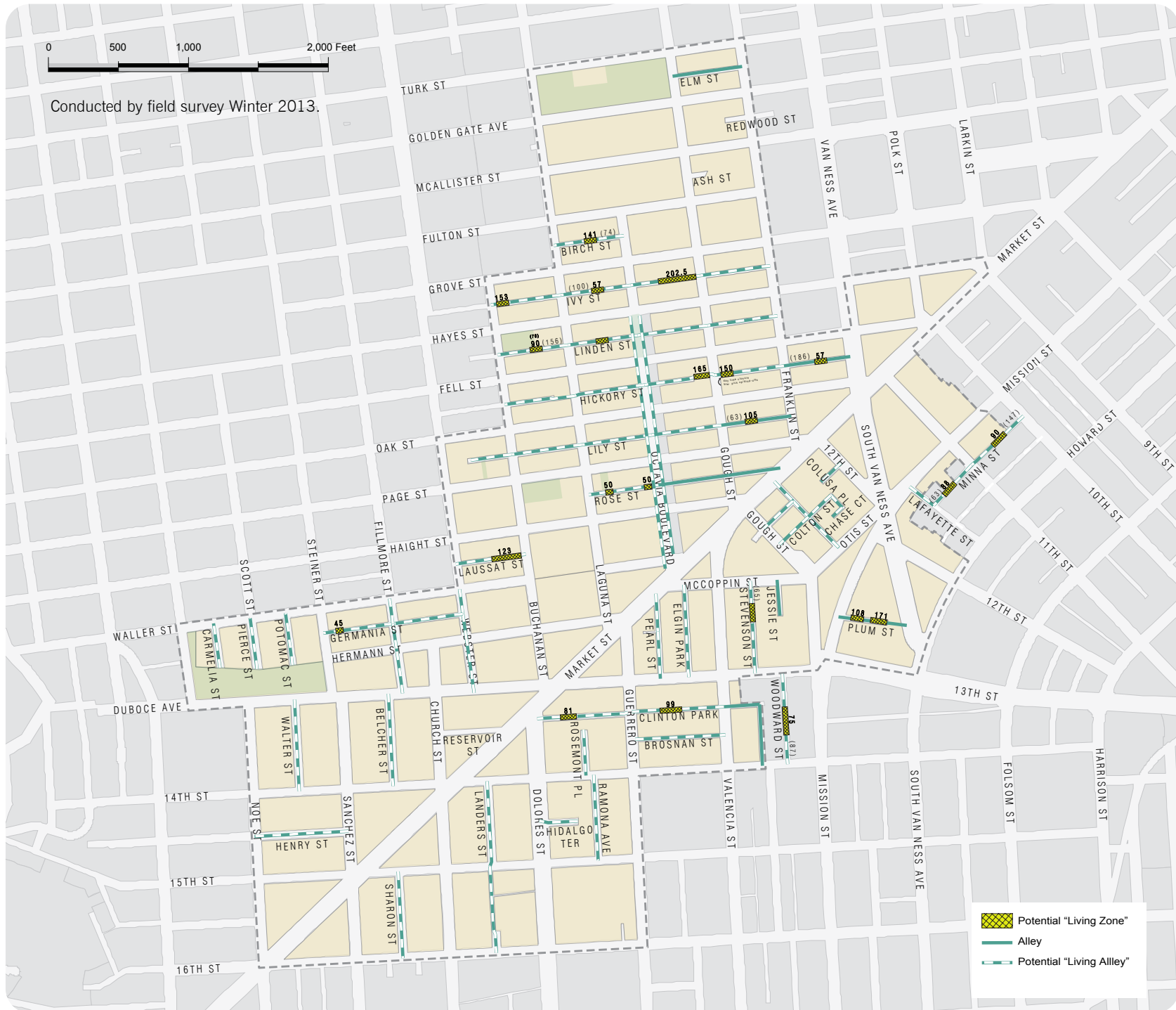
Living zones create public spaces in alleys for active recreational uses (such as a basketball courts, hop scotch, and other unstructured play activities), and social uses such as sitting,

by temporarily closing them to through traffic. Living zones typically include intense traffic calming to promote very slow driving speeds, or may even curtail through-traffic to allow people to use the alley comfortably, by spontaneously furnishing the street with tables and chairs, planters, play structures, basketball hoops, sandboxes, etc.

Living zones are best located in the middle portion of residential alleys with no parking access, and dead-end alleys. Living zones should be sited on alleys with very low traffic volumes, with slopes of 5% or less. They can also be sited next to community centers and schools. Active land uses, such as residences with doors and windows, should front living zones.

Designs should incorporate seating areas where adults can sit and supervise children at play. All existing effective road widths, with a minimum of 14 feet, would need to be maintained at all times for emergency vehicle access. Through-access would be designed to restrict cars but would be accessible for emergency and service vehicles (street sweeping, trash and recycling collection) through movable gates, or removable bollards. Signage at the alley entrance would discourage through traffic.





Potential Living Zones in the Market Octavia Neighborhood

Living zones may be designed with low-cost materials such as paint, movable planters, play structures, and seating. It is envisioned that the existing sidewalks, curbs, and road could remain unchanged, but more intensive treatments may involve modifying curb lines or adding speed tables, which would require an encroachment permit from SF Public Works.

Living zones require alleys to be two-way streets for local traffic. Although most alleys in the Market Octavia area function as one-way streets, there are several examples of two-way streets, because they are dead-ends, in the case of Lily, or engineered other reasons, as the case of Stevenson. The block of Lily that dead-ends is 35 feet wide and 185 feet long. In these cases cars are able to turn around, and service and fire access is accommodated.

Sponsors of living zones would apply for SFMTA's Temporary Street Closure permit which would involve an ISCOTT (Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation) hearing and any other relevant permits pending review.

PLEASE ALSO REFER TO PLAY STREETS IN:

The Green Connections Final Report

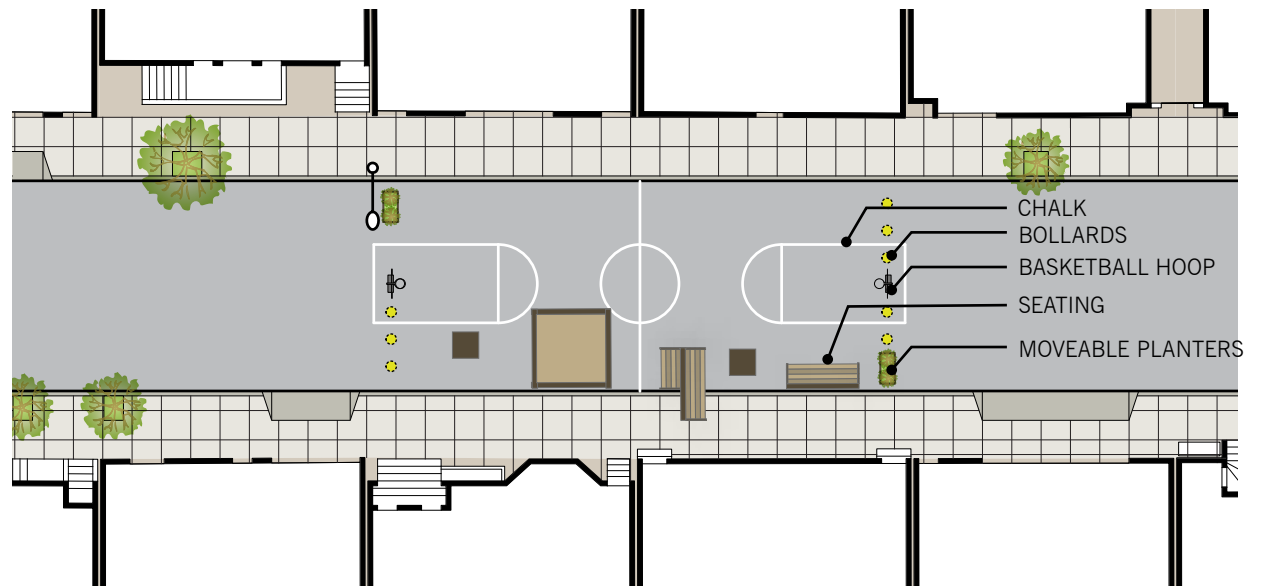
http://www.sf-planning.org/ftp/files/Citywide/green_connections/GC_Final_Report-CH5_Design_Toolkit.pdf.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

