

SUMMER 2015

# PLACEMAKING

SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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# From the **Director**

**W**elcome to our first issue of San Francisco Planning's community newsletter: *Placemaking*.



It's not unusual for someone to ask me what the Planning Department does. It's a good question, and one that isn't always easy to answer. I like to say that planners are great generalists, because of the broad range of work with which we are involved.

The title of this newsletter is a good place to start to define who we are and what we do. A great city is not the result of the decisions of a select few, but of everyone who lives and works there. Placemaking is not just improving a city's physical environment. It's a community-driven process of strengthening the connection between us and the shared places in which we all live. It is a constantly

evolving approach to the design and management of a city, building on its strengths and inspired by its possibilities.

Structurally, San Francisco Planning is organized into five divisions, each with technical roles and responsibilities. Ultimately, what makes our work interesting, and important for the City, is how these functions overlap. Whether it's working with our sister agencies to develop policy and long-range plans, reviewing applications for everything from small home additions to high-rises; preserving our historical resources; providing data analysis to the Mayor and Planning Commission; safeguarding the environment or enforcing the code, placemaking is at the heart of it all.

Ultimately, we work to make a great city for everyone. That's what I love most about what we do. It's about everything.

It is my great fortune to oversee what is, in my opinion, the best Planning Department in the country. I'm proud of my staff and our work with other City agencies, our community partners, the Mayor and Board of Supervisors and our Commissioners, who also see a great future for this great city.

Thank you for reading. We hope you find it as informative as well as entertaining.

**John Rahaim**

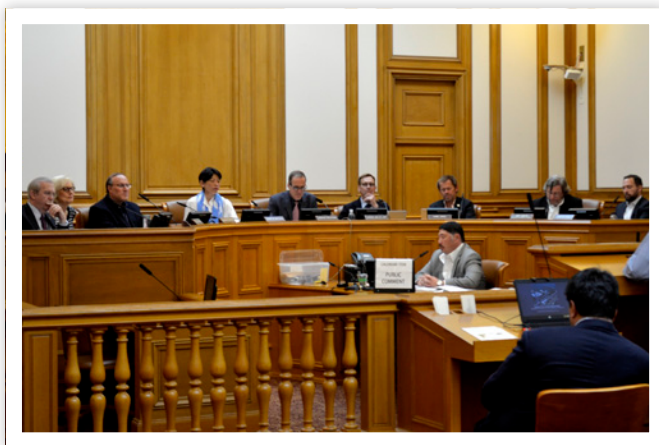
Director, San Francisco Planning

# Role of the Department and the Commissions

Under the direction of the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission, the San Francisco Planning Department plays a central role in guiding the growth and development of the City, making San Francisco the world's most livable urban place – environmentally, economically, socially and culturally.



The [Planning Commission](#) consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor and the President of the Board of Supervisors and then confirmed by the full Board of Supervisors. The Commission advises the Mayor, Board of Supervisors and City departments on San Francisco's long-range goals, policies and programs on a broad array of issues related to land use, transportation and current planning – with specific responsibility for the stewardship and maintenance of [San Francisco's General Plan](#).



The [Historic Preservation Commission](#) consists of seven members nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Board of Supervisors. It is responsible for identifying and designating San Francisco landmarks and buildings in the City's historic districts; as well as providing oversight and advice on the identification and treatment of properties with historic, social or cultural value to San Francisco.

# Planning Department Divisions



## Current Planning Division

Planners in the Current Planning Division help maintain and enhance the physical development of the City. They are responsible for reviewing building permit and land use entitlement applications for compliance with the San Francisco Planning Code, San Francisco's General Plan, and relevant design guidelines.

They also review project applications, implement the historic preservation work program and comprise the "core staff" at the Planning Information Center. Staff also processes all required Neighborhood Notifications.

## Citywide Planning Division

Planners in the Citywide Planning Division develop policy, maintain and oversee compliance with the City's General Plan, prepare and implement community plans, and act as the urban design resource for the City. This division also gathers and analyzes data in support of land-use policy.

Within Citywide Planning are the City Design Group, which provides leadership on urban design and public improvement projects, and the Information and Analysis Group, which provides regular reports and data analysis to the Commission, Board of Supervisors, and public.



## Got permitting questions?

Visit our [Permitting FAQ page](#)





## Administration Division

The Administration Division provides the support and resources to meet the Department's goals. The division includes the Finance Office, where staff oversees all financial, accounting and budget functions, ensures compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) through regular financial reporting, develops the annual work program and financial budget, and manages all aspects of professional services contracts and awarded grants; Human Resources, Operations, and the Office of Analysis and Information Systems (OASIS).

## Environmental Planning Division

Staff in the Environmental Planning Division review projects for potential impacts on the physical environment, a process known as environmental review. Areas of analysis include, but are not limited to: transportation, cultural resources, and air quality. Reviews are conducted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code, which provides guidelines for implementing the CEQA process.



## Zoning Administration and Compliance Division

Planners in the Zoning Administration and Compliance Division maintain and improve the quality of San Francisco's neighborhoods by ensuring compliance with the San Francisco Planning Code. The Code Enforcement Team responds to complaints of alleged Planning Code violations and initiates fair and unbiased enforcement actions to correct violations and maintain neighborhood livability.

**What zoning district do you live in?**

[Click here](#) to find out.





