

Market Street Arts

A Vision and Recovery Plan for the Mid-Market Neighborhood

By Urban Place Consulting Group Inc.
for Mid-Market Business Association & Foundation

August 2023

Introducing Market Street Arts



A Vision for Mid-Market

San Francisco's future, once again, lies in the success of Market Street. **Market Street Arts** is a recovery plan and a set of actions for the Mid-Market neighborhood.

The plan capitalizes on the creative infrastructure of San Francisco's historic theater district, which includes buildings and public spaces along Market Street between 5th and Van Ness.

The vision driving this plan: a **world-renowned arts, culture and entertainment destination and haven**, on par with elite international cultural districts such as the Quartier des Spectacles in Montreal.



Mid-Market History, An Arts & Entertainment Legacy

As film came to dominate entertainment at the turn of the 20th century, Mid-Market saw the opening of vaudeville theaters and cinema venues. **The neighborhood was the entertainment destination.**

By the mid-century, Market Street's theater golden age crashed. As this happened, in the 1960s and 70s, BART construction lasted about a decade and caused small businesses to shutter.

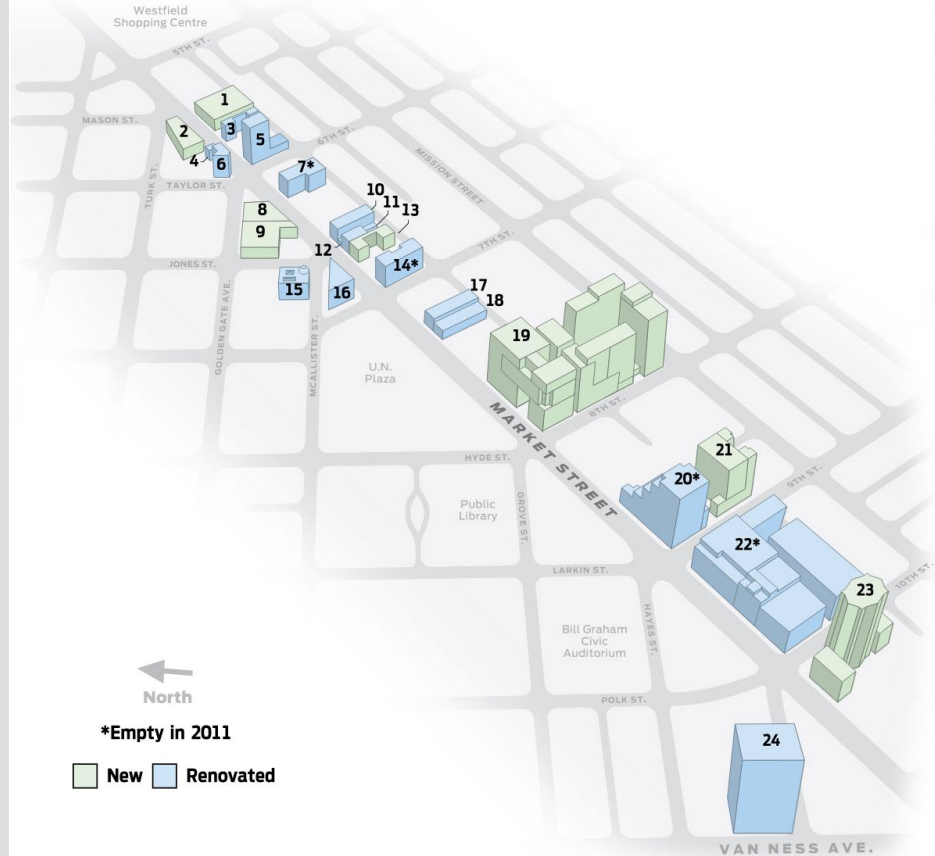
The revival of Bill Graham and other theaters in the 1970s saved the area. **Mid-Market has and continues to thrive because of arts, entertainment, and cultural organizations.**



In Mid-Market, Action Plans Work

The Central Market Strategy of 2011 and 2015 yielded **transformative investments**, including:

- **21 buildings** were refurbished or constructed
- Retail vacancies dropped from a rate of **30% down to 20% (OEWD, 2011 and 2014)**; separate data showed vacancy at around 11% in 2017
- Mid-Market residents **increased by 33%** since 2019
- The launch of **Better Market Street**
- Chief Economist for the City and County of San Francisco stated the profound growth **would not have been possible without [...] economic strategies for the area (SF Chronicle, 2019)**.