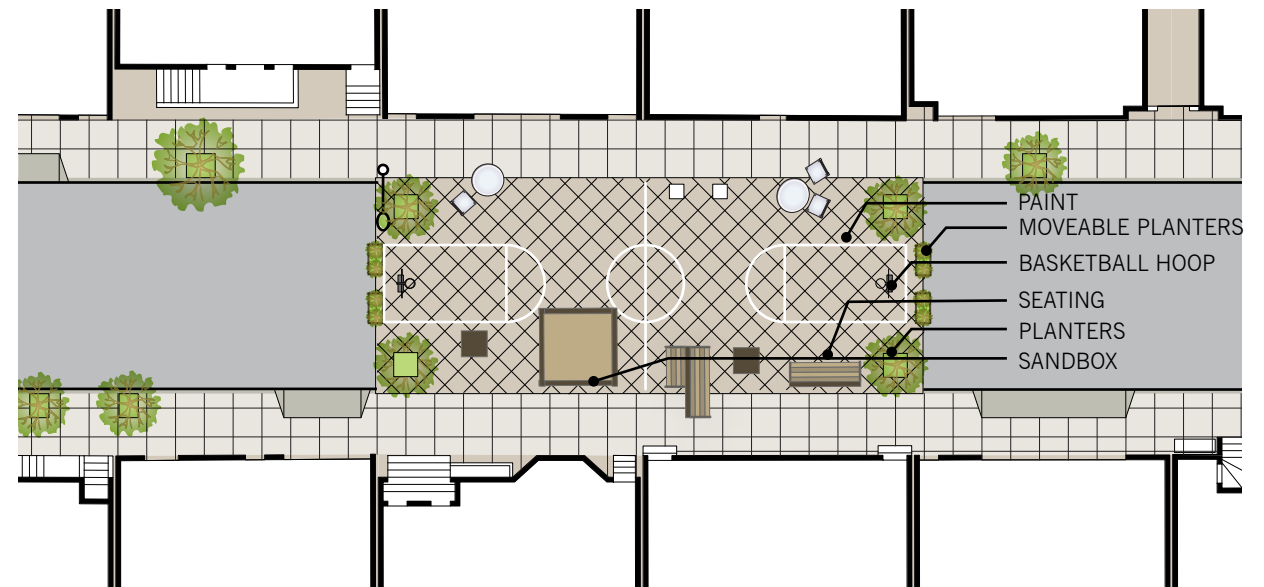
- » On-street parking spaces may be removed to accommodate three-point turns and two-way vehicle passing.
- » “Local access only” signs at alley entrances would discourage non-local traffic.
- » Entry points to alleys with living zones should be heavily traffic calmed to slow traffic entering the alley, but should maintain existing turning radii to accommodate emergency vehicle access.
- » SFFD would review the length of a block for fire access.
- » Considerations should be given if converting one-way alleys to two-way segments if turn arounds are needed by vehicles.
- » Consider doing a mid-alley closure vs. full alley closure, or consider starting out with timed closures.
- » The detailed design of a street with a living zone must consider ADA accessibility with ramps and detectable warnings, and pavement surfacing to eliminate cracks that could be tripping hazards.

PROTOTYPE
LIVING ZONES
Living Zone: Low Cost Intervention

Designed with bollards, chalk, moveable planters and furnishings.


Living Zone: Higher Cost Intervention

Designed with moveable planters and furnishings, and temporary surface paint.



PROTOTYPE

LIVING ZONES

Living Zone: Existing Condition

Located in mid-area of a block with no garage entrances.



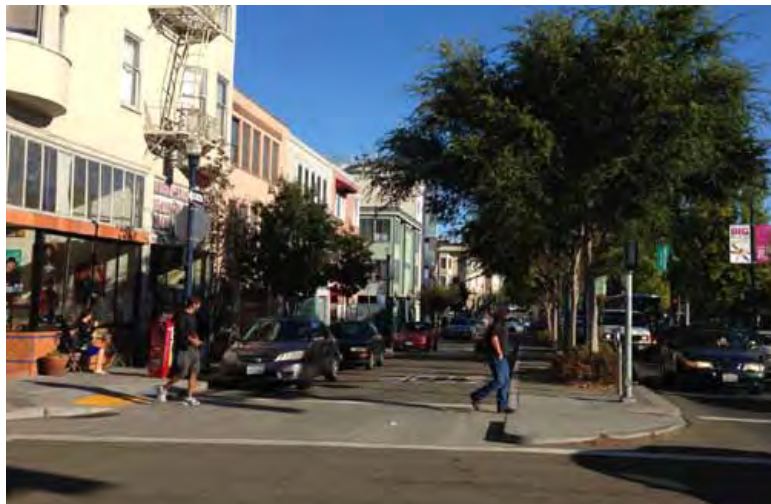
Living Zone:
Low Cost Intervention

Designed with moveable bollards, planters and furnishings. Chalk may be used to outline a basketball court.



MIXED USE ALLEY CASE STUDY

Octavia Boulevard Access Lanes



While not eligible for living alley funding, the access lanes of Octavia Boulevard function similarly to alleys in that they carry secondary traffic, and provide slower, calmer lanes that cater to pedestrians and bicycles. Their success depends on their design, adjacent uses, control of traffic, and the types of streets that intersect them. In Hayes Valley, existing alleys intersect the boulevard's lanes providing an ideal condition for a calm, pedestrian and bike friendly alley network to emerge amidst the busy arterial streets.

like local access roads. Often they are used as short cuts by through-going traffic. Their widths were determined by emergency vehicle access, while the medians were undersized and unrelated to the sidewalks to be useful to pedestrians. There may be opportunities to further narrow the street width of the access lane or otherwise improve the pedestrian and bicycle experience while still accommodating appropriate emergency vehicle access, thereby enhancing the overall quality of the alley network.



Octavia Boulevard is the only north-south part of the alley network that connects to the east-west alleys. Additionally, its connection to an existing open space and bike routes along its relatively protected length make it an important link in the network.

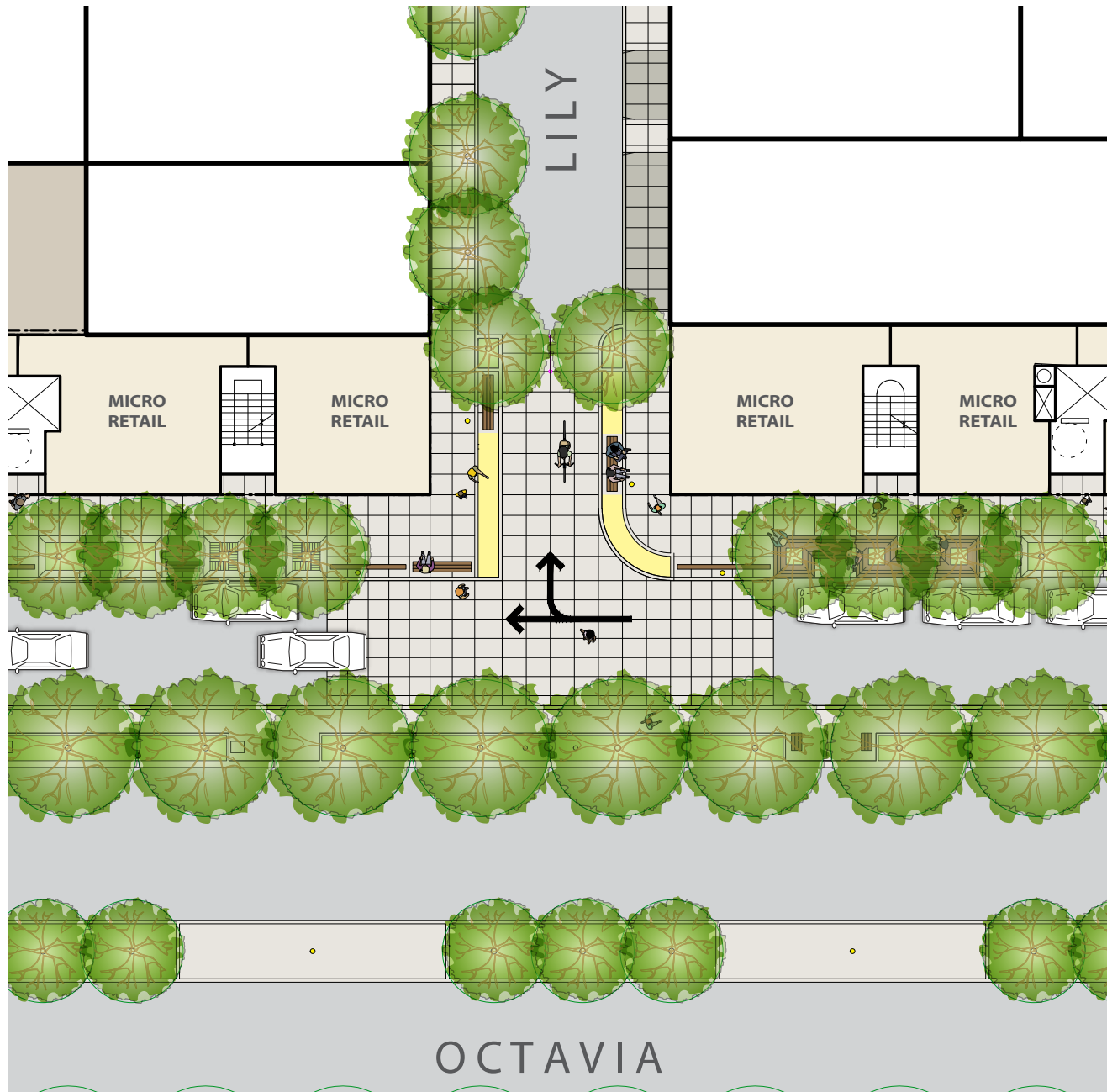
The concept as the frontage roads will be explored further with SFMTA's Octavia Boulevard Enhancement Project.