# What Can Planning Do For You?





## Residents and Property Owners:

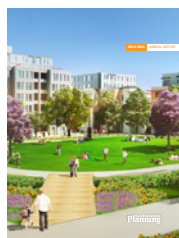
- Explain what can and can't be built on your property
- Give you valuable information about your property, such as zoning regulations, historic information, design review, and entitlement history
- Explain the incentives for owning a historical building
- Review permit applications for your projects
- Explain long-term goals for your neighborhood development

## Business Owners, Developers and Contractors:

- Review building design, permit and land use entitlement applications to verify your project is in compliance with the Planning Code
- Give you valuable information about your property, such as assessments, zoning regulations, historic information, and permit history
- Research the environmental conditions for your proposed projects
- Process and send neighborhood notifications for development and change of use
- Explain long-term goals for land use development

### Want to learn more about a property?

Check out our [Property Information Map](#), the award-winning, user-friendly property information tool for a variety of useful property data, zoning and project information.



### Check out our latest [Annual Report!](#)

# Ask Planning

*Have a question for us?* Ask us at [planningnews@sfgov.org](mailto:planningnews@sfgov.org), [facebook.com/sfplanning](https://facebook.com/sfplanning) or [@sfplanning](https://twitter.com/sfplanning) and look for the answer in the next issue!

## What's the difference between San Francisco Planning and the Department of Building Inspection (DBI)?

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Overall, San Francisco Planning is responsible for regulating the type and scale of land use activities that may take place at a given location. Planning places specific limits on these activities and the overall dimensions of the structures involved through the Planning Code and Zoning Maps.

DBI is responsible for all structural and life safety concerns in the construction, demolition or alteration of buildings, including electrical and plumbing permits, HVAC systems, Title 24 energy standards and handicapped access pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Department of  
Building Inspection  
1660 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
415.558.6088

[sfdbi.org](http://sfdbi.org)  
[dbicustomerservice@sfgov.org](mailto:dbicustomerservice@sfgov.org)

## How do I report a violation or file a complaint?

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Violations related to construction or remodeling taking place without a permit or beyond the scope of an authorized building permit should be referred to DBI at 415.558.6096. Violations of the Planning Code relating to illegal uses, such as possible illegal dwelling units, illegal signage, parking, illegal short-term rentals, or violation of conditional use or variance conditions of approval can be called in to the Planning Information Center at 415.558.6377.

## Can I build a deck at the rear of my house?

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A Building Permit is not required for decks, stairs or landings where no part of the walking surface is more than 30 inches above grade. Any other decks and/or stairs project will require the submittal of a Building Permit Application. Depending on the scope of work and zoning district of your property, your project may be approvable over-the-counter (OTC), or it may require Neighborhood Notification and several accompanying Pre-Application steps.

Visit or call staff at the Planning Information Center (PIC) early in the planning stages of your project.

The PIC is at **1660 Mission Street, 1st floor** and may also be reached by phone at **415.558.6377** or at [pic@sfgov.org](mailto:pic@sfgov.org).

You can also visit our Residential Deck and Stairs page [here](#).

**Are you a business owner and need more information about signage in front of your store?**

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Get all the details [here](#).



# Planning in the News

## 2014 Housing Element

**T**he Housing Element is a required component of the City's [General Plan](#) that provides a policy framework for the City's housing programs working towards meeting the goal of providing sufficient and healthy housing for current and future San Francisco residents. Per the State's Department of Housing and Community Development, the Housing Element must be updated every five years. Since the adoption of the 2009 Housing Element, the City has initiated and completed a number of Housing policy initiatives.

The 2014 Housing Element reflects the City's core housing values, including prioritization of permanently affordable housing; recognition and preservation of neighborhood



character; integration of planning for housing, jobs, transportation and infrastructure; and the City's role as a sustainable model of development. The 2014 Housing Element also builds on the work of the Housing Working Group and the [Mayor's Executive Directive 13-01](#), which requests that City Departments prioritize the construction of affordable housing.

The 2014 Housing Element consists of three components:

- Part 1: Data and Needs Analysis, which contains a description and analysis of San Francisco's

population, household and employment trends, as well as an assessment of existing housing characteristics, and housing needs;

- Part 2: Objectives and Policies, which defines the City's policies and goals related to housing; and
- Implementation, which includes a number of measures to help implement the City's housing-related objectives and policies described in Part 2.

The 2014 Housing Element was signed by the Mayor on March 27, 2015 and became effective on April 27, 2015.

**Watch Housing:  
Where We Are, and  
Where We're Going**



This six-minute video covers topics such as housing construction, job and population growth, market rate vs. below market rate housing, and what the City is doing to build more housing for all San Franciscans. (Posted November 2014)

Watch the video [here](#).

For more information, visit the Housing Element webpage at <http://www.sfplanning.org/housingelementupdate2014>.

### Buildingeye

#### What's happening in your neighborhood?

**S**an Francisco Planning, in collaboration with Buildingeye, a citizen platform specializing in GIS and data visualization, debuted an interactive map with a user-friendly mapping interface to make it easy

