SAN FRANCISCO PLAZAS
PUBLIC LIFE STUDY
FOUR PARAMETERS OF GREAT PUBLIC SPACES

1. WELL-USED & LIVELY
2. DRAW USERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
3. SUPPORT VARIOUS USES, ESPECIALLY SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES
4. PERCEIVED POSITIVELY BY THEIR USERS
INTRODUCTION & METHODS
INTRODUCTION

PAVEMENT TO PARKS

PROJECT TYPES

**PLAZAS**
Reclaiming the roadway

*A neighborhood venue for events and programs*

**PARKLETS**
Rethinking the parking lane

*Augmented sidewalk space and seating*

**NEW PROTOTYPES**
Mobile and event-based elements

*Exploring ideas to activate and re-imagine public spaces*
INTRODUCTION

PAVEMENT TO PARKS
PROJECTS ON THE GROUND

**PLAZAS**
- 7 Pavement to Parks Plazas:
  - 4 in demonstration phase
  - 3 becoming permanent
  - 2 now permanent plazas

**PARKLETS**
- 5 RFP cycles
- 60+ installed
- 15+ in design and permitting

**NEW PROTOTYPES**
- 1 Portable Bicycle Corral
- 1 Portable Parklet
- 7 Parkmobiles
- 2 Street Stages
SUMMER 2015 PUBLIC LIFE STUDY

• Launched a citywide survey of plazas in Summer 2015 as part of internship

• Survey included six public plazas in San Francisco, all which align close to the main corridor of Market Street.
  
  - Pavement to Parks projects: Jane Warner Plaza and Annie Street Plaza

• Sites were carefully chosen to look across different contexts of San Francisco and for their distinctive typologies.
  
  - Setting (downtown vs. neighborhood)
  - Location within public realm
  - Street types and transformations
  - Management structures
  - Presence of movable furniture
**SF PLANNING’S PUBLIC LIFE STUDY INSTRUMENTS**

**STATIONARY ACTIVITY MAPPING**
For approx. 5 min, 2x/hour, 4x/shift

**PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE SCREENLINE COUNTS**
For approx. 10 min on each side of surrounding block, 1x/hour, 2x/shift

**PLAZA USER INTERCEPT SURVEYS**
No. of responses vary per plaza depending on circumstances
6 PLAZAS
Studied 1 weekday (Tues or Wed) and 1 weekend (Sat) in July 2015, 12-2 P.M. and 5-7 P.M.

48 HOURS OF FIELD WORK

75+ PLAZA USERS INTERVIEWED

1,000+ PLAZA USERS OBSERVED

10,000+ BLOCK PEDESTRIANS & CYCLISTS COUNTED
2

PLAZA PROFILES
NEIGHBORHOOD SETTING PLAZAS

JANE WARNER PLAZA

Neighborhood
The Castro

Size (Approx.)
9,760 sq. ft.

Site Background
Originally a large turning area for F-line streetcar. Plaza made permanent in 2014 after several experimental phases installed by Pavement to Parks.

Features
• Movable chairs and tables
• Trees
• Planters

Designer
San Francisco Public Works (Permanent Plaza)
Boor Bridges Architecture (Phase 2)
Public Architecture (Phase 1)

Management & Maintenance
Castro Community Benefits District
Orphan Andy’s

LINDEN ALLEY

Neighborhood
Hayes Valley

Size (Approx.)
2,960 sq. ft.

Site Background
Not a fully pedestrian space like the other sites, but functions like a plaza by providing gathering space. Opened in 2010.

Features
• Fixed benches
• Curbside seating
• Trees and planting

Designer
Winslow Architecture & Design

Management & Maintenance
Community members and adjacent property owners

MCCOPPIN HUB PLAZA

Neighborhood
Mission District

Size (Approx.)
4,790 sq. ft.

Site Background
Originally a dead end street space; went through trials of activation with food trucks, which inspired the current design. Opened in 2014.