The functionality of Octavia's access lanes could be enhanced by design refinements that improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists and signal their function as such. These access lanes were originally designed as single surface lanes and intended to function

FOR MORE INFO:

Octavia Boulevard Enhancement Project

<http://www.sfmta.com/projects-planning/projects/octavia-boulevard-enhancement-project>



Proposal for Alley
Intersection at
Octavia Boulevard
Access Lanes

IMPLEMENTATION & RESOURCES



4.1 COMMUNITY ORGANIZER CHECKLIST	<i>p. 86</i>
4.2 ORGANIZING	<i>p. 88</i>
4.3 RESEARCH	<i>p. 88</i>
4.4 ESTIMATING COSTS & FUNDRAISING	<i>p. 92</i>
4.5 FUNDING SOURCES	<i>p. 94</i>
4.6 PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS	<i>p. 96</i>
4.7 PERMIT PROCESS & RESPONSIBILITIES	<i>p. 100</i>

IMPLEMENTATION & RESOURCES

This chapter explains how to get started and what it will take to complete a living alley: from community organizing, to understanding the potential costs and sources of funding, to partnerships, and finally the approval processes and associated fees.

We also outline the possibilities and benefits of coordinating with the work plans of City Departments.

Community Organizer Checklist

BEGIN

2-4 MONTHS

- » Using the Living Alley D.I.Y. survey forms, walk and map the existing physical conditions, and document the activities in your alley.
- » Using imagination and examples from the toolkit, list and visualize all the possible ways to enhance the alley.
- » Organize a get-together in the alley and ask interested neighbors to imagine possible improvements.
- » Use the toolkit to understand the design constraints, and palette of tools.
- » Discuss with your neighbors what are the most important goals.
- » Sketch 2-3 plans that include these ideas.

DESIGN

3-6 MONTHS

- » Meet with SF Public Works, Hydraulics, Fire Department or issues with high impact on feasibility
- » Temporary project could showcase design by using temporary paint and potted plants. Great way to kick-start the project, get people excited, and see the potential.
- » Use the toolkit to estimate the costs and identify funding sources
- » Review preferred design
- » Hire an architect, landscape architect, civil engineer,

PERMIT

14 MONTHS

- » Conduct a comprehensive and coordinated design review of parameters that will affect final design
- » See permit process diagram in toolkit

BUILD

4-6 MONTHS

- » Coordinate with other city work, volunteers, donors etc

LIVE

- » Spend time in your alley!

LIVING ALLEY COMMUNITY ORGANIZER CHECKLIST

		YEAR ONE												YEAR TWO												YEAR THREE					
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
2-4 MONTHS BEGIN	Analyze existing conditions																														
	Visualize opportunities																														
	Organize and discuss with neighbors																														
	Understand parameters and possibilities																														
	Discuss priorities and values																														
	Design conceptual options (think about phasing)																														
3-6 MONTHS DESIGN	Review with City for feasibility																														
	Test idea with temporary installation*																														
	Develop preferred design option																														
	Develop cost, budget, and funding plan																														
	Apply for Community Challenge Grant																														
	Organize and meet with neighbors																														
	Develop and refine design: hire professionals**																														
	Fundraise																														
14 MONTHS PERMIT	Develop funding and maintenance entity																														
	Pre-application design review of living alley																														
	Revise plans as needed																														
	Submit drawings for permit																														
	Attend public hearings																														
	Sign maintenance and liability agreements																														
4-6 MONTHS BUILD	Interview contractors																														
	Review and evaluate bids																														
	Select contractor																														
	Organize others involved in construction																														
	Coordinate staging during construction																														
	Construction																														
LIVE	Plan a ribbon cutting party!																														
	Enjoy your new urban living room!																														
	Take care of your living alley!																														

* See Parklets, Pavement to Parks

** Consult with Envista to learn about future City projects

Organizing

Since living alleys are intended to be created by and for the community, the extent of community involvement will likely determine the success of implementation and its useful life long after it's construction. Organizing a community to undertake all aspects of the project from design to implementation to maintenance requires time and enthusiasm. Full consensus is not required, but widespread and passionate support will likely make design and fundraising easier, and facilitate the permit approvals process. A core group of committed individuals who genuinely listen to and incorporate the values and goals of the neighborhood are often the people who carry projects from inception to completion.

The first step to a successful project is to discuss priorities and values with neighbors through open dialogue and active listening and establish a set of mutually agreed goals before a single drawing is made. This toolkit provides a starting point and common understanding of the design possibilities. There will probably be multiple ideas of how to achieve the shared goals; try to capture these with three loose design sketches and continue to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each approach until arriving at an agreement.

Most successful neighborhood-led projects start as a single, compelling idea by an individual or small group of neighbors, which eventually

catches on and gains the support of the broader community. Getting these ideas off the ground can require considerable time and effort organizing, fundraising, and planning, not to mention countless hours of volunteer sweat equity. Although specific needs will vary according to the project, most will need the following:

PLAN ACTIVITIES TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

There are many inclusive and inexpensive ways for residents to learn more about one another. Getting a sense of your neighbors' interests and talents can be a great way of understanding how each person can contribute to making their alley a better place to live, work, and play.

CREATE A COMMUNITY INFORMATION BOARD

A community information board allows residents and non-residents to leave event and job postings that keep people informed of current events and new opportunities in the area. They are quick and relatively inexpensive to install, and are a simple and active design element that can draw a lot of interaction between alley users.

DONATE YOUR TALENTS AND TIME

The creation of a living alley requires people with diverse skill sets, from event planning to craftsmanship. In addition, alleys require time

commitments all throughout the day, from evening community workshops to morning site clean-ups. Everyone has something unique to contribute!

PLAN A FUNDRAISER

Fundraisers can provide the necessary funds to implement a small-scale project, like a furniture installation or an infrastructure repair. Volunteers can use their time and talents to provide goods, keep track of money, publicize fundraising events, and make promotional materials. Local businesses can also help out by sponsoring fundraisers or donating goods.

FORM LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Local partnerships with community resources are a great way of connecting an alley with the larger community and getting them involved in developing ideas that make good use of their talents and expertise. A local arts organization can provide volunteers to do a mural installation, or students from a local university can use the alley as a site for small and large scale design projects.

Here is a list of community resources available to you that might be able to aid in the design, implementation or development of your living alley project.

Studio for Urban Projects SEED fund Grants

www.studioforurbanproject.org

Friends of the Urban Forest

www.fuf.net

CCCBD Community Lighting Grants

sfciviccenter.org

Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association (HVNA)

www.hayesvalleysf.org

Civic Center CBD

www.sfciviccenter.org

American Community Gardening Association (ACGA)

www.communitygarden.org

San Francisco Urban Agriculture Alliance (SFUAA)

www.sfuua.org

CommunityGrows

www.communitygrows.org

49 Farms

www.49farms.org



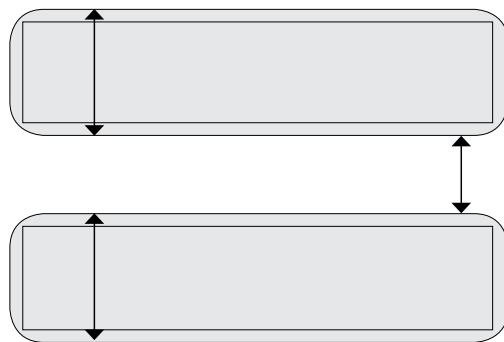
Research

Included in the Living Alleys Design Toolkit is a set of survey instruments called the “Living Alleys D.I.Y Survey” (refer to Appendix A.1), which will allow you and your community to assess the conditions and needs of your alley, jot down key observations, and begin sketching out initial concepts and visions. Once all the different measurements, physical conditions, movement, and activities have been accounted for, you can then use the attached Alley Plan Template to diagram the current conditions of your alley and further develop your design ideas and concepts. We have physically mapped a random selection of alleys that may be downloaded from our website.

PHYSICAL CONDITION MAPPING

This instrument looks at the traffic conditions, aesthetics, and user perceptions of the alley and the surrounding context. This tool will allow you to critically assess the assets and challenges that are present in the current infrastructure, which will affect decisions of what you will need to add or change in order to create a more suitable environment for different alley activities.

Bring a measuring tape with you for this instrument. Begin by looking at the surrounding conditions of your alley, and noting the different densities, land uses, traffic conditions, and street elements. Then, with your measuring tape, record and dimension the lengths of different road, lot, and furniture elements that are present in the alley. As a more subjective measurement of alley conditions, you will also rank your overall alley experience on a scale of 1-5.

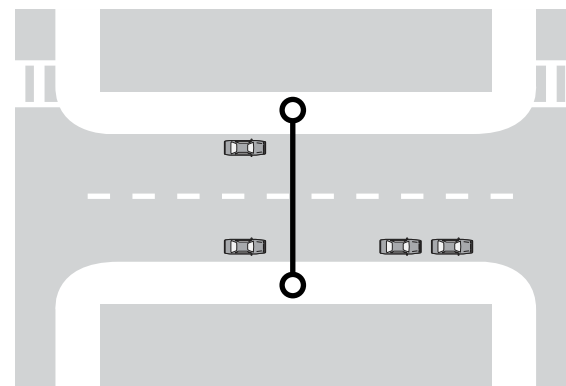


Physical Condition Mapping

SCREENLINE COUNTS

This instrument looks at traffic volumes generated by pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles using the alley. This tool will help you determine which modes of travel are currently most prominent and/or suitable in the alley, and will inform decisions regarding how these spaces will be shared amongst different types of people moving through the space.