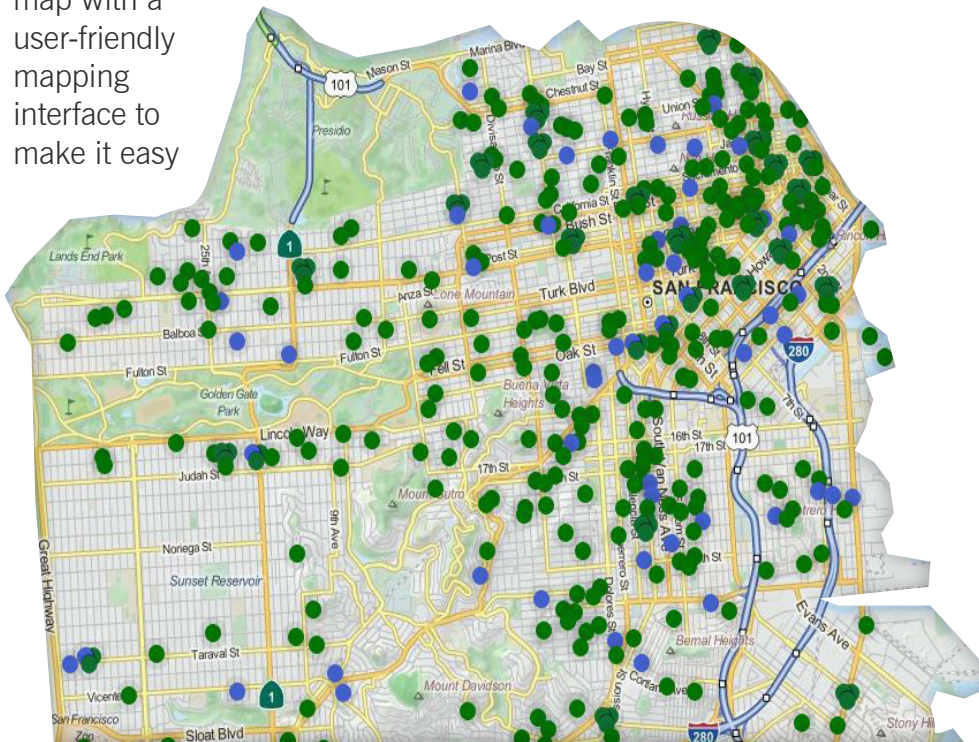
The map can be filtered to search by neighborhood, address or ZIP code, application type and date range. You can also draw your own map.

The planning applications within the search range appear as icons on the map.

that application, its address, reference number, project description, associated planner and their contact details, the status of the project and a link for more details. Information is updated every morning.

Find a separate map specifically for CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) that allows you to set up e-mail alerts once a planning application within a specified area produces a CEQA document [here](#).

A similar map of building permits that are being processed or have been approved by the Department of Building Inspection in the last year can be found [here](#).



to see where new planning applications are being proposed anywhere in the City.

#### How it works

Access the map at <https://sanfrancisco.buildingeye.com>.

Each icon is color coded: blue is a new application currently being processed, and green represents a completed application. Clicking on an icon provides all the information about

Users can set up e-mail alerts when a new planning application is submitted or a project is approved for a particular neighborhood or address.



## Community Business Priority Processing Program (CB3P)

**S**mall businesses are essential to our community. They account for half of the City's employment, help keep dollars local and contribute to the diversity in our neighborhoods that make San Francisco the unique and special place it is today. But the process of starting a new business can often appear overwhelming and time consuming.

The Community Business Priority Processing Program, or CB3P, streamlines the Conditional Use review process for certain small and mid-sized business applications and provides a simplified and efficient system to get you out the door faster and opening your business sooner. Projects that qualify for and enroll in the CB3P are guaranteed a Planning Commission hearing date within

90 days of filing a complete application and placement on the Consent Calendar.

To learn more about the CB3P Program, contact the Planning Information Center (PIC) at **415.558.6378** or [pic@sfgov.org](mailto:pic@sfgov.org)

*\* Certain limitations do apply. CB3P is formerly known as the Small Business Priority Processing Pilot Program (SB4P).*

## San Francisco Planning Wins 2015 In-House Design Excellence Award

**I**ndustry leader Graphic Design USA awarded San Francisco Planning with a 2015 In-House



Design Excellence award for the recently released "Parklet Manual 2.0." This award recognizes creative in-house designers within non-profits, universities and government agencies.

A round of congratulations to Gary Chen, Robin Abad, and Maria deAlva who were responsible for the graphic presentation and the whole Pavement to Parks team!

Download the Manual [here](#).

## Legislative Affairs Team Receives the Livability Award for Public Service

**L**ivable City works to create a balanced transportation system and promote land use that supports a safer, healthier and more accessible San Francisco for everyone. Their annual Livability Awards recognizes innovators, advocates,



Left to right: Supervisor Scott Wiener; Diego Sanchez, Legislative Analyst; AnMarie Rodgers, Senior Policy Advisor; Aaron Starr, Manager of Legislative Affairs and Tom Radulovich, Executive Director, Livable City.

and public servants for their leadership and accomplishments. At this year's Awards, San Francisco Planning's Legislative Affairs Team will be honored with the **Livability Award for Public Service**.

They were recognized for 'their fast, professional analysis and recommendations on every planning law approved by the City, and their work in completing long-needed overhauls of planning regulations, including those for zoning districts, land uses, restaurants, and formula retail.' Congratulations!

### SF Planners at APA

**I**n April, twenty-two of our planners attended the American Planning Association (APA) National Conference in Seattle. APA is a non-profit organization for professional planners committed to making great communities.

During the four-day conference, attendees had the opportunity to learn and share ideas on sustainable environmental planning, technology innovation, and best practices in the field of urban planning. Thirteen of our planners presented at the conference, discussing topics such as creating innovative mixed-use districts, green infrastructure strategies and how shared streets can create safe, active and walkable neighborhoods.









### City Softball Tournament – San Francisco Planners Play Ball!

**O**n Saturday, June 20th, San Francisco planners participated in the Mae Louise Mays 26th Annual SF Foster Youth Fund Softball Tournament. This year, twenty-seven City Department teams participated in the tournament honoring the work of Mae Louise Mays, a former City Social Worker and wife of SF Giant Willie Mays. The tournament is one of the main fundraisers for the SF Youth Fund.

Although the San Francisco Planning team was eliminated from the tournament by one run, the team and the Department broke records off the field by raising more than \$900 for the Foster Youth Fund through donations and raffle tickets.



### Coming This Fall!

#### San Francisco Planning in Your Neighborhood

**T**his fall, we'll host a series of Mobile Workshops throughout San Francisco. A dedicated group of City planners will be on hand to talk about issues specific to your neighborhood, services we offer, and answer questions about codes, permits, design guidelines, home remodeling, and just about anything else! Check back with us soon for a full schedule.





