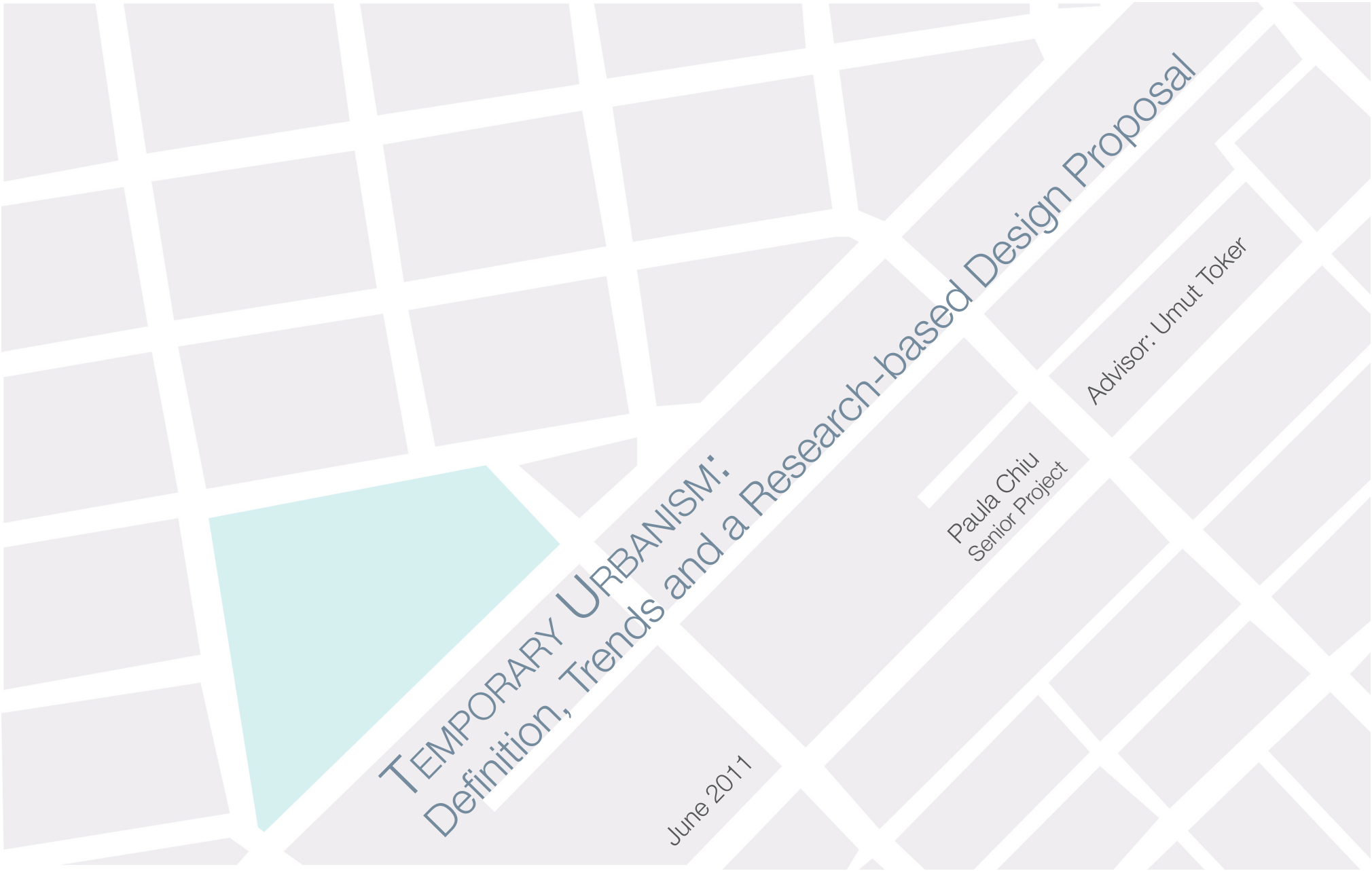

Temporary Urbanism: Definition, Trends and a Research-based Design Proposal

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June 2011

CONTENTS

05 Introduction

07 Existing Terms and Definitions

11 Relevant History

15 Streets as Public Space

21 Urban Plazas as Public Space

29 Learning from Case Studies

37 Urban Plazas Checklist

47 The United Nations Plaza Case Study

59 Methodology

63 Observations and Findings

75 Implications for Design

85 Design Principles

87 Proposal for Redesign

91 Design Features

105 Design Rationale

107 References

The emerging phenomenon of utilizing public spaces in a temporary manner (also called everyday urbanism, temporary urbanism, loose space, guerilla urbanism, do-it-yourself urbanism, ad hoc urbanism as presented by various authors and researchers) has been appearing in many major national and international cities. These interim activities often take place in everyday, conventional, public plazas but their uses tend to be partial and selective, modified and adjusted to reflect their needs and desires. Unlike the public spaces intended and idealized by the original designers, the informal and temporary use of a public space can bring out many possibilities in exploring unmet needs. In fact, this type of informal albeit temporary hijacking of the space in turn leads to a disruption in the fluidity among urban characteristics. This disruption is reflective of needs and desires unmet by the everyday amenities or services. Citizens redefine the meaning of “public space” by introducing a new physical framework for incorporating a myriad of possibilities, most notably activities in public spaces. While this notion of redefining public space is shared across time in different cities around the world, it is also temporary in nature. Beyond everyday functions and primary use, public spaces are restructured upon these imposed changes. Citizens as participants in the design of a particular public space express their appropriations for use. The improvisations evidently point out commonalities as well as differences observed in intended and unintended uses. This trial and error, bottom-up approach to planning and designing of a public space is common grounds for revealing community needs and desires.

01 Park(ing) Day 2009
San Francisco

Temporary urbanism offers an interesting view of how people interact with their environment. Because of its growing importance and influence on social activities, it is crucial to try and characterize this phenomenon. This paper aims to discuss aspects of temporary spaces and will address the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics and principles of temporary spaces?
