



WORKSHOP 1 SUMMARY

More information about the first workshop can be found at: <http://civiccentersf.org/workshop-1>

INTRODUCTION

The first Civic Center Public Realm Plan community workshop took place on November 7, 2017 from 6-8pm at UC Hastings College of the Law. The evening was structured in three parts:

1. A presentation providing an overview of the Public Realm Plan process and the results of the project team's analysis of exiting conditions;
2. A small group activity that allowed participants to share their hopes and potential actions to improve Civic Center's public spaces; and
3. An open house where participants were invited to review a series of project boards and provide feedback on potential design directions for Civic Center's public spaces.

OUTREACH

The workshop was heavily publicized via in-person outreach to area stakeholders, direct residential mailing, multi-lingual postings, email blasts and website announcements. Engagement was offered in Arabic, Chinese, English, Tagalog, Spanish and Vietnamese. Outside of the workshop format, other engagement included in-person outreach to over 50 organizations, 300 multilingual intercept surveys and four focus groups: three in-language, and one with area youth.

ATTENDANCE

Approximately 76 people attended the workshop. Participants ranged from neighborhood residents to representatives of the area's cultural institutions. The majority of participants came from the Civic Center area including, Hayes Valley, Civic Center, Tenderloin, SoMa, Cathedral Hill and Lower Haight. Of this majority, 90% arrived on foot. Other participants came from elsewhere in the city including, Mission Dolores, Mission, Haight Ashbury, Cole Valley, Pac Heights, Russian Hill, Mid Market, Sunset, and Bayview.



At check-in, workshop attendees used dots to mark on a map where they came from within San Francisco and how they traveled to the workshop (via foot, bike, car, etc.)



PRESENTATION RECAP

The evening began with welcoming remarks from John Rahaim, Director of the San Francisco Planning Department. Director Rahaim emphasized the importance of coming together to think critically about the future of Civic Center's public spaces and emphasized their importance as both a neighborhood-serving spaces and regional gathering places. Director Rahaim also acknowledged the complex social challenges being experienced in these spaces and noted that the potential physical/design improvements to the public realm are only one component of larger City efforts to make Civic Center a healthy and inclusive place that welcomes everyone.

Nick Perry, Plan Manager from SF Planning introduced the plan and gave an overview of the project team, the historical context of the effort, plan components, an overview of community outreach to date, and overall project timeline.

John Bela and Anna Muessig from Gehl Studio presented results from the Public Space and Public Life (PSPL) study conducted in the Civic Center area in early summer 2017. This effort involved more than 100 volunteers and 52 hours of observation across four days to see how people use and move through the various spaces in Civic Center.

In conjunction with an existing conditions analysis, the results of the study will inform concepts for both near and long-term improvements to Civic Center's public realm. John and Anna shared highlights from their study, emphasizing that the highlights being shared only captured the 'tip of the iceberg' in terms of the breadth of analysis that can be done with the tremendous amount of data and encouraged participants to view the forthcoming PSPL report.

Willett Moss and Lauren Hackney from CMG Landscape Architecture concluded the presentation by introducing draft Public Space Design Principles that will guide the future vision for the Civic Center area's design focus areas. The design focus areas include the three main public spaces in the Civic Center area (UN Plaza, Fulton Street between Larkin and Hyde, and Civic Center Plaza - Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza), the subterranean Brooks Hall, and the streets that surround Civic Center Plaza.



Planning Department Director John Rahaim

PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

GEHL'S PUBLIC SPACE KEY FINDINGS:

1. Civic Center is a powerful symbol of San Francisco;
2. There's no center in Civic Center;
3. The civic axis is broken;
4. Fragmented stewardship and governance;
5. Look but don't touch: the space is unfriendly to the human scale; and,
6. The limited ability of the Beaux-Arts plan to support public life has been eroded over time.

GEHL'S PUBLIC LIFE KEY FINDINGS:

1. Lots of people are moving through Civic Center;
2. Peaks in activity do not generate 'spillover' impacts;
3. Few people choose to spend time in Civic Center;
4. Each space in Civic Center has a unique public life heartbeat;
5. Activities like sleeping and encampments can feel overwhelming; and,
6. Different users of Civic Center experience the same spaces differently.

