



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **San Francisco Planning Launches Public Survey for the Civic Center Public Realm Plan**

*Seeks community input on efforts to create a more welcoming and inclusive public space*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The San Francisco Planning Department has launched a citywide survey seeking community feedback on potential design improvements to the Civic Center area. The survey is a component of the Civic Center Public Realm Plan, a citywide effort to develop a comprehensive, long-term vision for improvements to Civic Center’s plazas, streets, and other public spaces.

The primary goal of the Plan is to develop design and activation strategies that will help make Civic Center a more welcoming and inclusive public space for all San Franciscans. It will develop conceptual designs for Civic Center’s key public spaces – Civic Center Plaza, United Nations Plaza, and Fulton Street between Larkin and Hyde, and envision improvements to surrounding streets through improved pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities and streetscape amenities such as trees, paving and lighting. The project is an interagency effort managed by the San Francisco Planning Department, in partnership with San Francisco Public Works, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, San Francisco Recreation & Parks, San Francisco Real Estate Division, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, San Francisco Arts Commission, and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

“The Planning Department is fully committed and excited to take on a project that will re-think one of the most important spaces in the City,” said John Rahaim, Director of San Francisco Planning. “We’re looking forward to working further with the community to create an inclusive place that is as comfortable for a conversation between friends as it is for a gathering of thousands. The City team understands that the revitalization of Civic Center is not only about a re-design of the Plaza. It will require a range of approaches that also address governance, management, and cultural diversity issues through the area.”

A design team led by CMG Landscape Architecture has been awarded the contract by the City and County of San Francisco. CMG’s design and engagement approach to Civic Center’s public spaces is a community-based process that encourages participation and the sharing of ideas. CMG supports the City’s vision for Civic Center as an inclusive public space and 21<sup>st</sup>-century commons that all San Franciscans are proud of – where civil discourse and social justice are cultivated and where city residents embrace shared governance with compassion and pride. The design team includes Gehl Studio, HR&A, InterEthnica, Kennerly Architecture + Planning, Lotus Water, Structus, M. Lee, JS Nolan, architecture + history, and HRA Engineering.

“We are delighted to assist the City of San Francisco in the creation of a vision for Civic Center. Although each and every place is unique, special places with special attributes can rise to iconic levels and Civic Center is such a place,” said Willett Moss, founding partner of CMG Landscape Architecture.

The Public Realm Plan is part of the City’s larger initiative to improve the Civic Center as both a neighborhood gathering space and a public commons for all San Franciscans. It will build on other coordinated efforts, including the \$10 million Helen Diller Civic Center Playgrounds renovation, and the launch of Street Café, a partnership between San Francisco Recreation & Parks, The Trust for Public Land, Helen Diller Family Foundation, Civic Center Community Benefit District, and Bi-Rite. It will also build on the Civic Center Commons initiative, a collaborative effort that is bringing more positive and inclusive activity to the City’s central civic spaces between Market Street and City Hall through interactive art installations; tables and seating; more frequent free activities; and innovative workforce development partnerships that help make the area clean, safe and welcoming on a daily basis.

“We are proud of our partnerships that have pushed forward with the renovation of the playgrounds and the launch of a street café both at Civic Center Plaza; our efforts have built the momentum for the ongoing transformation of the Plaza,” said Phil Ginsburg, SF Rec & Parks General Manager. “The Public Realm Plan will now help highlight Civic Center Commons not only as the heart of our City but the community hub and neighborhood park that it truly is for the children and families who live in the Civic Center and Tenderloin neighborhoods.”

“We are thrilled to be part of the efforts underway to make Civic Center Commons a safe, welcoming place for everyone who lives, works and visits the heart of the City,” said Todd Rufo, Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. “Activating open space is critical to supporting economic vibrancy. The Public Realm Plan will help infuse these efforts with long-range vision that can make the Commons a powerful symbol for San Francisco’s values and a model for civic spaces around the world.”

The citywide survey is a digital adaptation of content and questions originally shared at the project’s first community workshop held in November 2017, and serves as a first step in the public realm plan design process in seeking community feedback on potential design improvements to the Civic Center area. Open to anyone with an interest in the future of the Civic Center’s public spaces and streets, responses from the survey will be used to help develop design alternatives for many Civic Center streets and public spaces. In spring of 2018, the City will host a second community workshop to share and get feedback on design alternatives.

The Civic Center Public Realm Plan Community Survey, available at [www.civiccentersf.org](http://www.civiccentersf.org), will be open through March 11, 2018. Paper versions and translated surveys are available upon request.

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The **Civic Center Public Realm Plan** will create a unified vision for medium and long-term improvements to Civic Center’s plazas, streets, and other public spaces, and is an interagency effort managed by the San Francisco Planning Department in partnership with multiple City agencies including San Francisco Public Works, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, San Francisco Recreation & Parks, San Francisco Real Estate Division, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, San Francisco Arts Commission, and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. For more information visit: [www.civiccentersf.org](http://www.civiccentersf.org).

**CMG** is a mission-oriented urban design and landscape architecture firm working to increase social and ecological wellbeing through artful design. Founded in San Francisco, at the heart of the practice is the idea of building community. Ultimately, everything we do is predicated on connecting people with each other and with their environments. It is our ambition and passion to design and build vital and sustainable communities and enduring places. We are dedicated to public open space. We believe successful democracies require a vibrant, free, and beautiful public realm – places for people to come together and reinforce relationships and communities. For more information visit: [www.cmgsite.com](http://www.cmgsite.com).

**Helen Diller Civic Center Playgrounds** will reopen on February 14<sup>th</sup> after their \$10 million renovation. The renovation project is a partnership between the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (SF Rec & Parks), The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the Helen Diller Family Foundation. Designed by the award winning San Francisco based firm Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture (ACLA) in partnership with The Trust for Public Land, the new playgrounds are symmetrically aligned with City Hall, and inspired by nature and weather themes. To complement the new playgrounds and activate the adjoining space is the installation of the “*Pole Forest*” and “*KARL*,” the largest interactive floor light display in the country and represents the next generation of integrating public art in public spaces.

**Civic Center Street Café** is the gift expansion generously donated by the Helen Diller Family Foundation to create a street café and central gathering place at Civic Center Plaza. The Street Café to be administered by the Civic Center Community Benefit District (CCCBD), is located at the corner of Grove and Larkin Streets, and will be housed in a new kiosk. The CCCBD selected Bi-Rite to operate the café and will offer a variety of fresh food and drink selections as well as movable tables and seating for the public to relax and enjoy recreational activities at Civic Center Plaza. The Street Café is expected to open in summer, 2018.

The **Civic Center Commons Initiative** is a collaborative effort to breathe new life into the city’s central civic spaces so that people who live, work and visit can celebrate the best of San Francisco every day. Led by the City of San Francisco in partnership with neighbors, community organizations, and cultural institutions, the initiative is transforming Civic Center Plaza, UN Plaza, and Fulton Street between the Main Library and the Asian Art Museum with San Francisco-style attractions such as Living Innovation Zone installations by the Exploratorium and the Asian Art Museum; innovative workforce development partnerships that help keep the area clean and safe while providing jobs for people facing barriers to employment; and frequent free events, recreational activities, and whimsical art installations that are changing how people engage with the space and each other. Major capital investments at Civic Center Plaza and the Civic Center Public Realm Plan’s long-range vision for design improvements will catalyze the continued development of the Commons and help it become a powerful symbol of San Francisco’s inclusive values and a model for public spaces around the world.