2. How are these different from conventional spaces? And how do such principles and characteristics make successful temporary spaces?
3. How do these characteristics and principles apply to the UN Plaza and the surrounding Central Market Street area?

Existing Terms and Definitions

Through a review of the existing literature on the topic of utilizing public spaces in a temporary manner, different names have been used to describe such events and occurrences. Various authors and organizations present their research and findings according to these different names, hence these terms will be explained in the following:

Everyday Urbanism

Everyday urbanism describes the state of the present city with an emphasis on what is “public” and “space.” John Leighton Chase, Margaret Crawford and John Kalinski (1999) offer insight on how any given city today may cycle continuously across different types of urban spaces, thus forming a vernacular landscape that can result in intentional and unintentional consequences. These intentional and unintentional consequences are created from public spaces that do not fulfill their original purposes. As time progresses, these urban spaces take on another form, hence drawing on potential for new types of development. As a result, these activities, temporary in time, continue to redefine the terms “public” and “space.” The product is a form of local improvisation by citizens interested in creating new conditions for urbanism. Creative outlets are endorsed for a chance to improve the city.

Temporary Urban Space

Authors, Haydn and Temel (2007), discuss the term “temporary” as reflective of its passing state in their book Temporary Urban Spaces. The keyword, temporary, is the distinguishing factor between interim use and long term use. In the projects presented in this book (international in scope with focus on Europe), many temporary projects in temporary spaces last as short as few hours at a time, and deliver actions and interactions that are specific and deliberate. For these reasons, qualities of temporary projects are determined by its effect and transience (as they are time-sensitive). In such, these projects last for a short amount of time for these spaces are paid a short span of attention as their identities are not entirely fashioned; moreover, they are yet to be determined by users both occupying and abandoning the space – temporary is necessary. Haydn and Temel suggest that this is what attracts users to temporary projects.