CMG'S DESIGN GOALS:

Connection & Cohesion

Reinforce key connections, unify the public realm as a place for pedestrians, and create a vivid district identity.

Quality & Comfort

Create a high-quality sustainable neighborhood open space that connects people to their environment.

Invitations & Vitality

Provide necessary infrastructure to welcome diverse activities, visitors, and uses.

Following the presentations, workshop attendees gathered around tables to join a small group discussion activity. Nine groups were asked to write down their hopes for the area on one piece of paper and on another piece of paper their ideas for actions that would help achieve those hopes. 'Hopes' and 'Actions' were grouped thematically and discussed amongst the group. Members of the project team were present at each table and will use the results of the discussions to inform the design process. The results of the discussion are summarized via the word clouds below.



“Inviting,” “safe,” “inclusive,” “welcoming,” “clean,” and “community” were among the words most frequently mentioned by workshop attendees when sharing their hopes for Civic Center’s public spaces.

[illegible]

"Food," "bathrooms," "enforcement," "market," "events," "safe," "services," and "activate Brooks Hall" were among the words most frequently mentioned by workshop attendees when asked what actions might help achieve their hopes for Civic Center's public spaces.

OPEN HOUSE

After the small group discussions, participants were invited to review project information and offer feedback either generally or as prompted by each of the 17 project boards on display. These boards elaborated on the content introduced earlier during the project team's presentations. Project team representatives were present at each board to answer questions and encourage participants to place green dot stickers over items they felt were priorities in the design of the space. Participants were also encouraged to write general comments on sticky-notes or on the boards themselves. Boards were grouped into three categories:

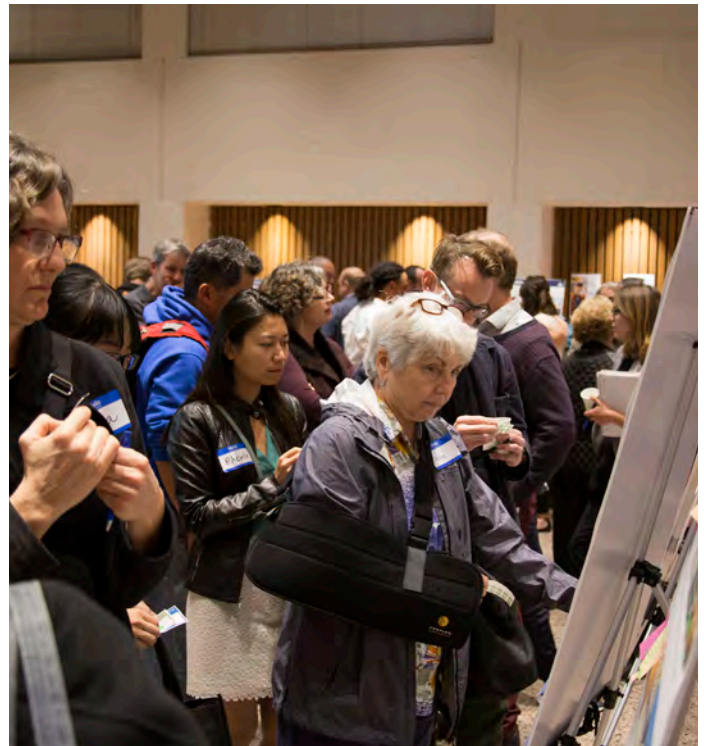
1. Civic Center Today (Existing Conditions Analysis)
2. Civic Center Tomorrow (Ideas for Future Improvements)
3. Related Projects (Civic Center Commons Initiative, Helen Diller Playgrounds & Kiosk)

Most boards were grouped under the "Civic Center Tomorrow" category. Each of these boards covered a different topic related to design and use of Civic Center's public spaces. At these boards, workshop participants used green dot stickers to indicate their response to questions on the board and mark photos that represented design elements/uses they liked the most. Based on the number of green dots placed on each board, the level of general interest/engagement with various design topics can be surmised. The boards, in order of engagement, are listed below:

1. Public Space Programming & Events: 116 responses
2. Public Space Uses: 98 responses
3. Planting vs. Paving in Public Spaces: 82 responses
4. Public Space Planting Types: 82 responses
5. Public Space Amenities: 80 responses
6. Brooks Hall Uses: 70 responses
7. Public Space Attractions: 61 responses
8. Lighting: 59 responses
9. Paving Materials: 45 responses

As indicated above, boards more focused on aesthetic topics like lighting and paving materials generally garnered less interest. People seemed most interested in weighing in on improvements to the events, uses, plantings, and amenities in Civic Center's public spaces.