Locate the middle of the block. You will stand on one side of the block with your back facing the wall and imagine an invisible line (screenline) that extends from your body to halfway across the street. You will tally all pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars that cross that screenline in either direction, as well as tally any additional attributes you observe. After 15 minutes have passed, you will repeat this instrument again on the other side of the block.

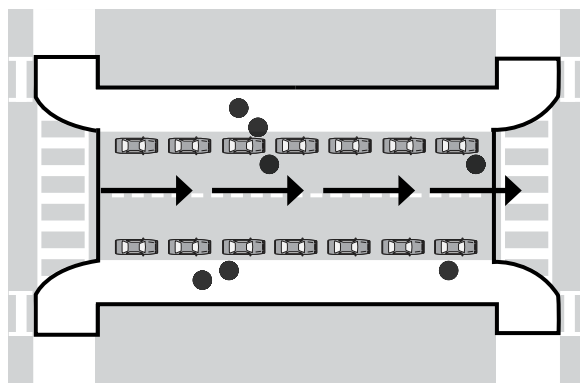


Screenline Counts

STATIONARY ACTIVITY SCANS

This instrument looks at different types of stationary activities that alley users are doing, as well as the demographics of those users. This tool will help you determine which activities and behaviors are currently most common in your alley, and whether or not people are spending prolonged periods of time in the alley rather than just passing through.

Start out on one end of the block and walk the length of 2-3 storefronts and stop. Record each stationary person that is immediately in your field of vision. Each row in this instrument will correspond to a single person, and you will mark down all the different attributes that they are displaying (gender, age, posture, activity, etc.). Each bike you observe will be recorded on the right-hand column. Once you record all activities immediately in your field of vision, repeat the process until you arrive at the other end of the block.



Stationary Activity Scans

ALLEY PLAN TEMPLATE

This template can be used to summarize your findings from the three survey instruments into a single, measured diagram that shows the correct dimensions and placement of street furnishings, lighting, and infrastructure. Different proposals, annotations, and ideas from the living alleys Toolkit can then be layered on top of the alley plan template as a way of envisioning how an alley can be transformed to meet community needs and wants.

A 50 x 22 square grid is provided on the template, with each square corresponding to 10 feet x 10 feet. Using the measurements from the “Physical Condition Mapping” instrument, draw out the streets, sidewalks, and building footprints to scale as a first layer of information. Include the locations and measurements of existing infrastructure and furnishings (curb cuts, lighting, planters, etc.) as a second layer of information. You can then reproduce this finished measured diagram of existing conditions and distribute to residents to provide a fairly accurate template for drawing in new ideas and designs for the alley.



Estimating Costs and Fundraising

Because living alley improvements can be complex and expensive endeavors they will usually rely on multiple sources of funding to design, construct, and maintain. There may be different sources for each of the categories of costs outlined below. The design toolkit is intended to reduce some initial design costs, but cannot substitute for the complete technical and professional services that are necessary.

Understanding the time and costs associated with creating a living alley and developing a funding plan are critical to implementation of a design. We have tried to generalize some of the costs and when they are incurred to help inform that process. We attempt to list some scenarios and strategies to fundraise and to leverage those funds.

The length of time from an initial idea to a built improvement can take years. Initial costs, typically called “soft costs”, are up-front costs for services and fees required to develop a design and fundraise before construction can begin. These first dollars are not only the hardest to come by, they also the riskiest, since there is always a chance that the project, for whatever reason, does not get built.

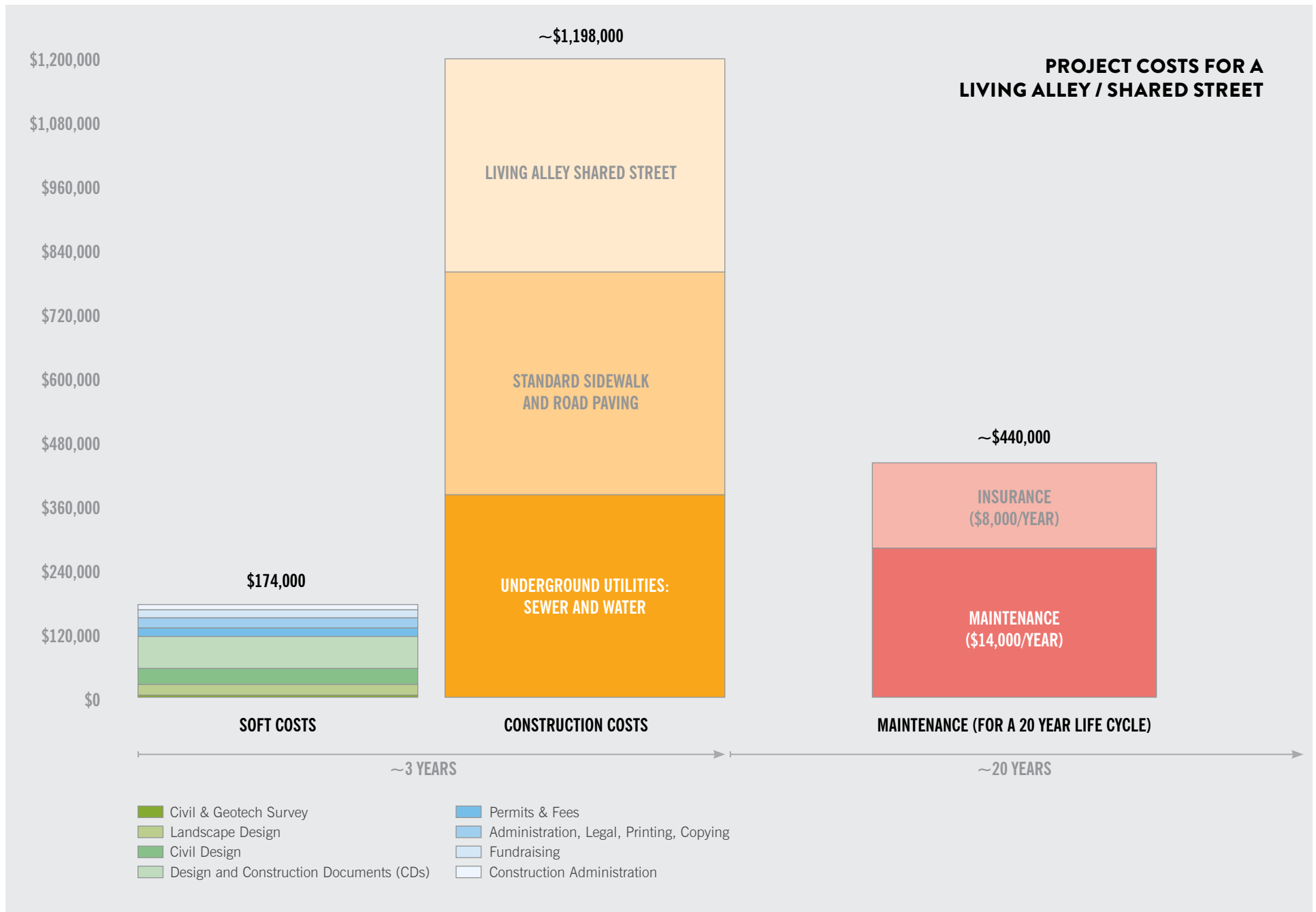
Soft costs include professional services such as surveys, design, engineering, as well as permit fees, fundraising costs, and other related administrative costs. Soft costs for community projects might be sponsored by a grant, or project champion, or provided pro-bono, or some combination of the above.

Hard costs are for actual materials and construction and will represent the largest expenditure in the shortest time frame spent on the project. We include some general costs associated with our tools. (see Appendix A.2 for sample estimation of typical hard costs)

The project will need to budget for **on-going maintenance costs**. Although these come after the project is complete, in a sense, they are the most important part to keep the beauty and usefulness of a project intact and alive. Although relatively small, they add up over the long lifetime of a living alley and are best shared by as many people as possible.

Predicting exact costs is difficult since a variety of site specific factors can affect costs. Also, construction costs fluctuate with market trends of supply and demand, and with inflation.





Funding Sources

MARKET OCTAVIA IMPACT FEES

A primary and reliable source for hard costs and some soft costs will come from impact fees. The City, through the Market Octavia impact fees, will have about \$2,000,000 allocated for living alleys. The City hopes to leverage those funds with other funding sources in order to build as many high quality improvements as possible. Administered through the Community Challenge Grant, (CCG) based on competitive merits, large projects are eligible for up to \$250,000. While not enough for all costs, when combined with other contributions it will start to form the core of a large-scale living alley improvement. The CCG grant will also have medium and small categories tailored to intermediate projects. It is envisioned that the small grant would enable a living zone type improvement.

SPONSORSHIPS

Institutions, businesses, and product manufacturers are sometimes willing to donate or contribute, at a greatly reduced cost, materials or services to a public serving nonprofit effort. Identify businesses that might support your cause. They may be willing to provide products in exchange for the good press of your project.

FISCAL SPONSOR

A nonprofit fiscal sponsor (501.c3) can funnel grants and charitable donations. If so, this further incentivizes giving with the advantage of allowing contributions to be tax deductible.

IN-KIND SERVICES

Many people or organizations offer services that can be valuable and used in lieu of monetary contributions. For example, neighborhood organizations, schools, or gardening clubs may have work programs to plant, garden, and clean public green spaces. There may be designers who offer pro-bono services to worthy public community projects. Friends of the Urban Forest organizes planting events that involve neighbors and residents in planting new trees. In-kind contributions at the scale living alleys are most useful for on-going maintenance. The scale and duration of maintenance activities are the kinds of things individuals or small organizations can do.