Loose Space

A loose space, as described by Karen Frank and Quentin Stevens (2007), refers to a variety of activities that can be pursued by people not originally intended for those locations. A loose space can be anything from a sidewalk to a ruined factory. A space can become loose through the actions of people. These spaces provide a freedom of choice and accessibility appropriate for all to contribute to this type of space. In particular, this looseness of a space deals with how people use public spaces to meet their own needs and desires. The variety of activities, such as physical recreation, that go on in these type of spaces are broad and are at the discretion of the user and are also adjustable. The expressive aspect in creating loose spaces is also the creative aspect. Creativity explores possibilities of loose space, characterized by accessibility. The book, *Loose Space*, examines how people use physical spaces with experimentation and creativity. The book is also organized around four central themes in which the author calls appropriation, tension, resistance and discovery.

Ad Hoc Urbanism

The term Ad-hoc urbanism focuses on temporary reuse through building on unused and underutilized lands within existing urban areas. This is called infill development. Infill is a way to repurpose unsuccessful or underutilized urban landscapes for other creative means in a temporary manner, such as events or art installations. The Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative and Kent State University students created a series on urban development issues. One of which is aptly named Pop-Up City (2009) discusses and showcases how vacant lots were transformed into vibrant gathering spaces for temporary use. In addition, Ad-Hoc Urbanism has been used by architects wishing to provide new adaptations for repurposing and bringing attention to disenfranchised buildings or dilapidated landscapes for spatial reclamation. Ad-Hoc urbanism aims to “reactivate” vacant land through highlighting on underutilized spaces. Of note, the vocabulary is also used abroad by architects Sean Griffiths, Charles Holland and Sam Jacob of London-based design firm, Fashion Architecture Taste (FAT).

DIY Urbanism

In 2010, the San Francisco Urban Planning + Research (SPUR) specially curated an exhibition that recognizes the do-it-yourself (DIY) mentality and bottom-up approach in City planning. DIY urbanism serves as a testing ground for social change. In addition, the do-it-yourself mentality is also expressive of a movement for mobilizing local and community projects or collaborations with goals to improve the city. This type of activism expresses a strong interest in observing the mixing of the urban fabric within the public realm. In such, the impulsive consequences of changing the urban landscape to incorporate diverse projects are particularly evident in the showcase of projects ranging from food truck vending markets to sidewalk living rooms. These examples and DIY applications relevant to City planning are rooted in community activism. The DIY urbanism movement emphasizes a bottom-up approach to planning and accounts for counterweight resistance against the economic downturn.

Insurgent Public Spaces (Guerilla Urbanism)

Insurgent public spaces are described by landscape architecture professor Jeffrey Hou (2010) in a series of articles and essays (international in scope) that documents cases of guerilla urbanism. The book is organized into 6 categories with the keywords: appropriating, reclaiming, pluralizing, transgressing, uncovering, and contesting. Since public spaces tend to be controlled or regulated though some form of governing, these case studies go onto illustrate how the transformation of these urban spaces defy traditional roles of how public space is perceived when in such an environment. This type of urbanism deals with the readapting of public spaces in such ways that would lead to better organized structured gathering places. Consequently, guerilla urbanism presents alternative uses are constructed out of public spaces for informal gatherings in a temporary manner, thereby challenging how public space is defined.

It is clear that there are various terms used by different authors to describe the characteristics and principles behind these concepts. The existing terms and their definitions explained above would act as a basis of foundation for this study. For the purpose of this paper, the term “temporary urbanism” (and “temporary space”) will used throughout to represent the principles and concepts found common among these existing terms.

Relevant History

The ideals and principles of temporary urbanism go hand-in-hand with ‘temporary use’. This term, ‘temporary use’, stirs the very notion of what types of urbanism has evolved organically over many cycles of urban development. To start, the temporality and experimental nature of the temporary installations or projects are some of the earliest indications of temporary use in an urbanized area and dates back to the latter 1950s. At the time, there was a group called the Situationist International in Paris who, under Marxist influences, advocated for restructuring uses with emphasis in art into the program of open spaces. The Situationists held a very ambitious goal - to reconstruct the entire city. They called their program “situation constructions” where “each constructed situation would provide a decor and ambiance of such power that it would stimulate new sorts of behavior, a glimpse into an improved future social life based upon human encounter and play.” (Sadler, 1998) This was certainly quite ambitious in the sense that there were no clear layouts as to how the situations would unfold. As such, these experimental ways of construct served as framework for the ideals of temporary urbanism. In today’s context, would this “[demand for] mobile urban spaces and a modifiable architecture that could be partially or totally transformed in tune with their inhabitant’s desires” be the originating idea? (Haydn & Temel, 2006)