Highlights from the responses at each of these boards are summarized on the following pages.



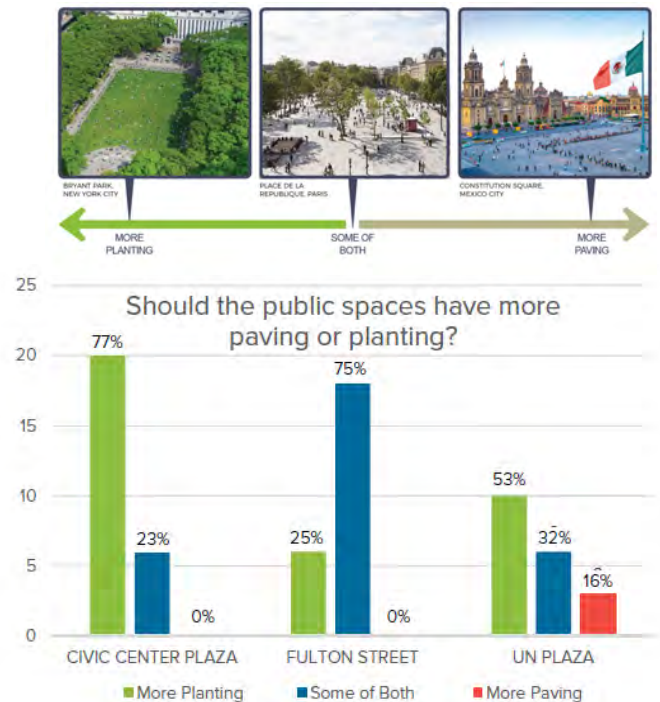
HIGHLIGHTS FROM OPEN HOUSE BOARD RESPONSES

Workshop participants were polled on potential design and programming improvements to Civic Center's public spaces. These responses will help inform the conceptual public space design alternatives that the project team will develop and share with the public at the next community workshop. It's important to note that the findings and data below only represent the opinions of those who were able to attend workshop. Additional outreach events and an online survey are planned to allow those who did not attend the workshop a chance to weigh in on these same design questions.

SHOULD THE PUBLIC SPACES HAVE MORE PAVING OR PLANTING?

Workshop participants were asked to consider what the balance should be between planted and paved areas in each of the three major public spaces in Civic Center.

- 26 people responded to the question for Civic Center Plaza, with the majority indicating they'd prefer more planting.
- 24 people responded for Fulton Street, with the majority preferring a mix of planting and paving.
- 19 people responded for UN Plaza, with a slight majority preferring more planting.



WHAT KINDS OF PLANTING WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

Workshop participants were asked to offer their input on tree types, tree composition, and planting type.

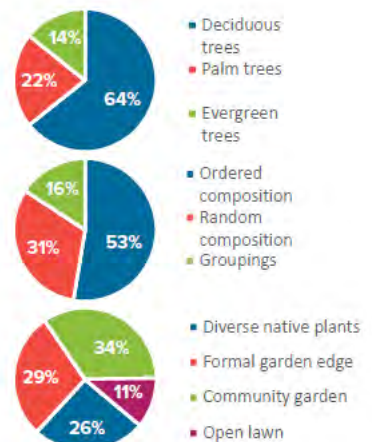
- 28 people indicated their favorite tree type, with a majority (18 votes) preferring deciduous over palm or evergreen trees.
- 19 people selected a preferred tree composition, with the majority (10 votes) preferring an ordered composition.
- 35 people shared their favorite planting type. Open lawn was the least popular option. Community garden, formal garden edge, and diverse native plants received the most positive responses.

TOTAL RESPONSES 82

TREE TYPE	28
Deciduous trees	18
Palm trees	6
Evergreen trees	4

TREE COMPOSITION	19
Ordered composition	10
Random composition	6
Groupings	3

PLANTING TYPE	35
Diverse native plants	9
Formal garden edge	10
Community garden	12
Open lawn	4



Deciduous trees were the preferred type of tree.