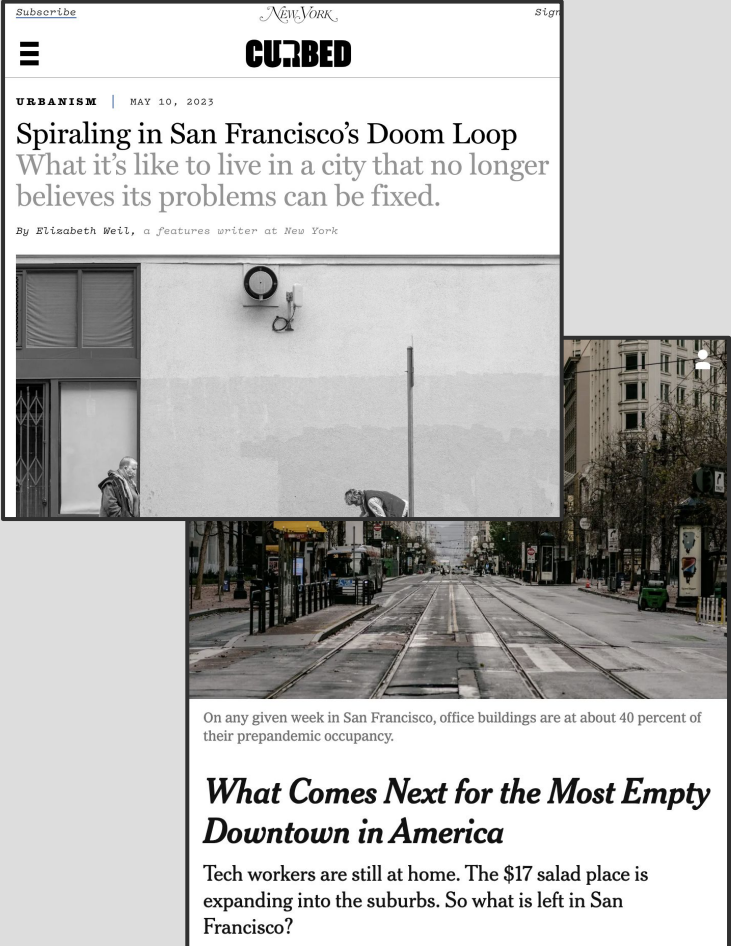
Can a Plan Fix Mid-Market's Woes?

San Francisco's health and reputation run directly through Mid-Market.

Retail vacancy is at 40% as of July 2023, and businesses continue to shutter due to unsafe conditions.

Had past recovery plans been guided by a vision for Mid-Market's arts & entertainment roots, **could the neighborhood be more resilient to the effects of the pandemic and crippling drug epidemic?**

For Mid-Market to not only persist but thrive, **safety interventions must play out in parallel with economic revitalization.** Market Street Arts is designed around **what works in Mid-Market—arts & entertainment—not what *could* work.**



The image is a screenshot of a Curbed New York article. At the top, it says "Subscribe" on the left, "New York" in a script font in the center, and "Sign" on the right. Below this is the Curbed logo. The article is dated "MAY 10, 2023" and is part of the "URBANISM" series. The title is "Spiraling in San Francisco's Doom Loop" with a subtitle "What it's like to live in a city that no longer believes its problems can be fixed." The author is "By Elisabeth Weil, a features writer at New York". The main image shows a street scene with a person walking and a building facade. Below the image is a caption: "On any given week in San Francisco, office buildings are at about 40 percent of their prepandemic occupancy." At the bottom, there is a sub-headline: "What Comes Next for the Most Empty Downtown in America" and a paragraph: "Tech workers are still at home. The \$17 salad place is expanding into the suburbs. So what is left in San Francisco?"

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URBANISM | MAY 10, 2023

Spiraling in San Francisco's Doom Loop

What it's like to live in a city that no longer believes its problems can be fixed.

By Elisabeth Weil, a features writer at New York



On any given week in San Francisco, office buildings are at about 40 percent of their prepandemic occupancy.

What Comes Next for the Most Empty Downtown in America

Tech workers are still at home. The \$17 salad place is expanding into the suburbs. So what is left in San Francisco?