Over time, the same questions regarding the nature of a public, open space has been constantly questioned by its users - the public. In order to investigate such a question, a social test has been ensued to track such concerns. Originally started as a game in Vienna in 1996 by Friedemann Derschmid, Permanent Breakfast incidentally lends itself to becoming a tool for testing grounds of “public space.” In this game, the rules are simple: one starts with a breakfast invitation in a public space. Once the breakfasting has commenced, the attendees become committed guests who will host and invite at least four additional guests to another public breakfast in a different place. Finally, those invited guests of the foremost shall repeat the game with the same rules. While breakfasting, everyone at the table is encouraged to invite tourists, passersby and bystanders to join. Every year, a game of Permanent Breakfast kicks off at the city centre in Vienna. (Haydn & Temel, 2006) As of this writing, the Permenant Breakfast game has become international with countries from all over the world participating. For consistency, the rules of the game are fully disclosed via the internet and participants are in charge of their own breakfast event. Initially, gathering large amounts of people in the streets was the intended attraction.

Moreover, as the public breakfasting events grew, the sheer number of attendees eventually became a phenomenon regarded more with the matter of accessibility to public space. This experiment ultimately illustrated how public a space really is through observing the people’s reactions to other users and the so called ‘protectors’ of the public space. (Haydn & Temel, 2006) The end result proved one of two attributes relative to a known space: the space is either private but formerly public or publicly disguised private space. The snowball effect has led the game Permanent Breakfast to transcended borders and spread to many different corners of the world as it gained momentum and recognition abroad. Many written and visual accounts documenting the process help illustrate the phenomenon, and are shared across the world wide web. (“Permanent Breakfast,” 2011)

permanent breakfast

Streets as Public Space

04 “Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city’s streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull.”

-Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961)

On the macro scale, a quick look at any map of a modern city would show that streets are major thoroughfares for transportation and major channels of movement that compositely make up a significant percentage of the land. Yet, many urban designers and scholars would agree that not all streets are the same (J. Jacobs, 1961; A. Jacobs, 1995). Furthermore, Jacobs (1995) contends that the physical context of great streets do not become great for its grandness in size or number, but rather great streets are the ones that have “physical, designable characteristics” that make them stand out. In contemporary times, streets do not merely just serve as channels for movement. Streets also play a vital role in the social life of urban communities. In such, streets on the macroscale level describe the relationship between pedestrian activities and physical factors such as density, accessibility, location, major features and natural features that affect what sets great streets apart from the others. To specify, Jacobs is most concerned with what a great street should do. To further supplement this inquiry, Mehta also researches what microscale characteristics support stationary and social activities on neighborhood commercial streets.

In order to investigate such inquiries, a great street is defined by “physical, designable characteristics” (Jacobs, 1995) and a lively street is defined as “a street with the presence of a number of people engaged in a variety of predominately stationary and sustain activities, particularly those activities that

(opposite)
Market Street
05 in San Francisco

are social in nature" (Mehta, 2007). According to Jacobs (1995), great streets carry out a vital role to the functioning of infrastructure for a public service - communication. As with anything, communication is essential in conveying information, in particular, to the public. Jacobs proposed that the idea of community should be first addressed. The idea is that streets which are accessible to all at various scales from citywide to neighborhood is what allows people to put a community together.

06 Strolling in the streets

Jacobs (1995) asserts that great streets have the ability to "moderate the form" with their specific and careful arrangements. In such, great streets have physical criteria that makes them better than others. These criteria deal with how a street would "please, uplift, attract or achieve a desired set of values than some other arrangement" (as opposed to dealing with street sizes, widths, trees, benches or placement matters). Moreover, these arrangements provide the users with a sense of scale.

