



# Minna/Natoma Art Corridor Project Stakeholder Workshop Summary

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## Meeting Time and Location

Wednesday, July 31st | 12:00 - 1:30 pm at SFMOMA Whitebox, 151 3rd Street, San Francisco

## Attendees

**SFMOMA**

**SF Planning**

**SF Public Works**

**SFMTA**

**SFAC**

**YBCBD**

**Business/Community Stakeholders**

- Area residents
- Henry's Hunan
- St Regis Hotel
- Unity/Align Real Estate
- 140 New Montgomery
- Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center
- SPUR
- SF Travel
- 111 Minna
- Patrick and Co
- Academy of Art University American Giant
- Jensen Architects
- Chandler Fine Art and Framing Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

*Note: The workshop was also attended by several members of the Yerba Buena Community Benefit District (YBCBD) Streets and Public Space Committee*

## Background

The City is partnering with community organizations, cultural institutions, and local stakeholders on a streetscape project along Natoma and Minna. The goal of the streetscape project is to transform these streets - which connect the Transit Center to the Yerba Buena Gardens - into safe and attractive pedestrian corridors that reflect the identity of the neighborhood as an arts and culture destination.

### Purpose of Meeting

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce core stakeholders along these corridors to the project, understand their needs and concerns around safety and operations, and generate ideas for creative and artistic streetscape elements.

### Presentation

The meeting opened with a short overview presentation, delivered by Paul Chasan and Julie Flynn of SF Planning. [Click here](#) to download a copy of the presentation.

## Feedback from Interactive Activities

Attendees were asked to work in table groups to identify safety/operational challenges *and* opportunities for artistic projects (ex: public art, creative streetscape elements, etc.) along Natoma and Minna Streets. Key themes of feedback are summarized below.

### General Considerations for Project Approach to Both Minna & Natoma Corridors

- Include consistent visual cues for pedestrians to mark a sense of “procession” through the space
- Prioritize adding additional lighting that provides a sense of place (artistic, decorative, etc.)
  - Ex: Artistic neon or catenary lighting
  - Thresholds to buildings are one possible area of focus for lighting - adding lighting in thresholds and recessed areas would improve the sense of safety at night
- Pavement quality is an issue in general - potholes/cracks become filled with trash, debris, etc.
- Decorative paving is desired - pursue decorative surface treatments along the length of both Natoma and Minna streets to make the corridors more visually interesting and attractive, and to draw pedestrians down the corridors to key connection points (example - Fern Alley surface treatment)
  - Make sure visual cues connect Minna and Natoma along New Montgomery - for example, could paving patterns on these streets be integrated onto the New Montgomery sidewalk in this area?
- Consider special pavers in sidewalk that highlight local heroes, perhaps focusing on the theme of art and creativity in the district (ex: look to Castro Street’s recent upgrades)

- Add greening treatments, with awareness of operational needs and maintenance. For example, green walls may be more appropriate than trees, as trees require more care and can restrict passage of trucks and delivery vehicles on narrow alleys.
- Collaborate with students to generate ideas and implement artistic installations
- Artistic elements selected must remain in good condition - consider ease of maintenance
- Conduct a viewshed analysis to site public art pieces for maximum visual impact
- In general, preservation of loading is very important along both corridors
- Consult YCBCD Streetscape Plan, and integrate recommendations and intel from that plan into this project
- Pedestrian traffic is very different depending on the day; weekdays are dominated by working professionals who know the area, while weekends are dominated by tourists often trying to find their way.
- It would be nice if this area had a neighborhood feel during the weekdays, not just during the work week.
- Please show all existing parking spots on these plans.

### Cleanliness/Stewardship

- Some of the major issues around cleanliness on Minna/Natoma may not be able to be addressed through a streetscape improvement. For example, at Natoma between Minna and 2nd, there are consistently encampments, needles, and left belongings. Outreach and support services are needed in the area for individuals experiencing homeless and addiction.
- Coordination is needed around waste management.
  - People dig through waste bins currently put out at night, creating a mess by morning. Ideas to address this include: locked areas for trash bins, or a pilot with Recology to allow inside service/access.
  - Numerous streets are dominated by the presence of large garbage containers. Is there any way to step up enforcement so that these are properly stored when not in use?
- Dog relief is an important need in this area.

### Traffic Circulation (Impacting Multiple Corridors)

- Any changes to traffic patterns should consider the right turn one-way exit from SFMOMA garage on Minna headed towards New Montgomery, and the right-turn movements onto New Montgomery from both Minna and Natoma
- 2nd Street turn movements and volumes
  - Evaluate traffic volumes on the section of 2nd Street between Minna and Mission - turn movement restrictions seem to contribute to low volumes here, which could mean it's an appropriate segment to close off for exclusive pedestrian use
  - Currently, vehicles traveling on 2nd towards Howard are not allowed to turn left onto Howard, so they need to continue up 2nd towards Natoma/Minna. Is it possible to allow the left turn onto Howard to minimize excess vehicle traffic through the focus area, where pedestrian access is becoming a priority?

- Analyze signal timing when new pedestrian crossings are added at Minna and Natoma Streets - streamlining is needed for signals in the area.
- Existing one-way traffic restrictions are often not obeyed on Minna between 2nd and New Montgomery, and between 3rd and New Montgomery.

### Vacant Building Activation

- In general, vacant storefronts are an issue that impact these corridors and surrounding streets.
  - Pursue facade activation at the building across from SFMOMA garage, at the end of Natoma (American Giant may have connection to building owners).
  - Enable pop-ups in vacant storefronts.