STRATEGIC FUNDRAISING

Typically, but not always, private funding comes from people who will benefit from the work. Identify your base of support: people in the neighborhood, those closest to the cause and impacted or inspired by the project, and look for ways to expand your network. Write a story of why this is personally important, describe the project either in story or visually and describe what impact it will have. Identify a specific “ask” to funders so they can identify with something tangible what they are responsible for. For example, “we are looking to fill the gap with a pledge of \$1,500 for benches.” Remember to thank all your supporters.

COORDINATING AND PARTNERING WITH PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

New development that faces an alley has in many cases an obligation and opportunity to enhance the streetscape. These obligation can activate an alley.

In the Market Octavia Plan area, a fee on new development, called an “impact fee,” was introduced to fund new infrastructure to meet the needs of new residents and employees. The City establishes fee amounts based on the demand for the infrastructure.

In some instances, private development projects may have the option of meeting applicable development fees through an in-kind agreement. This agreement outlines the types of public improvements that would be paid for by a private development project. Once the terms are established, the in-kind agreement goes before the Planning Commission for approval.

Establishing relationships between private developers and community groups may be mutually beneficial. Developers may have the capacity to design and construct an improvement, but not have the desire for carrying the long-term maintenance and liability. It may be possible for a community based organization to partner with private developers to leverage mutual efforts. For example, community members and developers could coordinate design and construction to include an extended or enhanced portion of the alley in exchange for the community organization to cover the on-going maintenance and liability.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT DISTRICTS

A Community Benefit District is a tool to raise and distribute funding for improvements and maintenance of public amenities and programs. Property owners agree to contribute capital and maintenance funding through a special assessment on their property tax. Once the geographic boundaries of the district are determined, the estimated amount and purpose of the funding is established, and a simple weighted majority of owners is obtained, a Community Benefit District can be legislated. Establishing a CBD is a significant undertaking. It demands a strong commitment of time, money, and energy to initiate. It also demands large scale buy-in from property owners and community stakeholders about the needs of the district. A community benefit district entails a level of governance to prioritize which projects get what and when. There are several ways of pro-rating the assessed costs.

For capital costs, a CBD can bond against future revenues.

FOR MORE INFO:

San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development Community Benefit District

Crezia.Tano@sfgov.org

<http://www.oewd.org/Form-a-CBD.aspx>

<http://www.oewd.org/Neighborhood-Revitalization-Community-Benefit-Districts.aspx>

<http://www.oewd.org/media/docs/CBD%20docs/BID%20Technical%20Assistance%20Matching%20Grant.pdf>

Public / Private Partnerships

Because living alley improvements can be expensive endeavors they will usually rely on multiple sources of funding to design, construct and maintain. Public private partnerships are essential for both the creation and on-going maintenance of living alleys. Implementation of living alleys will rely on public private partnerships, in part because of the reluctance of the City to accept maintenance and liability for non-standard street designs, and in part due to limited public capital for infrastructure. The positive aspect of this policy is that it may also help

ensure that improved alleys do not suffer neglect from the “tragedy of the commons” if people are vested in the creation and maintenance.

The City, through the Market Octavia development impact fees, has \$2,000,000 allocated for living alleys. Through private public partnerships we hope to leverage those funds to develop as many high quality improvements as possible.

Developing a partnership entity that is effective at raising funds could be a considerable

expenditure of effort, but once established could sustain and expand many living alleys. Deliberate thought should be put into determining which partnerships would work best.

Some of the components of potential living alley network are consistent with ongoing work of various City agencies. It is fair to assume that many of the improvements, particularly around traffic calming, bicycle amenities and improved pedestrian safety may be built in coordination with various City agencies.

The City’s streetscape projects are generally built by San Francisco Public Works (SFPW), the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). Because many living alleys will involve both a greening component and a streetscape component, it is important to reach out to these agencies early on. The Planning Department works closely with these agencies to ensure that the ideas, plans, and designs that are generated through community-led planning efforts can be realized on the ground. Additionally the Planning Department can provide urban design support for living alley projects. This section discusses potential partnerships for project delivery by different agencies.



Market Octavia Living Alleys Community Workshop #1 in 2013

PARTNERING WITH THE SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (SFPUC)



The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) implements and maintains the water and sewer system throughout the City. The Sewer

System Improvement Program (SSIP) is a 20-year program to upgrade sewer infrastructure across the City. The program includes infrastructure upgrades, including pipelines, pump stations, and treatment facilities. When sewer and water mains are replaced, the street is usually repaved. This is can be an opportunity to implement additional living alley improvements. Finally, the program also includes green infrastructure projects, such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable paving, aimed at minimizing stormwater impacts on the sewer system.

Where the opportunities exist, streetscape designs could include green infrastructure that detains local storm water flows with low impact design features, and also serves other goals for living alleys, such as traffic calming and greening.

The SFPUC has two funding opportunities that fit the typical scale of a living alley project. The first is the **Watershed Stewardship Program**, which offers grants for streetscape improvements that help to minimize stormwater impacts on the sewer system.

FOR MORE INFO:

Urban Watershed Stewardship Grants

<http://www.sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=104>

The second opportunity is the **Sidewalk Garden Project** in partnership with Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF) to replace concrete sidewalks with thriving gardens to capture stormwater and reduce the burden on our sewer system while beautifying San Francisco neighborhoods and protecting the environment.

FOR MORE INFO:

The Sidewalk Garden Project

<http://www.sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=641>

AND

<http://www.fuf.net/programs-services/planting/sidewalk-gardens/the-sidewalk-garden-project/>

The SFPUC has created an opportunity map that indicates streets that may be potential candidates for low impact design treatments that considers soils, slope, streetscape factors, and location in drainage area. Consult the **SFPUC Green Stormwater Infrastructure** website for design details.

FOR MORE INFO:

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

<http://sfwater.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=6009>

Additionally, SFPUC may provide technical review of stormwater related engineering to a community led project

Depending on the extent of a living alley project, the underground sewer should be scoped to determine its condition, and if needed, be repaired or replaced before street improvements begin.

FOR MORE INFO:

Green Infrastructure Projects

<http://sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=614>

PARTNERING WITH THE SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY (SFMTA)



The SFMTA is responsible for implementing all surface transportation improvements across the City, including Muni operations, bike and pedestrian programs, taxi policies, parking programs, and traffic control

operations. Per the SFMTA Strategic Plan, the agency's overarching goals are to improve safety and provide transportation options for residents and visitors. There are opportunities to coordinate capital improvements along the living alley network through new, planned, and funded projects related to traffic calming, school area safety, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

The City's Bike Plan was adopted in 2009, and many of the plan's projects have been built, increasing the amount of bike facilities across the city. Looking to the next phase of bike projects, the SFMTA released the Bike Strategy in 2013, which outlines goals, objectives, and targets for bicycling for the next five years. The Strategy emphasizes the importance of connectivity and comfort for increasing the bike mode share in San Francisco. This goal is consistent with living alley network, which aims to improve routes and connectivity.

The SFMTA implements traffic calming measures along city blocks and at intersections. These measures include treatments such as corner bulb-outs, chicanes, speed tables, and special crosswalk markings. Residents can also request traffic calming on their street, which would provide additional opportunities to reduce speeds on corridors either in coordination with other projects or as an independent projects prioritized based on need.

The majority of the SFMTA's bicycle, pedestrian, school area safety, and traffic calming projects are implemented by the Sustainable Streets Division. Planned projects are included in the Division's 5 year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which documents the expected scope, schedule, budget, and funding source for each project. Revised every two years and approved by the SFMTA Board of Directors, the CIP is the most comprehensive source for reviewing projects in the pipeline. The Projects in the CIP are also influenced by the SFMTA Strategic Plan, the Bicycle Strategy, the Pedestrian Strategy, and the Traffic Calming Program.

The following CIP areas each include projects that provide opportunities to coordinate with the living alley network:

- » The SFMTA **2013-2018 Bicycle Strategy** sets new directions and policy targets to make bicycling a part of everyday life in San Francisco. As part of the strategy, the SFMTA is assessing the bicycle network in terms of user comfort and prioritizing key routes. This will identify the areas of greatest need for improvement, which will then feed into the development of the capital program.
- » The **Pedestrian Strategy** is a multipronged approach to reducing severe and fatal pedestrian collisions by 50% by 2021. The city is upgrading it's streets to slow drivers and make pedestrians more visible, in part by fixing almost 70 miles of the City's high injury corridors and dozens of intersections identified in WalkFirst. The strategy also includes increasing education, outreach, and targeted police enforcement.

Efforts by the SFMTA are most likely to address physical changes to San Francisco's streets. Some of these features such as traffic islands or bulb-outs can be designed with space for greening; however the actual greening would require a sidewalk landscaping permit from San Francisco Public Works.

PARTNERING WITH SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC WORKS (FORMERLY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS)



Paving projects largely drive the location and schedule for capital improvements along City streets. Prior to repaving is an opportunity to implement additional pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Coordinating design and construction can result in time and budget savings, as well as minimize the disruption of neighborhoods. This idea has been formalized through the Streets Capital Group, which coordinates streetscape improvements among City agencies. The goal of this effort is to identify repaving projects that will begin in the next two

or three years, and identify opportunities to include additional improvements. Community support, the development of a conceptual design, the level of environmental review, and funding availability are key considerations in determining if a repaving project could incorporate additional improvements.