The Opportunities Today

Market Street Arts will focus investment and connect the dots between the area's unique opportunities:

- **World-class Arts & Entertainment Venues**
- **A Growing Neighborhood**
- **Highly-Trafficked Regional Transit Hub**
- **The Heart of the City**
- **Diverse Range of Businesses**
- **Track Record of Strategy Success**



Mid-Market's Concert and Theater Venues

For every \$1 spent on a ticket an additional \$12 is generated in the local economy. Concert and theater venues in Mid-Market have capacity for 16,633 patrons. This area is San an arts and culture destination and economic generator.

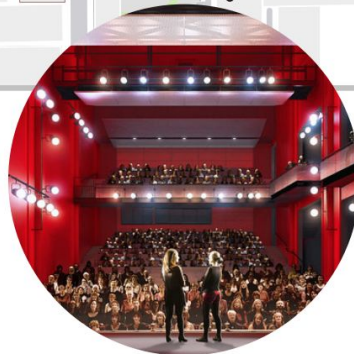
Orpheum Theater
8th and Market Streets
Capacity: 2,200 seats



Warfield Theater
6th and Market Streets
Capacity: 2,300 seats



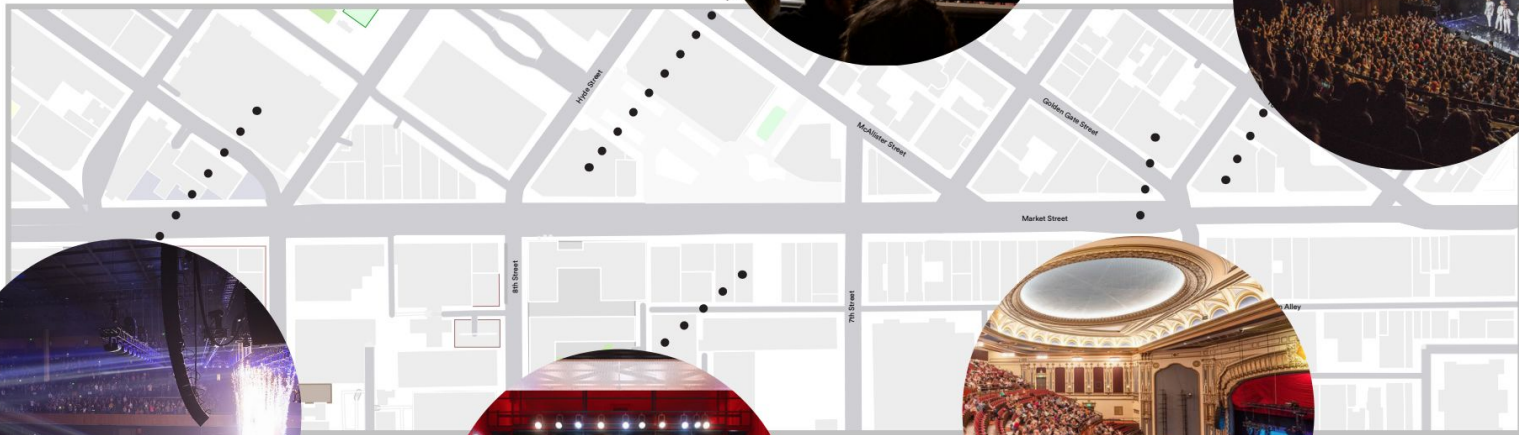
Bill Graham Civic Auditorium
9th and Market Streets
Capacity: 8,500 seats



ACT Strand
7th and Market Streets
Capacity: 433 seats



Golden Gate Theater
6th and Market Streets
Capacity: 2,200 seats



An aerial photograph of a city festival at dusk. The scene is filled with modern, illuminated buildings, including a prominent one with a red, curved facade. A large, dense crowd of people is gathered in the streets, surrounded by various festival stalls, tents, and light displays. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, indicating the time is twilight. In the background, more city buildings are visible, some with lights on. The overall atmosphere is vibrant and festive.

Inspired by
Montreal's
Quartier des
Spectacles

and other districts across
North America

Quartier Des Spectacles is...