## New Landmarks in SF

**T**his past spring, San Francisco welcomed two new landmark designations.

Built in 1907, the **Swedish American Hall** was designed by master architect August Nordin. Located at 2168-2174 Market Street, the Hall was found significant for its longstanding associations with the City's Swedish and Scandinavian communities and distinctive characteristics of a type, period, superior level of craftsmanship and high artistic values. Since its construction, the building has served as the home of the Swedish Society of San Francisco, established in 1859 and dedicated to the "welfare and kinship of emigrants from Sweden, Norway and Denmark," while also



R.L. Goldberg Building

providing a meeting place for scores of fraternal and social organizations related to San Francisco's Scandinavian community.

The **R.L. Goldberg Building** at 182-198 Gough Street is an exceptional example of an Edwardian era building with Classical influences. Built in 1911 and designed by master architect Bernard J. Joseph, the five-unit building is remarkable for its Classically-inspired ornament and for containing extraordinarily rare, intact storefronts. The building was commissioned by Pulitzer-Prize winning cartoonist, sculptor, author and City native Rueben (Rube) Garrett Lucius Goldberg. 194 Gough Street served as his San Francisco residence and studio, while 186 Gough Street was occupied by his father Max Goldberg, a former San Francisco police commissioner and fire marshal.



Swedish American Hall

## The Second LIZ debuts on Market Street

**I**n June, City leaders and the arts community gathered to celebrate *Studio 1*: the second installation for San Francisco's Living Innovation Zone (LIZ) Program. A LIZ is a temporary installation on Market Street that creatively activates public space and encourages people to connect with each other and their community through innovative real-world demonstration.

*Studio 1* is a public art project, mobile work space and micro residency center. The 65-square-foot "off the grid" solar powered art studio was built with reclaimed materials on the back of a flatbed trailer by artist and designer David Szlasa. The *Studio 1* installation features resident artists representing a variety



Credit: Photo by Robbie Sweeny



Left to right: Artist David Szlasa Supervisor Jane Kim, and Planning Director John Rahaim

of mediums. You can find more information on *Studio 1* and the LIZ on the Living Innovation Zone's [website](#).

The completion of *Studio 1* was a collaborative effort with San Francisco Planning, San Francisco Arts Commission, San Francisco Public Works, Mayor's Office of Civic Innovation, Tenth and Market LLC (NEMA), The Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) and Civic Center Community Benefit District.

**Want to attend one of our upcoming events? [Sign up for our Planning Event Roundup!](#)**

# Central SoMa Plan –

*We all know that the Bay Area's population is growing at a rapid rate. State, regional, and local policies all support positioning new development in areas served by public transit. The housing and employment markets are also seeking to place much of this growth in walkable, accessible, and lively neighborhoods.*



# Next Steps



**T**hese factors have created a significant demand for growth in the central part of the City's South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood, which bridges the Financial District to the burgeoning activity center of Mission Bay. SoMa includes a wide range of buildings and land uses and centers one of the best transportation networks in the Bay Area. It is also internationally renowned for its funky mix of uses and diverse social and physical environment, including many old warehouse buildings that can be repurposed for today's needs. The neighborhood also includes a substantial amount of underutilized buildings and lots, narrow sidewalks and

unsafe streets, and a lack of open space.

In 2011, the Planning Department began the process to develop and implement a vision for the southern portion of the Central Subway rail corridor in the vicinity of 4th Street between Townsend and Market Streets. This



Central SoMa Community Meeting In March 2015

“Central SoMa” Plan will be a comprehensive strategy to address such issues as land use for jobs and housing, improving transportation, designing open space, preserving historic buildings and the neighborhood's environmental sustainability.

The Central SoMa Plan is based on analysis of long-range regional, citywide, and neighborhood needs and feedback from dozens of community meetings involving hundreds of stakeholders.

Over 200 attendees have participated in the two public open houses events within the past six months, and many more participated in Plan-specific meetings hosted by community groups and by directly engaging with the Planning Department's staff. For the remainder of the year, the Department will focus on