Public Works reviews improvement plans and issues permits for all work in the public right-of-way through its Bureau of Street Use and Mapping. To find out about scheduled work, Public Works has an accessible list on 'ENVISTA'.

FOR MORE INFO:

Envista

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=1718>

Public Works also cleans and maintains the roads. When a non-standard street improvement is constructed, the City requires the maintenance responsibility shifted to the sponsor, or other third party.

PARTNERING WITH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (SFDPH)



The primary goals of the Living Alleys Program— to increase access to open space and create a pedestrian network – is closely aligned with the San Francisco Department of Public Health's (SFDPH) priorities of increasing physical activity, reducing pedestrian injuries, and increasing access to active public spaces. There are several initiatives and projects that could be leveraged

to further these overlapping goals and support implementation of the living alleys.

In December 2012, SFDPH released the San Francisco Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP resulted from a 14-month long community health assessment and outreach process, which engaged more than 160 community residents and health system partners to identify key health priorities for the city. For each key health priority, SFDPH and its partners

identified goals, objectives, and related implementation measures. As SFDPH begins implementing of the CHIP, there are several health priorities and objectives that would mutually benefit SFDPH and the Planning Department in support of implementing living alleys.

FOR THE FULL CHIP REPORT, GO TO:

SF Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/chip/CHIP_FullReport_UPDATED04052013.pdf

Permit Process and Responsibilities

PERMITS

Public Works is the primary permitting department for work associated with streets and alleys. Permits and fees originate from this agency. Here is a list of the current permit types and the associated fees.

SIDEWALK LANDSCAPING

Permits are required for installing planting strips or boxes within the sidewalk right-of-way. For landscape improvements within an existing sidewalk, Public Works has a cost-effective and streamlined process. The website is informative and easy to understand.

PERMIT FEES:

- » **\$245** for an individual
- » **\$211** for 2-4 neighboring properties
- » **\$182** for 5+ neighboring properties (most likely for the alley proposals)

FOR MORE INFO:

Sidewalk Landscaping Permit Application and Approval Process

<http://sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=1350>



STREET TREE PLANTING PERMIT

Required for any new proposed tree (separate from Sidewalk Landscaping Permit).

PERMIT FEES:

There are no fees associated with a tree planting permit at the time of publishing this document. Please check with Public Works for most current information.

FOR MORE INFO:

Street Tree Planting Permitting Process

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=649>



MINOR SIDEWALK ENCROACHMENT PERMIT

Generally required when adding improvements to the sidewalk, but not within the roadway (chairs, lighting, benches, etc.)

PERMIT FEES:

- » **\$1,067.80** for a new application
- » There is no annual assessment fee because the improvements would be for the public.
- » **\$151.58** existing conditions or submittal with Street Improvement Permit

FOR MORE INFO:

Minor Sidewalk Encroachment Permit

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=1189>



MAJOR ENCROACHMENT PERMIT

Required for any improvements within the roadway area. Changing the geometry of the roadway (for example altering the curb lines) or removing on street parking spaces requires a legislative process and inter-departmental review by SFMTA, Public Works, and the Planning Department.

Improvements must be approved by the Board of Supervisors (General Plan Referral)

PERMIT FEES:

- » **\$4,146.14** for a new application (General Plan Referral Fees not included)
- » A yearly assessment fee of \$3.21/S.F. may be charged if a commercial enterprise uses the improvement exclusively. If the improvements are for public use, there would be no fee.
- » **\$191.50** for site inspection before and after installation.

FOR MORE INFO:

Major Encroachment Permits

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=1192>

Also see Major Street Encroachment Permit Single Surface Street process diagram on the following page.



STREET IMPROVEMENT PERMIT

Usually tied to building projects, not likely for the alley improvement project unless associated with an issued building permit.

PERMIT FEES:

- » **\$1,197.58** minimum submittal fee (with Building Permit Application), additional plan review/inspection may be paid upon issuance.
- » **\$642.92** minimum (Notice to Repair)
- » There would be no annual assessment fee if the improvements are for the public.

FOR MORE INFO:

Street Improvement Permit

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=1190>



TEMPORARY STREET CLOSURE

If you or your organization would like to close an alley for a neighborhood block party, street fair, or for a proposed living zone, you must formally apply to the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation (ISCOTT).

PERMIT FEES:

- » **\$177.00** if submitted 60+ days before the event,
- » **\$236.00** is submitted 30-60 days before the event.

FOR MORE INFO:

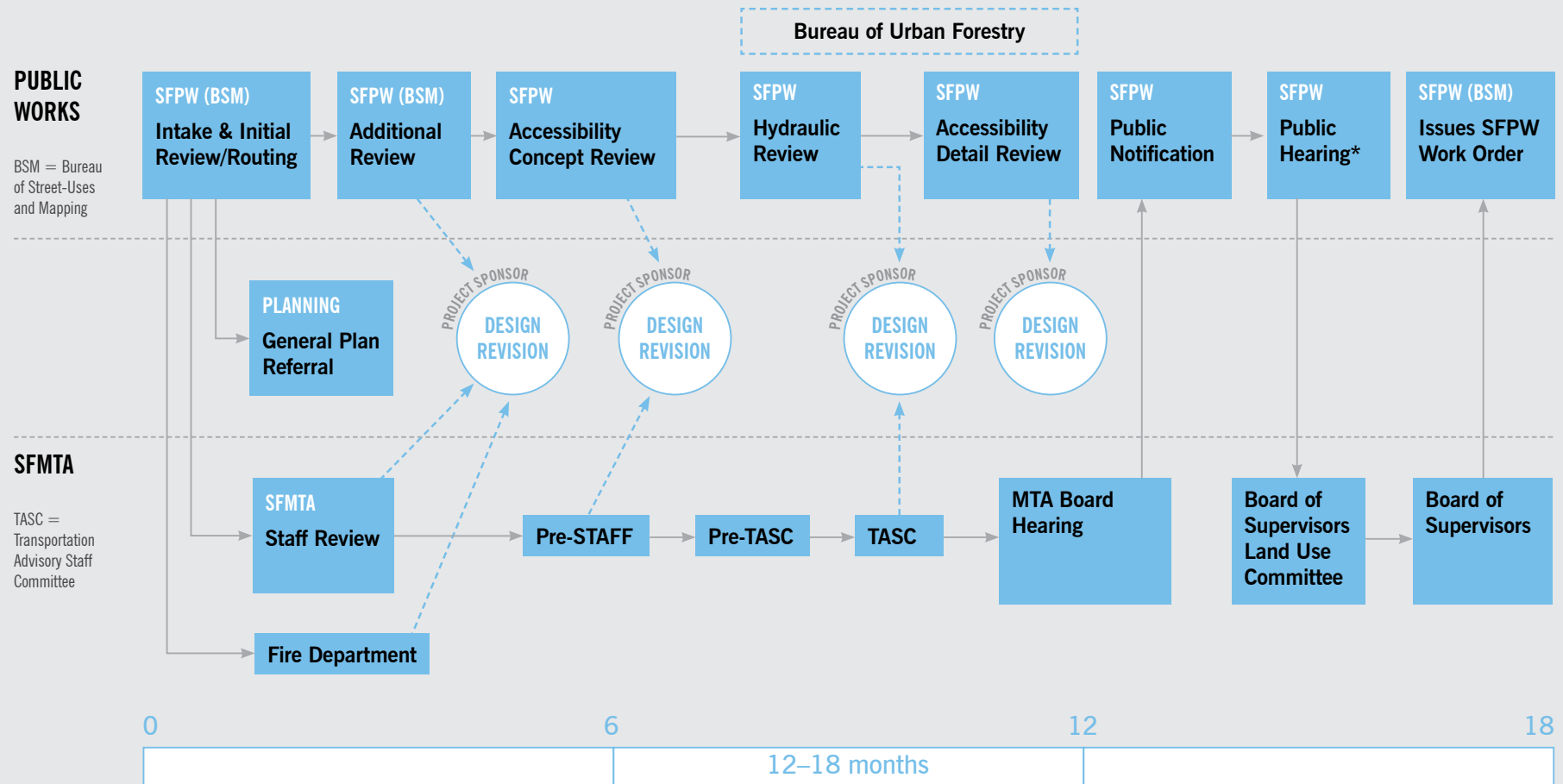
Apply for a Temporary Street Closure - Special Events

<http://www.sfmta.com/services/streets-sidewalks/apply-street-closure>





MAJOR STREET ENCROACHMENT PERMIT SINGLE SURFACE STREET



The Major Street Encroachment Permit covers:

- » Removal of parking
- » Alter/expand sidewalks
- » Repave with single surface
- » Plant trees, add furnishings

INSURANCE

The sponsor will be required to provide evidence of at least \$2M in liability insurance, naming the City and County of San Francisco as additional insured. Most businesses already carry this insurance; please check with your provider. This can be held and maintained by any entity. It is not necessary for unanimous inclusion, or equal representation; that is, owners may opt out, as long as some entity holds a policy that covers the area of the improvement.