### Crossings & Intersections

- Consider adding a crosswalk with a pedestrian signal at 2nd Street and Minna, even though none is planned currently. Some stakeholders asserted that this location should be prioritized over others proposed.
  - Stakeholders asked if a costly pedestrian signal was really needed at Natoma/New Montgomery if a signal is to be placed at Minna/New Montgomery. Would a simple crosswalk at Natoma/New Montgomery suffice, and free up funds for a signal at 2nd and Minna Streets?
- Add crosswalks across New Montgomery at Natoma and Minna intersections - many people already cross the street here and it is a safety issue without a formal pedestrian crossing.
  - Integrate art: pursue decorative/art crosswalks at all new crossings.
  - A pedestrian signal (not just a crosswalk) is particularly important at Minna/New Montgomery.

### Natoma between Hunt and New Montgomery Streets

- Important uses include:
  - SFMOMA Staff and Guest entrance, right near American Giant
  - Access to hotel loading
- This street stub will feel like a “dead end” for pedestrians, and access is unclear. Improve public access through the pedestrian/bike cut through connecting to Hunt Street, and add lighting/pavement markings to designate a safe and inviting pathway.
  - Pedestrian access through Hunt Street is currently hindered by fencing, and garbage/laundry staging - needs to be improved.
  - Consider a light installation within the driveway area to draw people in and make the pedestrian/bike throughway more inviting and safer feeling.
    - Lighting improvements could carry through to all exists of the SFMOMA garage.
- Ample signage is needed to help people know to walk around the SFMOMA building if they want to - this is an inviting and well designed cut-through; visual cues would encourage use.
- Widen sidewalks along this section of Natoma.

- Consider removing parking here but preserve loading uses, as this is critical - consider a deep dive conversation about loading requirements on this stub street. Note that residents in nearby condos may not support removal of these parking spots, as they are often used on weekends.
- Trou Normand garbage receptacles often smell of fish and attract seagulls.
- Increased security has been more effective than cameras to enforce No Smoking at Natoma and New Montgomery.

### Natoma between New Montgomery and 2nd Street

- Consider eliminating parking at the corner of Natoma and 2nd - the two spots adjacent to 100 Natoma building.
- The driveway opening onto Natoma at 132 Natoma is critical and much-used.
- Consider limiting traffic use during certain times of the day on Natoma between New Montgomery and 2nd (with the exception of loading uses).

### Minna between 3rd and New Montgomery

- When sidewalks are blocked, people walk in the center of the street on this block. Wider sidewalks and traffic calming are needed.
- SFMOMA art loading occurs along this block - streetscape improvements should accommodate access by a 40 ft trailer.
- Exhaust fan from Mourad restaurant (140 New Montgomery) create odors along Minna at New Montgomery.
- Large, empty facades and lack of active frontages makes this feel like a long and bleak street.
- Patrons of the two bars here often smoke and relieve themselves on these sidewalks, adding to the very uninviting nature of the street.
- There is often drunk and disorderly behavior near Minna and New Montgomery.

### Minna between New Montgomery and 2nd

- Drainage is a major issue - puddling occurs at the curbs and puddles then collect trash, debris.
- Stakeholders are already creating murals along this section of Minna.
  - Existing work should be built upon and amplified to create a cohesive mural alley that has synergy with indoor spaces like the 111 Minna Gallery.
  - Assistance is needed in connecting with the property owner at the 149 New Montgomery building so that a mural can be implemented (Blick Art Materials is a tenant, which provides a major collaboration opportunity). Also at this building, the existing recessed nook is a dark hiding place that makes the alley feel unsafe - lighting and monitoring are needed.
  - A light art installation would be a meaningful investment to complement existing murals.
- Note there is a sub-surface basement that likely extends into the Minna Street sidewalk 3-4 feet at 110 Minna.

- If decorative paving is pursued on Minna, consider wrapping treatment around Minna and 2nd Street onto the sidewalk, towards 111 Minna Gallery.
- Steam vent at Minna and Second Street is an attractive nuisance for encampments, but could be an opportunity for art.

## Art/Placemaking/Activation

### Great Spaces/Inspiration

- Nuit Blanche- Paris
- Seasonal Beaches on the Seine- Paris
- “Jazz Corner” commemorates the site of a historic Jazz club with sound-activated by passersby
- North Beach Library Sound Installation
- Cobblestone Streets of SOHO Manhattan
- Temescal Alleys (49<sup>th</sup> and Temescal Oakland) microretail destination
- Refik Anadol Artist
- Reigo street signs/murals
- Bogota prioritizing people over cars
- Tenderloin decorative crosswalks
- Gaudi inspired tile

### Ideas from Open Brainstorm

- Prioritize art that is interactive
- Integrate Augmented Reality (interface with smart phones etc.)
- Integrate atypical/whimsical informational plaques (bringing unusual facts about this place to life)
- Consider the soundscape
- Integrated art: Use unique Pavement/Lights/seating that would set this space apart
- Design should draw people to the alleys (Social attractor)
- A canopy element could unite the space and create a linear room that can be appreciated from below and above
- Integrate art that is kinetic
- Maintain manageable expectations of what’s possible - Public-Private Partnership is very hard to pull off!
- Activate these ‘backdoor alleys’ into front door alleys: Activate building frontages with Microretail/Pop-ups/Vitrines
- Some of the streets in this area are the few streets in the city named after women. Is there a way to highlight this history in a tasteful way?
- Partner with offices create murals/window designs that showcase their work (i.e. Unity Offices)
- Take inspiration from historic buildings in the area (start by creating a map of them)