The highest concentration ($\frac{1}{2}$ sq mi) and **the greatest diversity of cultural venues** in North America

Located in the eastern part of Montreal's downtown, between the business district and the Old Montreal, the city's most popular tourist destinations

100+ shows per month

8 lively public spaces

80 venues including 30 theaters and concert halls, cinemas, museums and venues



28,000 seats in area venues

1.9 million spectators attend indoor performances per year

6 million visitors during festivals and outdoor events

\$79 million in ticket sales, representing 28% of the total attendance province-wide

\$25.9 million commercial expenses annually

\$200 million initial investment with a **\$2.2 billion return** on real estate-related economic benefits



Market Street Arts

A vision, a plan, and
transformative actions for
San Francisco's
Mid-Market neighborhood

Developing Market Street Arts

In 2022, the Mid-Market Business Association & Foundation launched a process to define and develop a recovery strategy. Engagement and research included:

- Four public community stakeholder focus groups;
- A call for creative concepts;
- A retail sector report;
- Data analysis and research
- Consultation from a national retail expert and a national arts and cultural expert

In developing Market Street Arts, community engagement, consultants(i.e., MJB Consulting, NOW Art), and research revealed the area's greatest community and economic strength...

Mid-Market is the Bay Area arts, entertainment, and cultural destination.

Market Street Arts Goals

Goals

Capitalize on Mid-Market's creative infrastructure to realize an internationally recognized arts & entertainment destination.

Foster a thriving, unique commercial corridor.

Ensure safe experiences in public spaces.

Strong neighborhood leadership.

Increase investment in the neighborhood.

Change the perception of the neighborhood.

What Success Looks Like

An increase in day-to-day, hour-by-hour visitors to Mid-Market at arts & entertainment venues; **new arts destinations** in formerly vacant spaces, featuring Bay Area art organizations and creative businesses.

Ground-floor retail space vacancy remains below 10% (40% as of July 2023) and retail options that are regarded as **only-in-San Francisco destinations and cultural touchstones.**

Increased pedestrian traffic, reduction in crime and drug dealing, and an increase in the number of regular, **positive programs and events taking place in public space.**

MMBA&F board, staff, and members will have a seat at the table with public and private sector decision makers and serve as the voice of the neighborhood.

Robust and stable funding sources for positive and necessary programs to enhance the Mid-Market economy and public spaces.

Regular, positive media coverage of Mid-Market.

Growing Our Partners - Neighborhood Solutions to build on our International Reputation

**Arts &
Entertainment
Leaders**

**International
& Local Civic
Partners**

**Small
Businesses
and Global
Corporations**

Market Street Arts: Year One



A Plan with Real Action

Market Street Arts programs are the connective tissue for the neighborhood. Two cultural programs will launch in year one, building on the special programs led by area arts & entertainment venues:

Creative Hubs

Creative Hubs welcome more than 15 local arts organizations in its five inaugural Creative Hubs, which are MMBA&F-managed and subsidized spaces for creative uses in formerly vacant storefronts.



Public Events

Public Events invite the public to experience live music, murals, window installations along Market Street.

Supporting Market Street Arts



Investment To Date

The current investment and investment that is still needed reflect **monetary and in-kind investments**.

To date, public and private investments—including contributions from area businesses and the City and County of San Francisco—have provided funding to the Mid-Market Foundation to develop and implement components of the ***Market Street Arts*** recovery plan.

Funds and In-Kind Contributions Secured will Support:

- 4+ Creative Hubs
- One season of public events
- Staff support for MMBA&F
- A new approach for telling the story of Mid-Market

Investment Still Needed

Investment Opportunity #1:

Stop the trend of extreme ground floor retail vacancy and attract new, diverse tenants.

Investment Opportunity #2:

Support the at-risk, long-standing, and new art institutions in the area—the anchors for the future Downtown San Francisco Arts, Culture and Entertainment (ACE) Zone.

Investment Opportunity #3:

Develop a three-year plan to strengthen Mid-Market as an internationally recognized arts, culture and entertainment haven. Utilizing its point of connection between the Downtown San Francisco neighborhoods and greater San Francisco to build it as a desired destination

Two-Year Budget Recommendation for Market Street Arts:

- **\$8 million for Year One (FY 2023-2024)**
- **\$7 million for Year Two (FY 2024-2025)**

What happens if we do nothing?

Should there be no investment in this recovery plan—moreover, no investment to realize this recovery plan—Mid-Market will suffer and nosedive.

The neighborhood stands a chance if we act today. Action must occur this year. All that is required now is a commitment from the City and County and members of the Mid-Market (and Bay Area's) private sector. We only need to look at recent history to see what progress is possible.

Committing to the neighborhood with a plan rooted in the area's history while building a vision brimming with arts and entertainment is the necessary bold vision that can transform Mid-Market into San Francisco's internationally recognized cultural destination.