Features
• Fixed seating (10)
• Trees
• Planters
• Lighting
• Art piece

Designer
Boor Bridges Architecture (Design)
San Francisco Public Works (Construction)

Management & Maintenance
San Francisco Public Works
PLAZA PROFILES

JANE WARNER PLAZA
Source: San Francisco Public Works

LINDEN ALLEY
Source: Winslow Architecture & Design

MCCOPPIN HUB PLAZA
Source: San Francisco Public Works

*Images not at same scale
PLAZA PROFILES

DOWNTOWN SETTING PLAZAS

MINT PLAZA

Neighborhood
South of Market

Size (Approx.)
17,900 sq. ft.

Site Background
Originally a vehicle right-of-way; became pedestrianized and opened in 2009.

Features
- Movable chairs
- Fixed benches
- Planted pergola
- Trees
- Planters
- Private tables and chairs
- Lighting

Features
CMG Landscape Architecture

Management & Maintenance
Friends of Mint Plaza

ANNIE STREET PLAZA

Neighborhood
South of Market

Size (Approx.)
2,000 sq. ft.

Site Background
Originally a vehicle right-of-way. Temporary plaza created through Pavement to Parks Program in 2014.

Features
- Movable chairs and tables
- Fixed benches
- Hanging planters

Features
CMG Landscape Architecture

Management & Maintenance
Yerba Buena Community Benefits District

MECHANICS MONUMENT PLAZA

Neighborhood
Financial District

Size (Approx.)
4,660 sq. ft.

Site Background
Oldest plaza of the sites. Originally had bench seating; redesigned in 2014.

Features
- Movable chairs and tables
- Charging station
- Counter tops (3)
- Fixed seats (3)
- Mechanics Monument, with steps
- Trees and planting

Features
San Francisco Public Works

Management & Maintenance
San Francisco Public Works
MINT PLAZA
Source: CMG Landscape Architecture

MECHANICS MONUMENT PLAZA
Source: San Francisco Public Works

ANNIE STREET PLAZA
Source: Winslow Architecture & Design

*Images not at same scale
PLAZA CONTEXT

SURROUNDING LAND USE

Displayed with a 1/2-mi buffer around each plaza

Data Source: San Francisco Planning Department
PLAZA CONTEXT

SURROUNDING DEMOGRAPHICS

Selected U.S. Census information surrounding the plaza, compared to the other plaza areas.

Plaza Area data based on Census Tracts in which the centroid of the Tract falls within 1/2-mi of the plaza.

Data Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate, 2014 Survey
STUDY FINDINGS
PARAMETER 1. WELL-USED & LIVELY

PLAZA USERS TOTAL VOLUMES

Aggregated, by Plaza

12-2 P.M.
5-7 P.M.

FRIDAY 10 JUNE, 2016 | SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT
STUDY FINDINGS

PARAMETER 1. WELL-USED & LIVELY
COMPARING USAGE ACROSS PLAZAS, AT PEAK USAGE

Number of Users, Weekday 12-1 P.M.

Number of Users, Weekend 12-1 P.M.
PARAMETER 1. WELL-USED & LIVELY
COMPARING USAGE ACROSS PLAZAS, AT PEAK USAGE

Number of Users Per 1,000 Sq Ft, Weekday 12-1 P.M.

Number of Users Per 1,000 Sq Ft, Weekend 12-1 P.M.
PARAMETER 1. WELL-USED & LIVELY
BLOCK PEDESTRIANS TOTAL VOLUMES

Aggregated, by Plaza

when comparing these volumes to usage...

Pedestrian Block Volume vs. Plaza
User Volume, Aggregated
PARAMETER 1. WELL-USED & LIVELY
LAND USE WITHIN 1/4-MI OF PLAZAS

Data Source: San Francisco Planning Department
PARAMETER 1. WELL-USED & LIVELY
USAGE PATTERNS RELATE TO:

PEDESTRIAN VOLUME TRENDS

- Decrease in pedestrian volumes on weekends (-23%)
- Increase in pedestrian volumes on weekends (+41%)

LAND USE MIX

- Vacant/missing
- Office
- Residential
- Mixed (w/o resid)
- Mixed (w/ resid)
- Retail/entertain.
- Open space/public
- Other