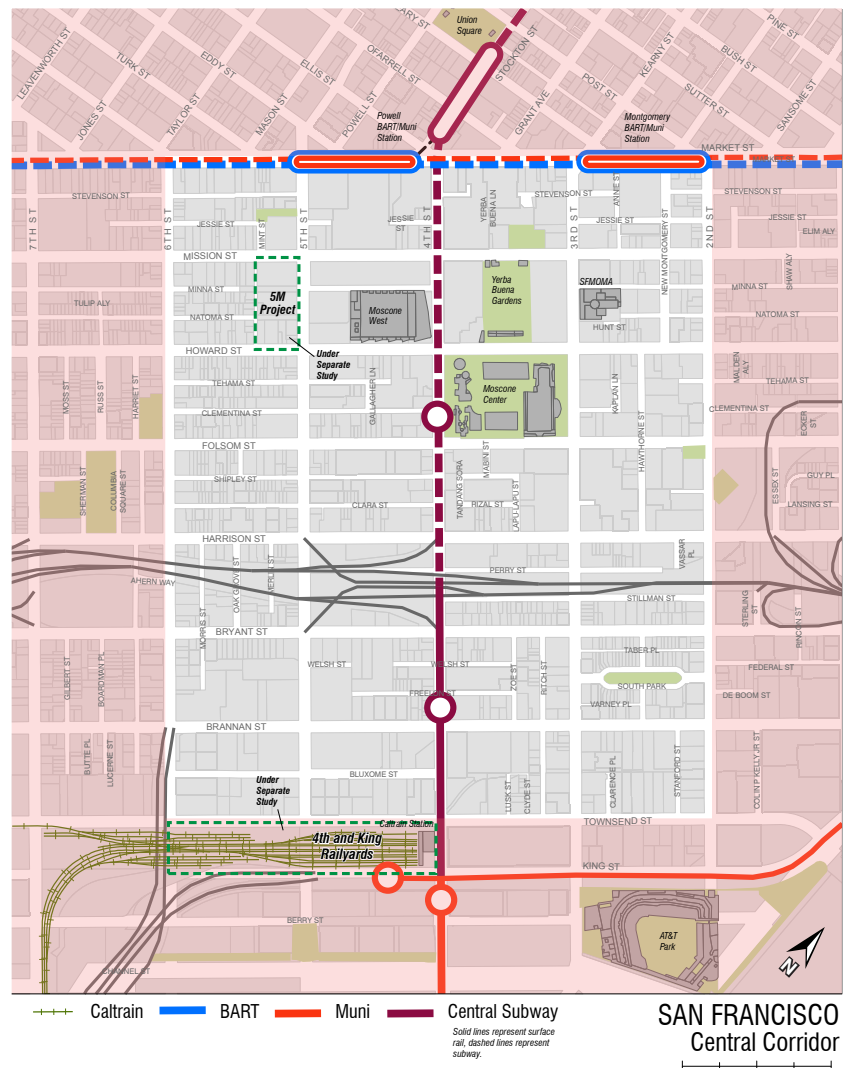




Credit: Joel Kabahit, "Spring day at Yerba Buena Gardens" March 27, 2009 via Flickr. Creative Commons Attribution

continuing to refine the Plan's policy proposals, further outreach and conversation with the community, and on completing the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

For more information, visit our [Central SoMa page](#). To receive updates on the Draft Plan or the Draft EIR for the Plan, sign up [here](#) for electronic e-mail updates.











# Urban Forest Plan

*Approximately 105,000 trees grow along San Francisco's streets. Trees improve our overall environment and quality of life by greening our neighborhoods, removing carbon from the atmosphere, protecting water quality and providing habitat for wildlife. Simply put, the City's street trees make San Francisco a better place to live.*



### Phase 1: Street Trees

**O**n February 20th, 2015, Mayor Ed Lee signed legislation sponsored by Supervisor Scott Wiener to officially adopt the first phase of the **Urban Forest Master Plan**, San Francisco's long-term vision to improve the well-being and sustainability of the City's street trees. In developing Phase 1, San Francisco Planning worked in collaboration with the Department of Public Works, the Urban Forestry Council and Friends of the Urban Forest to identify strategies to protect and expand San Francisco's street tree population.

A decline in maintenance funding has restricted the City's ability to plant and properly care for street trees. As a result, maintenance responsibility is increasingly being shifted to private property owners, presenting significant upkeep challenges and putting the urban forest at risk of neglect and damage. A key recommendation from the Plan is to identify long-term funding for street tree maintenance. Ending the practice of holding property owners responsible and creating a municipally managed and operated street tree program will ensure proper

care and protection. Supervisor Wiener has established a working group to identify possible funding opportunities through an Urban Forest Fund.

Additional recommendations from Phase 1 include maximizing the environmental and public health benefits of street trees, planting 50,000 new trees over the next 20 years, and developing a life-cycle approach to street tree management including a street tree nursery and urban wood re-use program.

As part of the Plan's implementation, a Citywide [Street Tree Census](#) is set to begin this summer. For the first time, the City will conduct an inventory of every street tree in San Francisco. Information on age, location, species type and condition will be collected for the city's 105,000 street trees. Census results will inform ongoing management and increase public awareness about the benefits of trees and types of trees growing throughout San Francisco.

For more information, visit: <http://urbanforest.sfplanning.org>



**What's your favorite kind of tree in San Francisco?**

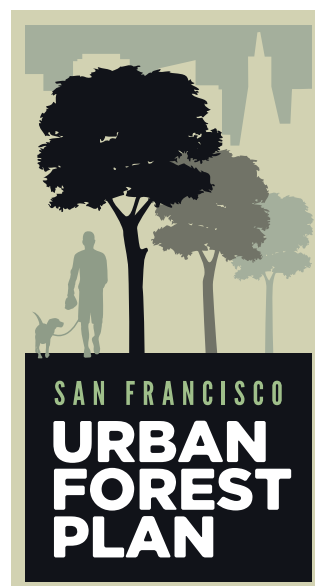
**Let us know at:**

[planningnews@sfgov.org](mailto:planningnews@sfgov.org)

[facebook.com/sfplanning](https://www.facebook.com/sfplanning)

[@sfplanning](https://www.instagram.com/sfplanning)