Jacobs (1995) also insists that “streets are settings for activities that bring people together”, so great streets would offer a place in which people can live, work, play and spend time. In addition, streets are also influential in “social and commercial encourage and exchange” (Jacobs, 1995) thus becoming the medium in which these interactions take place. Other scholars, too, have conferred that public urban spaces have the “ability to support, facilitate, and promote public life” (Mehta, 2007).

Jacobs (1995) goes on to state that, in fact, the best streets should encourage participation from the public where ultimately these streets are the ones that are remembered. In order to hold such social activities and encourage participation, great streets are required to be physically comfortable and safe. Comfort also accounts for providing protection from the elements. Physical safety is concerned with the well-being of humans in regards to threatening situations and conditions. Although feelings of comfort are difficult to objectify in numbers or words, the feelings of comfort that are evoked are important attributes to the overall sense of place.

The fleeting faces and movement of people are not the only constant changes in the city streets; physical features of streets are also constantly changing as well. Jacobs (1995) adds that the design of streets should go with the flow of these changes that affect the relationship of streets and its community. In particular, Jacobs (1995) uses Market Street in one of his chapters from Great Streets to provide insight as to how to design those changes that have taken place in Market Street. Market Street was once a great street with its land marks and grand buildings. Market Street is also unique in that it shapes the city’s grid system with a direct, diagonal cut connecting straight to the Ferry Building at the Port of San Francisco. Places like the Ferry Building and other prominent buildings such as the Palace Hotel, Lucky Baldwin’s, the Case Building and major stores were once iconic, major focuses along Market Street. The streetcars also provided a system of transportation and were a major presence in Market Street itself. With the pace and scale of the streetcars running along Market Street, the physical shape of the street has been restructured to accommodate for these new transit stops. Physical road layouts on the streets changes were not the only ones. Buildings have

become bigger and taller. The sheer vertical mass of these multistory buildings have changed the styles of the contemporary office building. Regardless of how tall these buildings are, the pedestrian would have stores to catch their eye on the street level. Street trees and landscape have been added as well to make the space more inviting and comfortable.

Streets also provide for a place of reflection. Not all that goes on in the streets are poetic and comforting. It is these same streets that allow socialability to develop including all dimensions of what the public has to offer. What goes on in the streets, pleasant and unpleasant, allows for passersby to pause and reflect. Every aspect of society is showcased as these city streets are a place to be seen. The “experience of public life and social interactions” is necessary to foster “social and psychological health of modern communities” (Mehta, 2007).

07 Along Embarcadero Street in San Francisco

08 Better Market Street
rendering of Market Street

In short, it is great streets, such as Market Street, that are, over the years, emphasized as having the aforementioned “physical, designable qualities”. These physical, designable qualities are ultimately the elements that encourage activities and foster pedestrian-street relationships. These criteria for development help establish a “liveliness and diversity” (Mehta, 2007) to the streets. Hence, these qualities, “liveliness and diversity”, are also characteristic of great streets and fits well with Jacobs’ idea of community building through great streets.

Urban Plazas as Public Space

09 "The Plaza is intended as an activity focus, at the heart of some intensive urban area."

- Kevin Lynch (1981)

Role of the Urban Plazas

Great streets are indeed important in the overall functionality of a space in terms of community and sociability, but on a micro level, urban plazas help facilitate much of the human interaction that occurs. In contrast to the traditional types of Spanish "plazas" and Italian "piazzas", the modern plaza is faced with a different type of unease regarding what it should be and how it should be. Within an urban core lies opportunities for different types of plaza. Urban plazas have gone beyond the typical uses of "sitting, standing, walking and their combination of eating, reading, watching, and listening" (Marcus, 1998) for the modern day plaza needs exploration of new ideas and a place for experimentation, just as temporary urbanism proposes. As presented below, the following is a brief (non exhaustive) typology of urban plazas explaining uses while illustrating evidence of growing pedestrians and urban dwellers' needs.