AVAILABILITY OF MOVABLE SEATING

Pedestrian Volume Differences from Weekday to Weekend
Total volumes over 12-2 PM, 5-7 PM

Land Use Within 1/4-mi. of Plazas
Data Source: San Francisco Planning Department
### Study Findings

**Parameter 2: Draw Users from the Local Community**

**User Profiles**

**User Residences**
- Most survey respondents live in San Francisco, or at least in the Bay Area.

**Gender Balance**
- 32% Females
- 68% Males
- Females are significantly underrepresented in plazas.

**Age Balance**
- More children and seniors observed in plazas than on adjacent blocks.

**Other Findings**
- 77% live in San Francisco
- 68% walked or biked to plaza
- 52% arrived in less than 10 minutes

**Plazas vs. Adjacent Blocks vs. Neighborhood**

**San Francisco**
- 49%

**Plazas**
- 16%

**Adjacent Blocks to Plazas**
- 77%

**Neighborhood**
- 49%

**VS.**

**San Francisco**
- 49%

**Adjacent Blocks to Plazas**
- 16%

**Neighborhood**
- 16%
PARAMETER 2. DRAW USERS FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
HOW OFTEN & WHY DO THESE USERS VISIT?

FREQUENCY OF VISIT
Aggregated, all Plazas

- Daily: 24%
- Weekly: 15%
- Monthly: 14%
- Very Rarely: 17%
- First Time: 4%
- No Response: 26%

By Plaza:
- Jane Warner Plaza: 2 (Daily), 3 (Weekly), 4 (Monthly), 3 (Very Rarely), 1 (First Time), 1 (No Response)
- McCoppin Hub Plaza: 4 (Daily), 2 (Weekly), 2 (Monthly), 3 (Very Rarely), 1 (First Time), 1 (No Response)
- Linden Alley: 7 (Daily), 1 (Weekly), 9 (Monthly), 1 (Very Rarely), 2 (First Time), 1 (No Response)
- Mint Plaza: 3 (Daily), 2 (Weekly), 5 (Monthly), 2 (Very Rarely), 2 (First Time), 3 (No Response)
- Annie Street Plaza: 1 (Daily), 1 (Weekly), 2 (Monthly), 1 (Very Rarely), 1 (First Time), 5 (No Response)
- Mechanics Monument Plaza: 2 (Daily), 3 (Weekly), 3 (Monthly), 2 (Very Rarely), 2 (First Time), 1 (No Response)
PARAMETER 2. DRAW USERS FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

HOW OFTEN & WHY DO THESE USERS VISIT?

REASON FOR VISIT
Aggregated, all Plazas

- 24% Work Nearby
- 17% Live Nearby
- 12% Errand
- 12% Passing Thru
- 8% Dining
- 3% Meet Friends
- 9% Shopping / Entertainment
- 3% No Response

By Plaza

- Jane Warner Plaza: Work Nearby (2), Live Nearby (4), Errand (1), Passing Thru (1), Dining (3), Meet Friends (1), Shopping / Entertainment (2), No Response (0)
- McCoppin Hub Plaza: Work Nearby (4), Live Nearby (1), Errand (1), Passing Thru (1), Dining (2), Meet Friends (1), Shopping / Entertainment (2), No Response (0)
- Linden Alley Plaza: Work Nearby (5), Live Nearby (3), Errand (2), Passing Thru (1), Dining (2), Meet Friends (1), Shopping / Entertainment (2), No Response (0)
- Mint Plaza: Work Nearby (4), Live Nearby (7), Errand (3), Passing Thru (5), Dining (4), Meet Friends (2), Shopping / Entertainment (1), No Response (0)
- Annie Street Plaza: Work Nearby (1), Live Nearby (6), Errand (1), Passing Thru (2), Dining (5), Meet Friends (2), Shopping / Entertainment (1), No Response (0)
- Mechanics Monument Plaza: Work Nearby (3), Live Nearby (2), Errand (1), Passing Thru (1), Dining (1), Meet Friends (1), Shopping / Entertainment (1), No Response (0)
PARAMETER 3. SUPPORT VARIOUS USES, ESPECIALLY SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

How do plazas allow people to engage both with the space and each other?