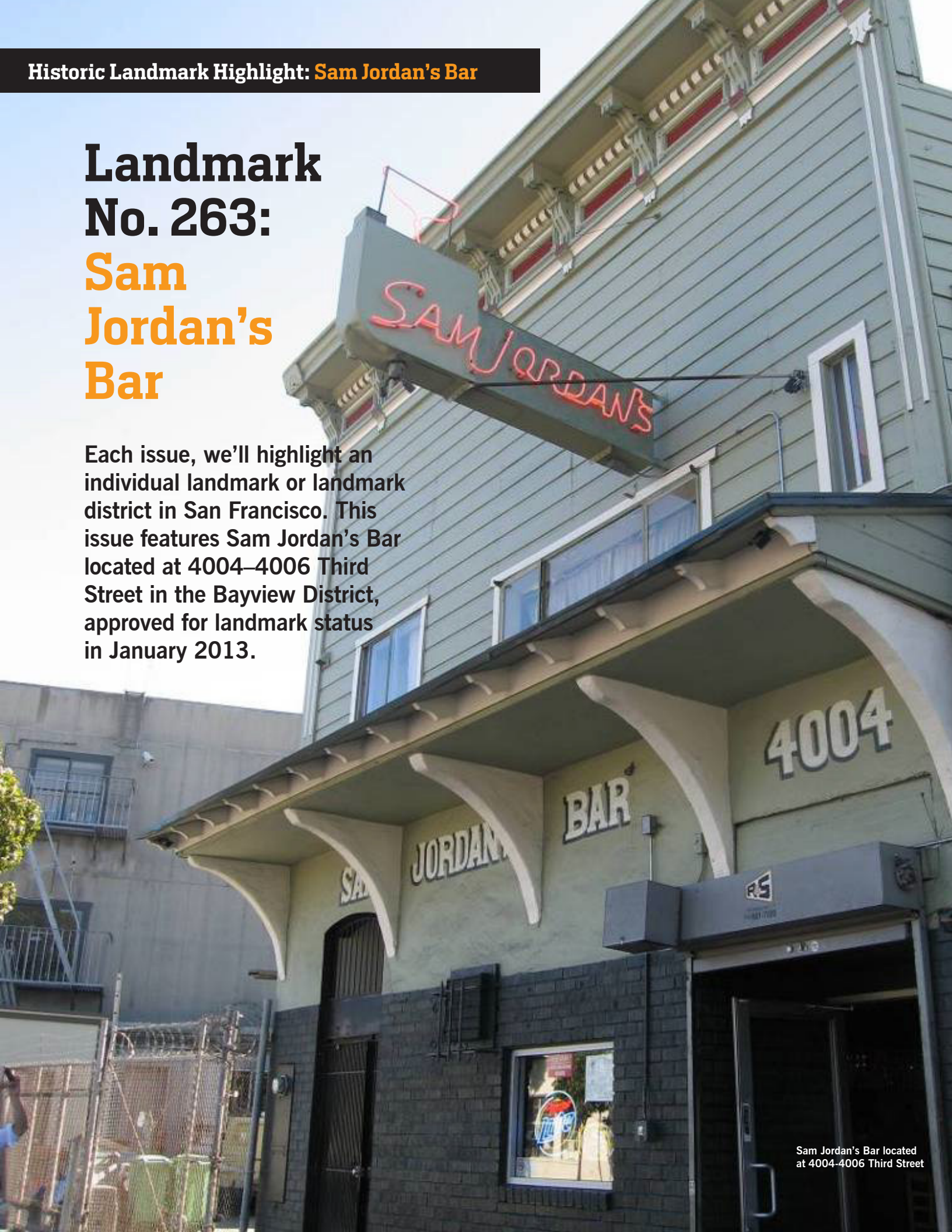






# Landmark No. 263: **Sam Jordan's Bar**

Each issue, we'll highlight an individual landmark or landmark district in San Francisco. This issue features Sam Jordan's Bar located at 4004–4006 Third Street in the Bayview District, approved for landmark status in January 2013.







Ruth Jordan, Sam's wife, is seated third from the right.

**S**am Jordan's Bar is the oldest African American Bar in San Francisco. The late Sam Jordan was an African American Navy veteran who arrived in San Francisco directly after World War II. After years as a longshoreman and light-heavyweight boxer (he won the championship diamond belt in 1948), he purchased the property in 1958, renovated it, and reopened it in 1959. Known for his community-minded spirit, Sam Jordan's Bar was known as a gathering place for the neighborhood's African American working class. Over the years, activities ranging from scholarship drives and concerts highlighting local musicians to African American businessmen's luncheons and political brainstorming sessions took place there, strengthening the community fabric of the Bayview neighborhood.

Mr. Jordan died in 2003, but the property continues to be owned and operated by the Jordan family and maintains many of the traditions that Sam Jordan supported.

### Learn more about Sam Jordan!

Download the Landmark Designation Report [here](#).

Learn more about SF Planning's Historic Preservation program [here](#).

San Francisco's Historic Preservation Program has been helping preserve the City's history since 1967. Architectural treasures, monuments to historic events and specific locations associated with cultural and social movements that contribute to San Francisco's unique history and identity are irreplaceable assets that must be protected. In 2011, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) adopted its Landmark Designation Work Program to protect and enhance San Francisco's cultural resources.



Sam Jordan in his boxing portrait for the Golden Gloves League, 1949.

# Day in the Life with Sarah Jones

**S**arah Bernstein Jones has been with San Francisco Planning since 2006 and became Director of Environmental Planning and Environmental Review Officer in March 2013. She has a BA in Urban Studies from Stanford University and a Master's in City Planning from UC Berkeley. She lives in Cole Valley with her husband, two children, dog Danny and cats Pepper and Tito.

## **What inspired you to go into environmental planning?**

Before I came to the San Francisco Planning Department, I did a variety of planning work – mainly environmental and current planning, with a little long-range planning thrown in. The SF Planning Department is unusual in having a division solely dedicated to CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) review. The Environmental Planning Division is the best place to see the full range of activity happening in San Francisco. I think my broader background and strong foundation in planning makes me better able to apply CEQA in a workable and useful way.

## **What is a typical day like for you?**

A lot of talking! I have a dual role – I'm head of a major

division of the Planning Department, and I'm also the City's Environmental Review Officer, so I'm the "decider" as to how we implement State law in San Francisco. In terms of CEQA administration, I read every single CEQA determination that I sign – they are often quite interesting! I give guidance to staff, project sponsors, and City officials on how to comply with CEQA. I spend a lot of time working with the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor's Office, and agencies and individuals outside the City. I coordinate closely with my management team; I have a terrific group of managers and would be completely lost without their hard work and good advice!

## **What is the most rewarding part about your job? Most challenging?**

The most rewarding part of my job is that I'm in a position to improve things such as development projects and Department procedures. Equally rewarding is seeing my staff grow personally and professionally. It is so exciting to see a planner take on a new challenge and shine.