Typology of Urban Plazas

Various types of downtown plazas are offered to the public in many U.S. cities, but they are not regarded the same. In developing a typology for urban plazas, Marcus suggests that urban plazas can be applied in three ways: 1) to examine a variety of spaces, 2) classify different types of public spaces and 3) develop guidelines in context of plaza types. This chapter is particularly interested in form and use of urban plazas. The following describes six broad categories presented by Marcus to exemplify the range of types, uses and forms (Marcus,1998)

10 Piazza Duomo, Milano

type one

The **Street Plaza** is almost always immediately adjacent to the sidewalk or street. This strategic placement of the plaza allows for extension of the sidewalk to be integrated seamlessly. This type of plaza is generally used for activities like sitting, waiting, and watching. A variety of mechanisms, such as the seating edge, widened sidewalk, bus stop, pedestrian linkage, corner pocket where two streets meet, and the arcade from an overhang are used to help merge and extend the street plaza into the urban fabric. All these applications can be utilized for connecting the street to a small, open space.

11 Mechanics Plaza
in San Francisco

type two

As corporate buildings in downtowns become densely clustered and shadow the streets with their vertical mass, the **Corporate Foyer** serves as an extended entryway from the street to the building. Features such as a decorative porch; a larger, impressive forecourt; or a stage set flanked by a building may be effective in indicating the change of scenery from public street to corporate setting. The Corporate Foyer is usually publically accessible but privately owned and is subject to the owner's hours of use and regulations.

12 Crocker Plaza on Market Street in San Francisco

type three

A desire for a change of scenery with park-like settings are not uncommon in urban cities. In such, they provide relief from the hustle and bustle of city life and offer the allure of an oasis emulating qualities in an urban atmosphere. Hence, it is no surprise that the **Urban Oasis** is often heavily planted and deliberately more saturated with greenery for users to enjoy. The users would seek out such an Urban Oasis to come for typical activities like sitting, lunch eating, reading and socializing as these places aim to radiate a tranquil atmosphere. Outdoor lunches are popular with office workers when an outdoor lunch plaza provides adequate seating and possibly cafe or take out services. One type of plaza, the garden oasis in particular distinguishes itself from a secluded enclosure often times filled with floral planters to convey a garden like image. As ground space is becoming an even more competitively sought after commodity, the market experiments with the additions of vertical oasis. Although roof gardens are not always immediately recognizable from the ground floor, these gardens are suitable for sitting, walking and viewing. Conversely, not all roof gardens are accessible. In such, Chicago's City Hall green roof was a pilot study on how to combat the urban heat island effect (City of Chicago, 2011)

13 TransAmerica Redwood Park in San Francisco

type four

The **Transit Foyer** is often times overlooked but heavily used as mass transit is highly stressed and emphasized in urban cities. This is a space that accommodates for heavy foot traffic to and from public transit terminals. While terminals are concerned with the movement of commuters, the Transit Foyer is an activity point that affords street entertainers, vendors and people watchers to gather or immerse into the crowds. In particular, two types of Transit Foyers exist: the subway entry place and the bus terminal. While both capture the convenience of commuters passing by the space, each one has a particular audience potential—subway entry place is subject to more group hang outs reached by mass transit while the bus terminal may catch more movement since these commuters enter and leave the space quickly.

14 Berkeley BART Plaza

type five

Pedestrian only spaces generate a different kind of atmosphere and have potential to take on the role of a plaza. The **Pedestrian and Transit Malls** are special examples of the Street as Plaza where the pedestrian is the dominant presence. These are often located in downtown areas, allowing users to enjoy a mall-like ambiance with the similar, standard amenities such as food, vendors, entertainment, public art and the likes offered by a plaza. A traditional pedestrian mall is closed off to traffic with design features such as bollards or curbs that make them inaccessible by automobiles. A mixed mall is also pedestrian-oriented but allows limited accessibility by automobiles through restrictions of circulation. The transit mall is served by mass transit, allowing buses and shuttles to become the central mode of transportation.