MAINTENANCE

If your living alley design requires a major street encroachment, the necessary permit from San Francisco Public Works, please be aware that this will deviate from the acceptable street standards of their Department. As such, the City will require that the project sponsor provide maintenance responsibility. Even the calmest streets can take a lot of wear and tear from various sources: cars and trucks; people and dogs; graffiti; utility repairmen; wind, rain, and time.

Street maintenance encompasses various time cycles: daily; weekly; monthly; and yearly. The following is a partial list of maintenance expectations to account for.

DAILY

- » Pick up of litter, dog waste

WEEKLY

- » Graffiti abatement
- » Watering
- » Street sweeping of litter and other detritus (In cases where a curbless street is created, the city abrogates its street-sweeping responsibilities.)

MONTHLY

- » Replanting
- » Weeding
- » Repair or replacement of features

YEARLY

- » Mulching
- » Tree-pruning and / or re-staking
- » Steam cleaning
- » Repair or replacement of paving, lighting, and other features.

From time to time sewer and water laterals may need to be replaced. When that occurs, repaving to match is the responsibility of the sponsor.

Public utilities also may install, relocate and retrench their lines. They are only obligated to replace with a city approved standard material such as asphalt or concrete.



MAINTENANCE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- » Durable long lasting materials.
- » Modular components may help. For example, patching unit pavers may be easier than patching concrete.
- » Plant material selected with drought tolerance in mind
- » What is the cycle and cost of maintenance for green infrastructure?
- » Stock standard and replaceable materials.
- » SFPUC is responsible for side sewer laterals from the curb line to the main. Delineation of the original curb line will be important to identify these in single surface streets.

The sponsor of a living alley will also be required to sign a maintenance agreement to keep the alley clean and free of graffiti on a daily basis, and to keep all plants in good health. This responsibility can be assumed by any person or entity and is not restricted to the adjacent property owners. A means of ensuring this is to create a plan and an agreement at the inception of the project that asks neighboring property owners to subscribe to a monthly maintenance fee, which may also cover the added insurance cost.

Community Grows is a neighborhood based non-profit that provides environmental education to local youth (5-19). Fostering a green workforce to <http://www.communitygrows.org>.

EXPECTED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Once the community and decision makers are on board with a proposed diversion project, the project must go through environmental review. What level of environmental clearance will be needed depending on the expected impact of a diversionary measure.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW THRESHOLDS FOR TOOLKIT TREATMENTS

The following are environmental review thresholds for road closures (e.g. block-end plazas) and diversionary devices (e.g. intersection islands, super bulbs and diverters) in San Francisco.

1. The road to be closed or diverted has fewer than 300 vehicles per either direction during the peak hour.
2. There is at least one parallel adjacent street that can accept the diverted traffic, and that

parallel street meets both of the following conditions:

- » There is no transit route, or if there is a transit route, transit operates in a transit-only lane;
- » The street has acceptable traffic operations during the peak hour

If the above conditions are met, additional environmental review would not be required because roads that meet these conditions, if closed/diverted, would be unlikely to result in significant impacts.

If these conditions are not met, then a proposed road closure and/or diversion would need to undergo additional environmental review.



APPENDIX



A.1 DIY SURVEY KIT *p. 106*

A.2 SF PUBLIC WORKS COST ESTIMATES *p. 110*

LIVING ALLEY
D.I.Y. SURVEY
#1 PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

ALLEY NAME

BLOCK(S)
(SOUTH/WEST) CROSS STREET

(NORTH/EAST) CROSS STREET

↕

DATE & TIME ☐ WEEKDAY ☐ WEEKEND

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

OBSERVE YOUR ALLEY AND ITS SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD

DENSITY ESTIMATE

W/ AVG. BUILDING STORIES

LOW MEDIUM LARGE

0 2 4 6 8 10+

LAND USE

☐ RESIDENTIAL ☐ MIXED USE

☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ INDUSTRIAL

OTHER LAND USE NOTES: _____

KEY DESTINATIONS ON ALLEY

☐ TRANSIT STOP ☐ SCHOOL

☐ OFFICE ☐ SHOP

☐ OPEN SPACE ☐ RESTAURANT/CAFE

☐ OTHER: _____

TRAFFIC CHARACTERISTICS

OF TRAVEL LANES: _____

OF PARKING LANES: _____

LOCATION OF PARKING LANES: _____

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL: _____

TRAFFIC VOLUME: _____

OTHER

☐ VACANT LOT ☐ ON CONSTRUCTION

☐ PARKING LOT

NOTES

ALLEY DIAGRAM

DRAW & WRITE YOUR FINDINGS FREELY (SEPARATE SECTION FOR SCALED PLAN DRAWING)

ALLEY CONDITION

MEASURE AND COUNT THE FOLLOWING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF THE ALLEY

WIDTH/CLEARANCE	TOTAL R.O.W. WIDTH: _____ ft ROADBED WIDTH: _____ ft SIDEWALK WIDTH: _____ ft / _____ ft CLEAR PATH ON SIDEWALK: _____ ft
LENGTH LOT/FRONTAGE	AVERAGE LENGTH: _____ ft
ENTRIES	TOTAL NUMBER: _____ AVERAGE WIDTH: _____ ft <input type="checkbox"/> RECESSED <input type="checkbox"/> ABOVE GROUND <input type="checkbox"/> BELOW GROUND
CURB CUTS	TOTAL NUMBER: _____ AVERAGE WIDTH: _____ ft
GROUND FLOOR	<div>NUMBER AVG. DEPTH</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> SETBACK: _____ ft</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> PLANTING: _____ ft</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> PARKING: _____ ft</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> BLANK WALL: _____ ft</div>
STREET ELEMENTS	<div>NUMBER (AVG. DIMENSION)</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> STREET TREE: _____</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> PLANTER: _____</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> LIGHTING: _____ (TYPE: _____)</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> ELECTRIC POLE: _____</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> SEATING: _____</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> BIKE RACK: _____</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____</div>
STREET PARKING SPACES	TOTAL NUMBER: _____

ALLEY EXPERIENCE

GRADE BASED ON YOUR PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS DURING THE SURVEY AND EXPLAIN WHY

	BAD	GOOD	NOTES
CONNECTIVITY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ACCESSIBILITY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SAFETY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
AESTHETIC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SUSTAINABILITY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

LIVING ALLEY
D.I.Y. SURVEY
#2 SCREENLINE COUNT

ALLEY NAME

BLOCK(S)
(SOUTH/WEST) CROSS STREET

(NORTH/EAST) CROSS STREET

↕↕

DATE

☐ WEEKDAY

☐ WEEKEND

WEATHER CONDITION

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

TIME IN

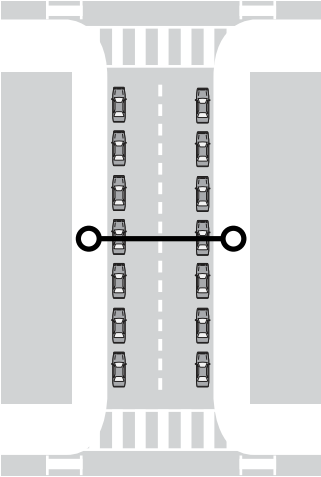
☐

TIME OUT

(FOR EXACTLY 15 MINS)

1 SHEET = 15 MINUTE INTERVAL
4 SHEETS = 1 HOUR

SAMPLE STREET BLOCK



- SCREENLINE: COUNT PEDESTRIANS AND BIKES CROSSING THIS LINE
- STAND FOR 15 MINUTES AT SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BLOCK

NOTES

PEDESTRIANS					SUBTOTAL	TOTAL
		MALE		FEMALE		
DIRECTION OF TRAVEL*	NORTH / EAST					
	SOUTH / WEST					
15 YEARS OLD AND UNDER						≤15
OVER 65 YEARS OLD						65+
ON SIDEWALK						
RUNNING/ JOGGING						
WHEELCHAIR/ SPECIAL NEEDS						

CYCLISTS					SUBTOTAL	TOTAL
		MALE		FEMALE		
DIRECTION OF TRAVEL*	NORTH / EAST					
	SOUTH / WEST					
15 YEARS OLD AND UNDER						≤15
OVER 65 YEARS OLD						65+

VEHICLES					TOTAL	
		CAR		TRUCK/BUS		
DIRECTION OF TRAVEL*	NORTH / EAST					
	SOUTH / WEST					

*MUST ADD UP TO 100% OF SAMPLE

LIVING ALLEY

D.I.Y. SURVEY

#3 STAIONARY ACTIVITY SCAN

ALLEY NAME

BLOCK(S)
(SOUTH/WEST) CROSS STREET

↕

(NORTH/EAST) CROSS STREET

DATE

☐ WEEKDAY

☐ WEEKEND

☀️ ☐ ☁️ ☐ ☔️ ☐ ⚡️ ☐

TIME IN

⌚

☁️ ☐ ☔️ ☐ ⚡️ ☐

TIME OUT

⌚

(NOT A TIMED TASK - SCAN SLOWLY)