I guess the most challenging part of the position is dealing with the fact that people always want environmental review to go faster and cost less than it does. I find this

especially frustrating, because we truly need time to do the work correctly. CEQA provides an opportunity to be a part of so many different types of projects, but it's a challenge because a lot of people look to environmental review to do things that it's not designed or even allowed to do, so you end up with many parties unhappy with the process, the outcome, or both.

## **What are you most looking forward to in the next year?**

Level of Service reform! The State is in the process of changing its standards of review for traffic impacts. This will result in a more accurate measuring of the impacts of car use as well as better tools to support all modes of transportation. Also, we have a terrific department, so I'm looking forward to what I have enjoyed for the last nine years here – working with a lot of smart and fun people every day, doing our best on behalf of San Francisco.

## **What advice do you have for someone who is interested in urban planning as a career?**

Get exposed to as much of the planning field as possible before taking yourself down one path. Exposure to one side of planning will only make you better at the other parts. We have a wonderful profession



and there are so many ways to contribute!

**What is your favorite San Francisco building or landmark?**

I love the Ferry Building. The Bay setting is beautiful and energizing, the building itself is a treat for the eyes, and the farmers market is a great way to sample the most cutting edge of diet-busters.

I also love Buena Vista Park. I walk through it on my way to work and I walk my dog there. Physically and in spirit, it feels like the apex of the clash between order and chaos that is San Francisco.

**How do you spend your free time outside the office?**

I like to knit – a lot – and I like to hang out with my husband and two teenage kids.

**What is the last book you read?**

For some reason I have a particular affinity for historical fiction set in World War II. I just finished *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, which is one of those books that manages to be both very funny and deeply sad, usually on the same page (and sometimes in the same paragraph).





# Planner-ease Decoded: PLACEMAKING

**E**ach issue, we'll define a word or phrase commonly used by urban planners that might not be so familiar to everybody else. For our first issue, we define not just a common word in the world of Planning, but also the title of our newsletter: **Placemaking**.

## What makes a place great?

Great public places work well. They provide a healthy setting for people to live, work, play, learn, celebrate, inspire and support one another. They are places where people are invested in their communities. Basically, great public places are places where people want to be.

Placemaking is improving a community's physical environment through better streets, sidewalks, landscaping, public art, buildings and parks to create public places that encourage neighborhood interaction, civic engagement, supporting local businesses, and promote all methods of non-motorized transportation, helping connect people to each other and to the space around them.

**Placemaking** is not just the act of improving our physical surroundings; it's also a strategic process. It involves engaging all facets of the community – public, non-profit and private – to collaborate by building on its collective strengths while addressing its needs. Motivated both by what the community values most and by what it aspires to be, information and ideas form a common goal, vision, strategy and then action to promote health, happiness, public engagement and well-being.

What makes a place great to you?

Let us know at:

[planningnews@sfgov.org](mailto:planningnews@sfgov.org)

[@sfplanning](https://facebook.com/sfplanning)

[@sfplanning](https://facebook.com/sfplanning)





Reville Parklet, 100 Columbus

Credit: Photo by Sam Heller

## Placemaking: San Francisco Pavement to Parks Program

**S**an Francisco's Pavement to Parks Program was initiated in 2010 with a number of experimental projects that demonstrated new ways of creating public space in our neighborhoods. These projects included 'pedestrian plazas,' created by closing redundant areas of street intersections; and 'parklets,' which convert two or three curbside parking spaces to expand the sidewalk and provide seating, greenery, bicycle facilities, and public art. The projects have proven overwhelmingly popular, with over fifty community-generated, grassroots parklet projects emerging in over twenty different neighborhoods across the City. Six pedestrian plazas have been created, with requests for more in other neighborhoods.

Pavement to Parks has also led the early incubation of urban

prototyping, including mobile 'street stages,' bicycle corrals, and even a mobile parklet! This summer, Pavement to Parks is launching the "Urban Prototyping Exchange," a platform for connecting prototype innovators with communities who are interested in implementing prototype ideas in their own neighborhoods.

Looking to the future, Pavement to Parks is focusing on projects that increase pedestrian safety, equity of open space across the City, and enhanced community engagement by emphasizing partnerships in higher-need and higher-risk communities. Recent collaborations with art, technology, youth, and educational institutions highlight an expanded frontier for delivering meaningful places to diverse neighborhoods.



Credit: Photo by Stella Kim

**Since San Francisco's five pilot parklets in 2010, over fifty parklets have been installed across twenty different neighborhoods.**

***Which is your favorite, and why?***

**Let us know at:**

[planningnews@sfgov.org](mailto:planningnews@sfgov.org)  
[facebook.com/sfplanning](https://facebook.com/sfplanning)  
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# KID'S Page

The Polk Streetscape Project will create a new street design for Polk Street all the way from McAllister to Union. Brighter lights, more plants and trees, safer crosswalks and public art will make Polk Street better for everyone!

The Polk Complete Street project will bring many changes to Polk Street.