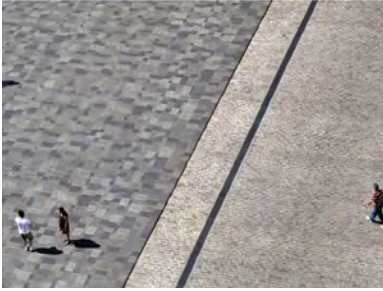


Ordered composition was the most popular tree planting arrangement.



Open Lawn was the least popular planting category.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OPEN HOUSE BOARD RESPONSES (CONT.)



Of the paving categories polled, color was the most conclusive with varied tone and texture as the most popular response.

TOTAL RESPONSES	45
GRAPHIC	13
Organic graphic	7
Text super-graphic	1
Geometric graphic	5
PATTERN	8
Geometric pattern	1
Uniform organic pattern	3
Bold artistic pattern	4
COLOR	24
Uniform color	3
Varied tone and texture	13
Random patterns	7

WHAT KIND OF PAVING FEELS CIVIC AND INVITING?

Workshop participants were asked to share their favorite graphic style, pattern, and color for paving. Only a small number attendees responded to this prompt; so few strong conclusions can be drawn from these results. Among the color category, there did appear to be a relatively strong preference for paving with varied tone and texture (selected by 13 votes).



Facade uplighting was the most popular lighting type.

Historic fixtures with artistic interpretation

TOTAL RESPONSES	59
LIGHT-BASED PUBLIC ART	16
Urban light (restored street lamps)	7
Suspended chandelier	6
Overhead light	3
WHIMSICAL FIXTURES	13
Projected patterns	3
Aim-able spotlights	0
Playful fixtures	6
Historic fixtures with artistic interpretation	4
LOW-LEVEL LIGHT	12
Bench lights	6
Small lights in paving	6
Skylights in paving	0
FAÇADE LIGHTING	18
Façade uplighting	4
Ground floor and façade uplighting	10
Ground floor lighting	4

WHAT SPECIAL LIGHTING WOULD CREATE A BEAUTIFUL ENVIRONMENT?

Workshop participants were asked to share their top three options for lighting elements they thought would create a beautiful urban environment. Of the four categories of lighting presented, facade lighting and light-based public art received the most responses.

People responded most positively to precedent images of ground floor and building facade uplighting (10 votes) and a photo of a public art light installation that uses restored historic street lamps (7 votes).



Public Facilities like drinking fountains and toilets were the most popular amenities selected to increase people's comfort in Civic Center..

MOVABLE SEATING	20
Move-able armchairs	8
Café tables/chairs at CC commons	12
IMPROVISED SEATING	4
Ledge for leaning	3
Terraced sculptural feature	1
PUBLIC FACILITIES	27
Drinking fountains	12
Public toilets	15

TOTAL RESPONSES	80
SOCIAL SEATING	12
Two-tiered seat and perch	2
Long modern bench	5
Community picnic table	5
PLAYFUL SEATING	7
Porch swings	1
Modular lounges	6
PARK BENCHES	10
Contemporary lounge benches	4
Classic park benches	6

WHAT AMENITIES WOULD MAKE CIVIC CENTER COMFORTABLE?

Workshop participants were asked to select their top three amenities/features for making Civic Center more comfortable. Responses varied widely, but the top three options were public toilets (15 votes), moveable cafe tables and chairs (12 votes) and drinking fountains (12 votes).

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OPEN HOUSE BOARD RESPONSES (CONT.)



“Contemporary cafe pavilion” was the most popular feature that people thought would prompt them to come and linger in Civic Center.

DOG PARK	1
Dog run or dog park	1
FOUNTAIN	16
Interactive fountain	8
Traditional fountain	8
OTHER	4

TOTAL RESPONSES 98

CAFÉ PAVILION	17
Contemporary pavilion	16
Traditional pavilion	1
RETAIL KIOSKS	10
Traditional kiosk/market	6
Contemporary kiosk/newsstand	4
PING PONG	6
Ping pong tables	6
GAME TABLES	8
Tables with cultural games	8
MARKET CANOPY	7
Open-air market canopy	7
ACTIVE RECREATION	9
Children's bicycle and skating track	2
Youth soccer	2
Fitness for all ages	5

WHAT KINDS OF NEW USES WOULD INVITE YOU TO CIVIC CENTER?