OBSERVED USER POSTURES

OBSERVED USER ACTIVITIES

OBSERVED USER GROUPINGS
PARAMETER 4. PERCEIVED POSITIVELY BY THEIR USERS
HOW ARE PLAZAS PERCEIVED? ARE USERS SATISFIED?

USER SATISFACTION
Aggregated, all Plazas in Summer 2015 Survey

USER SATISFACTION OVER TIME
Mechanics Monument Plaza:
vs. June/July 2014 (N=13)

Jane Warner Plaza:
vs. June/July 2014 (N=15)

Annie Street Plaza:
vs. May 2015 (N=70)*

* Note: 'Protection from Weather' not asked in May 2015 Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User Satisfaction by Plaza</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Cleanliness</th>
<th>Maintenance</th>
<th>Safety from Vehicles</th>
<th>Protection from Weather</th>
<th>Ease of Socializing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane Warner Plaza</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linden Alley</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>McCoppin Hub Plaza</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mint Plaza</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie Street Plaza</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics Monument Plaza</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Average, Category</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cells in blue = Higher than overall average
PARAMETER 4. PERCEIVED POSITIVELY BY THEIR USERS
HOW DO OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE COMPARE ACROSS PLAZAS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operations and Maintenance Comparison</th>
<th>Jane Warner Plaza</th>
<th>McCoppin Hub Plaza</th>
<th>Linden Alley</th>
<th>Mint Plaza</th>
<th>Annie Street Plaza</th>
<th>Mechanics Monument Plaza</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Maintenance Entity</td>
<td>Castro CBD, Orphan Andy’s</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>Property owners</td>
<td>Friends of Mint Plaza (Non-profit)</td>
<td>Yerba Buena CBD</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter Scheduled (Y/N)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming/Events in 2014: Entity, Scheduled Months, Average Frequency</td>
<td>(1) ‘People in Plazas’, July-Sept, 2x/Month; (2) CBD, June-December, 5x/Month</td>
<td>‘People in Plazas’, July-Oct, 3-5x/Week</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>(1) ‘People in Plazas’, July-Oct, 1x/Week; (2) Weekly food trucks/coffee kiosk</td>
<td>CBD, Feb-July, 1-2x/Week</td>
<td>‘People in Plazas’, Sept, 1x/Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures diversity of seating available (movable seating)</td>
<td>Y; weekends, until evening</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Y; weekdays/ends, until evening</td>
<td>Y; weekdays, until evening</td>
<td>Y; weekdays, until evening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stewardship efforts can strongly influence user perception & use of plaza.
RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION
FOR LIVELY, INCLUSIVE, SUCCESSFUL PLAZAS:

PLANNING

Consider the edge conditions to gauge comfort and user volumes.
Select sites with immediate nearby destinations and amenities.

DESIGN

Provide for comfort and choices in seating.
Include varied design features to support more activities.
Design for safety.

OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Program regularly.
Ensure cleanliness and upkeep.
CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

• Analysis of Public Life survey data and secondary research reveal that the studied plazas generally meet the report’s four parameters of great plazas:
  - Well-used and lively
  - Draw users of the local community
  - Support various uses, especially social opportunities
  - Perceived positively by their users

• Therefore, plazas seem to be performing well and are proving to be of value to our communities.

• Various limitations in data

• Recommend that Pavement to Parks and the City of San Francisco to continue to enhance and create quality public spaces, rooted in demonstrations and evaluation.
Thank you!
PavementToParks.org

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Summer 2015 Volunteers:

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Alex Caldwell
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Karen Chapple

Creators, Designers, Managers, & Stewards of These Plazas
THANK YOU!

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READ THE FULL REPORT “SAN FRANCISCO PLAZAS PUBLIC LIFE STUDY” BY STELLA KIM AT THE PAVEMENT TO PARKS RESEARCH LAB:

HTTP://PAVEMENTTOTOPARKS.ORG/RESEARCH-PROJECT/SAN-FRANCISCO-PLAZAS-PUBLIC-LIFE-STUDY/