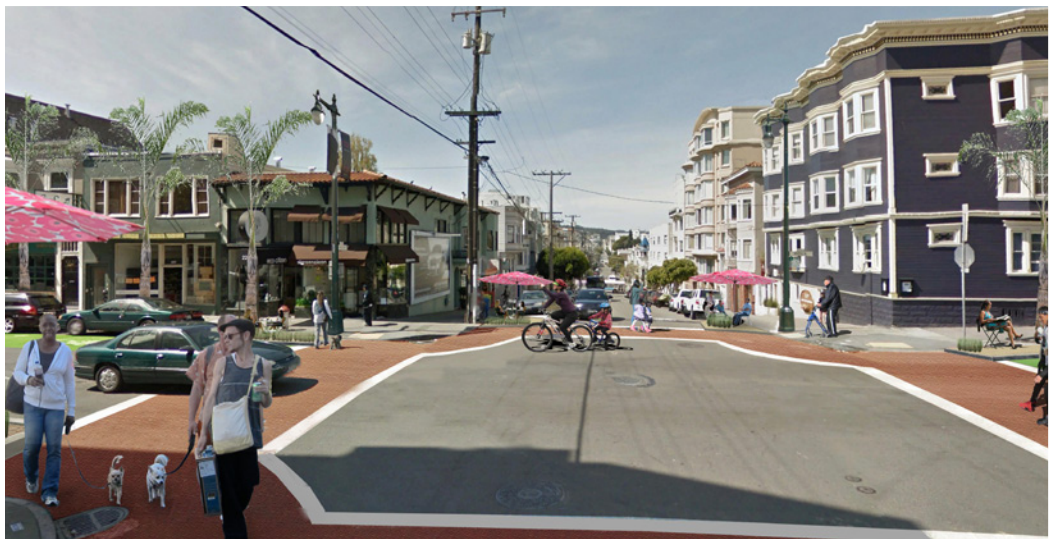
*How many differences can you see in the before and after photos?*

## Polk and Green Street

### BEFORE



### AFTER





## POLK

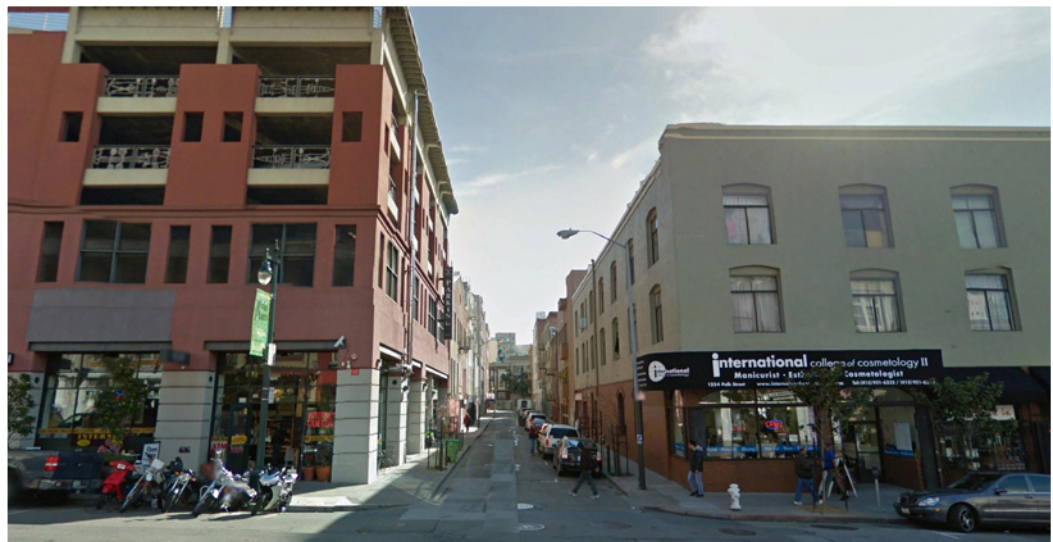
STREETSCAPE DESIGN

The Polk Streetscape Project is an interagency effort of the Planning Department, the San Francisco Department of Public Works, and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). Funds from the Road Repaving and Streets Safety Bond, passed by voters in 2011, have been allocated toward the planning and construction of Polk Street from McAllister to Union.

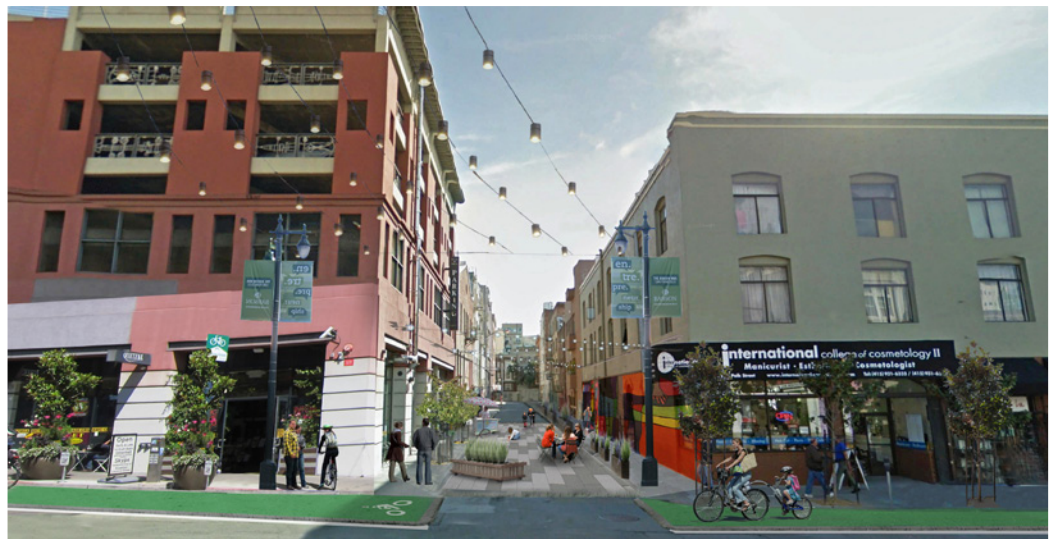
Learn more [here](#).

### Polk and Fern Alley

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



*Renderings are for illustrative conceptual purposes only. They are not representative of actual detailed design materials or locations.*





**San Francisco Planning**  
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San Francisco Alley on Commercial Street  
between Leisdorff and Sansome Streets