Workshop participants were asked to select the top three features they thought would invite them to come and linger in Civic Center. People seemed generally supportive of small-scale commercial uses in Civic Center; two of the most popular categories were “Cafe Pavilion” (17 votes) and “Retail kiosks” (10 votes). “Fountain” was the second most popular category (16 votes).

The least popular feature was “Dog Park,” which was selected by just one person.



“Ongoing uses + Events” like art installations were the most popular event category.

TOTAL RESPONSES 116

ONGOING USES + EVENTS	38
UN plaza markets	7
'Off the grid' food trucks	9
Lava Mae	7
Art exhibits	9
Movies and sports screening	6
SPORT EVENTS	5
Spectator sporting events	5
POP-UP GALLERY	5
Temporary art shows and outdoor galleries	5
READING ROOM	11
Outdoor library and reading space	11
CULTURAL EVENTS SCREENING	19
Symphony and ballet simulcast	11
Outdoor movies	8
PERFORMANCE	10
Outdoor dance performance	5
Outdoor theater performance	5
FESTIVALS	15
Music and food festivals	9
San Francisco cultural festivals	6
OTHER	8

WHAT EVENTS WOULD INVITE YOU TO CIVIC CENTER?

Workshop participants were asked to select the top three events they thought would invite them to come and linger in Civic Center. By far, the most popular category of events were the “On-going uses and events” that already take place in Civic Center’s public spaces (38 votes).

The next most popular category was “Cultural Events Screening” (19 votes) followed by Festivals (15 votes). Specific events to receive the most votes were “Symphony and ballet simulcast” (11 votes) and “Outdoor library and reading space” (11 votes).

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OPEN HOUSE BOARD RESPONSES (CONT.)



Various types of public art were popular choices for attractions in Civic Center, with “Iconic Public Sculpture” like Chicago’s ‘Bean’ receiving the most positive response.

TOTAL RESPONSES	61
PUBLIC ART	12
Iconic public sculpture	12
INFORMAL STAGE	10
platform for seating + performance	10
PUBLICSPEAKING PLATFORM	3
Permanent elements for free speech	3
MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS	9
Contemporary monument	3
Traditional monument	6
COMMUNITY CULTURAL EXPRESSION	1
Elements from different cultures	1
SCULPTURE/PLAY	7
Interactive sculptural features	7
ICONIC STRUCTURES	10
Architectural canopy structure	5
Community gathering space	5
INTERACTIVE ART	6
Playful elements for all ages	6
AMPHITHEATER	3
Playful elements for all ages	3

WHAT ATTRACTIONS WOULD SUPPORT SOCIAL & CIVIC GATHERINGS?

Workshop participants were asked to select the top three attractions they thought would support both large-scale and intimate neighborhood gatherings. Responses varied widely.

The top three individual features were an “Iconic public sculpture” (12 votes), “Platform for seating + performance” (10 votes) and “Interactive sculptural features” (7 votes).

When looking broadly at participants’ responses, it’s clear that public art in all its forms is highly desired in Civic Center; when combined, the various forms of public art that people had to choose from received 34 votes.



An underground rec. center was the most popular use for Brooks Hall.

TOTAL RESPONSES	70
PUBLIC CIVIC	24
Underground recreation center	18
Swimming pool	2
Public indoor tennis courts	2
Community center/senior center	1
all night café for homeless	1
NON-PUBLIC USES	5
Pavilion access to below-grade uses	1
fill with dirt	1
wedding venue	2
bar/speakeasy/club	1
PUBLIC RETAIL	22
Grocery	5
Market hall	14
Pop-up retail	1
Movie theater	1
Farmers market semi-permanent structures	1
PUBLIC CULTURAL	19
Underground gallery	6
Underground museum	11
Maker space	1
Artist studio/rehearsal space	1

WHAT USES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN BROOKS HALL?

70 participants selected their favorite use for Brooks Hall, located beneath Civic Center Plaza. Votes were roughly split between the “Public Cultural” (19 votes), “Public Civic” (24 votes), and “Public Recreation” (22 votes) categories.

By far, the least popular category was “Non Public” (i.e., uses not open to the public on a regular basis) with just 5 votes. “Underground recreation center” was the most popular use (18 votes).