PERSON OR OBJECT

MALE

FEMALE

AGE

≤15 YEARS OLD

65+ YEARS OLD

PAIR =2

GROUP ≤3

GROUP ≥3

STANDING

SITTING FORMAL

SITTING INFORMAL

LAYING ON GROUND

CULTURAL

COMMERCIAL

EATING/DRINKING

ELECTRONIC DEVICE

KIDS PLAYING

GARDENING

CHATTING

SMOKING

INTOXICATION

SLEEPING

PANHANDLING

URINE/DEFECATION

PET WASTE

ON BIKE RACK

OTHER

NUISANCES

BIKES

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

TOTAL








SAMPLE STREET BLOCK



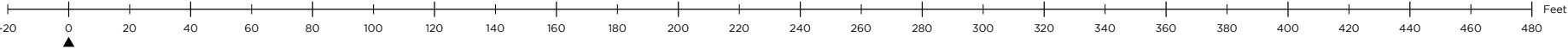
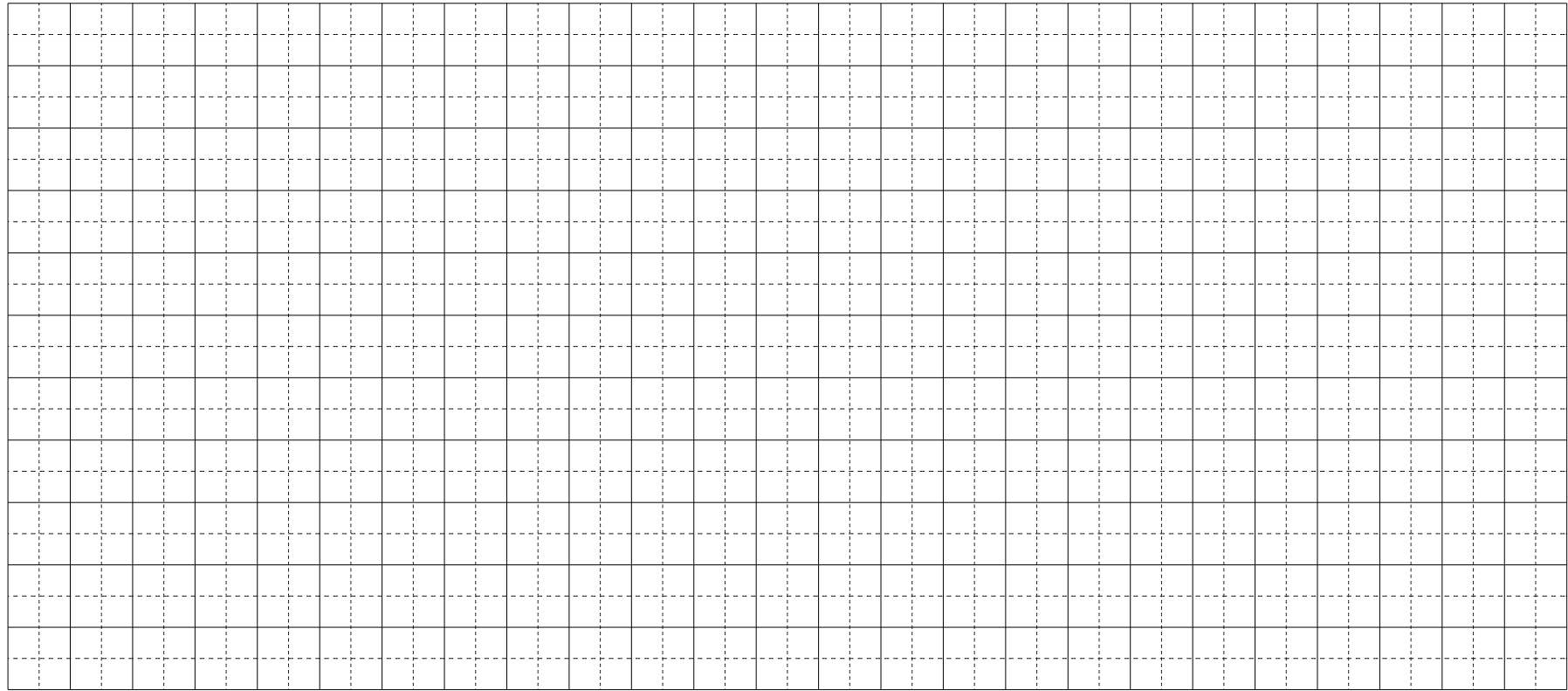
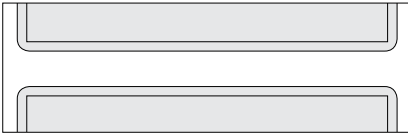
OBSERVATION AREA

ALLEY PLAN TEMPLATE

MEASURE & DRAW THE KEY DIMENSIONS AND ELEMENTS THAT YOU OBSERVED

ALLEY NAME		INSTRUCTIONS	<p>KEY ICONS</p>  Tree Canopy (12ft wide)  Entries  Street Lights  Signage  Curb Cuts  Parked Vehicles  Planters
BLOCK(S)	(SOUTH/WEST) CROSS STREET (NORTH/EAST) CROSS STREET		
DATE & TIME <input type="checkbox"/> WEEKDAY <input type="checkbox"/> WEEKEND			

EXAMPLE



LIVING ALLEY PROJECT

CONCEPTUAL CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATE - FOR INFORMATIONAL USE ONLY

Compiled By: SF Public Works 1/25/2015

Bid Item Description	Estimated Quantity	Unit*	Unit Price	Cost Range Per Unit	Comment
ITEMIZED COSTS					
1. Parking Lane Tree Planting (6'X6')					Cast-in-place concrete curbs/walls
<i>1a.</i> At grade with 6" curb edge	4	EA	\$2,000	\$2,000-5,000	15 Gallon trees without automatic irrigation; cost includes soil prep, backfill, mulch, and tree.
<i>1b.</i> Raised Planter with 16" wall edge	4	EA	\$5,700	\$4,000-8,000	Fronting homeowners responsible for watering and maintenance
2. Sidewalk trees (all flush conditions)					15 Gallon trees without automatic irrigation; cost includes soil prep, backfill, mulch, and tree.
<i>2a.</i> In existing tree pockets	8	EA	\$800	\$500-1,000	Fronting homeowners responsible for watering and maintenance
<i>2b.</i> In new 3'X3' tree pockets	6	EA	\$1,400	\$1,000-2,000	
3. Removable bollards	4	EA	\$6,000	\$4,000-7,000	Stainless steel retractable bollard with lock and key; cost includes concrete footing.
4. Raised crosswalks (both with and without drainage inlets & manholes)					Cast-in-place standard city sidewalk concrete with truncated domes; cost of driveway curb cuts included.
<i>4a.</i> Without drainage	2	EA	\$18,000	\$15,000-20,000	
<i>4b.</i> With drainage considerations	2	EA	\$28,500	\$25,000-30,000	Most likely, raised crosswalk installations will require drainage work.
5. Sidewalk extensions \$/if (bulb-outs that extend into parking lane)	1	EA	\$18,000	\$15,000-20,000	Cast-in-place standard city sidewalk concrete with new standard curbs. Extensions assumed to be 100 SF per bulb-out. Incidental drainage work factored into the cost. Loss of on-street parking requires SFMTA legislation. Street legislation cost (SFMTA) not included.
6. Sidewalk planters (6'X6')					5 Gallon shrubs and 1 Gallon ground cover; cost includes soil prep, backfill and mulch. Cost does not include automatic irrigation.
<i>6a.</i> Flush with sidewalk planters; no curb/wall edges.	4	EA	\$1,600	1,000-2,000	Fronting homeowners responsible for watering and maintenance.
<i>6b.</i> Raised planters with 16" wall edge	4	EA	\$7,000	6,000-8,000	

Bid Item Description		Estimated Quantity	Unit*	Unit Price	Cost Range Per Unit	Comment
7	Pedestrian Lighting					Cost does not include new electrical panel/source; assumes existing panel/source is adequate. If considering new electrical panels, pull boxes, etc, add \$15,000 to unit cost.
<i>7a.</i>	Existing poles remain; only fixtures are removed and replaced with new.	4	EA	\$3,000	2,000-4,000	Cost also does not include new footing; assumes existing footings are adequate.
<i>7b.</i>	Existing poles remain in location but they are removed and replaced with new poles and new fixtures.	4	EA	\$19,400	15,000-20,000	
8.	Seating benches	2	LS	\$7,000	5,000-8,000	Standard wood bench with metal frame; 6' long with three arm-rests; surface mount.
9.	Special Paving (colored concrete and unit pavers over engineered base)					Assumes entire roadway to be repaved per "Single Surface Living Alley" Concept.
<i>9a.</i>	Integrally colored concrete paving 8" depth on base rock	3,500	SF	\$25	25-40	
<i>9b.</i>	Unit pavers (Patricia's Green - Octavia Blvd. type pavers) over 8" depth concrete base	3,500	SF	\$50	30-60	
10.	Bike parking	4	EA	\$3,200	3,000-4,000	Assumes SFMTA standard bike racks surface mounted.
11.	Signalized mid-block crossings with curb ramps at each side	1	LS	\$375,000	300,000-400,000	Cost includes 2 signals, traffic striping, electrical work, signage, and truncated domes. Cost does not include street legislation (SFMTA). Per electrical engineer, electrical work includes vehicle and pedestrian signals, push buttons, controllers, pull boxes, conduit wiring and luminaires.

Note: all costs are installed cost: material plus labor.

Demolition costs are also factored in the cost where applicable.

Permit and code compliance costs are not included as they may vary case by case.



LIVING ALLEYS

MARKET OCTAVIA