15 Santa Monica Third Street Promenade

type SIX

The desire for an old world town square modeled after Italian piazzas and Spanish plazas are emulated by the modern day **Grand Public Place**. These places are more successful when located close to a multiplicity of land uses such as commercial retail and office as well as transit. The city plaza is meant to be highly visible; it sets a spotlight on concerts, performances and rallies as it anticipates incorporating these programmed events. In contrast, the city square stands on its own for iconic or historic reasons as it is enclosed by the sides of the encompassing streets. This venue is attractive for its central location and proximity to arterial roadways. The character of these spaces conveys the sense of being “the heart of the city,” involving a large space to host a variety of events (lunch crowds, outdoor cafes, art shorts, exhibits, and occasional rallies or concerts), and are usually publically owned.

16 Justin Herman Plaza in San Francisco

萊爾富
王記
下蛋
男女對鍊
禮物特賣
情人對戒
紫微斗數
開運點痣
知識光碟
銀匠
水果

Taipei's Shilin Night Market

17 Shilin Night Market

Night markets may be one of the oldest examples of temporary urbanism, characteristic of temporality for all its long standing history in many celebrated cities. (Hou, 2010) Night markets are informal street fair and have been transnationally held since preindustrialized ages. Among them, the earliest night market establishments date back to the Tang Dynasty in China (which is about ~836AD). Since, many ethnically Chinese inhabited cities including Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia spurred their own version of night markets as well. Today, the modern corresponding legacy of night markets thrive in cities like Taipei and Hong Kong. While not all night markets were in occurrence simultaneously from one country to another, there also exists night markets in Mexico, Turkey and France; this was truly a phenomena that took place for its festivities, food, culture and a mix of meanings. (Yu, 2004)

Taipei's Shilin night market is one of the most famous night markets internationally known for its public leisure activities. In such night markets, one can easily find streets lined with a variety of pushcarts, stalls, and displays of snacks and retail merchandise. While they are primarily issued for consumption, they also entail economic, social, and cultural significance within the public realm. (Yu, 2004) In contrast, morning markets are well documented and regulated in local and national governments and yet fail to account for the details of night markets despite a barrage of evidence that points to economic support in the commercial sector. In addition, the temporality of night markets

takes effect after dark, post business hours and draw in innumerable averse to go to sleep. The vivid pictures of night markets are painted by a lack of personal space strolling between shoulders to shoulders. The night markets in Taipei literally began as an invasion of food vendors carting their goods post dinner hours in the busy streets of the city. However, the Guomindang (KMT) government perceived this as a form of self help within the social class citizens. The debates went on whether vending caused problems because they evaded taxes and contributed to traffic congestion. (Yu, 2004) This pushed the night market into an underground economy and respectively, the regulations pertaining to illegal vending. Despite so, the hustle and bustle is what attracts people from all over the world to them. The drama of vendors fleeing the scene to avoid being arrested can be exhilarating and enlivens the city streets. (Hou, 2010) While the differential times in which a market is held overlaps in services and goods, there lies a cultural distinction between night and morning markets. (Yu, 2004) Temporality is a key factor any night market. In Taiwan, morning markets are oriented towards groceries sales - vegetables, raw foods, and other daily necessities. The night market offers social gathering space for entertainment - eat, play, and shop. The entertainment value amongst the economic and cultural agenda has created an atmosphere, although temporary, of leisure pastime.

The space in which these night markets take shape like, as the name suggests - a market. This concentration of buying and selling in a confined area exhibit no formal establishment such as a minimum numbers of vendors to become “official” nor is there occupied lots defined in square feet. (Hou, 2010) The compactness of night markets make for a very active ambiance, as described by “renao” meaning hot and noisy. Consequently, this is what deems this temporary event a success, by its celebration of atmosphere and ambiance.

As seen in regimented cities, night markets challenge the notion of a public space. On the other side of the world in North America, the adaptations of a night market is recreated in a few Chinatowns districts. In the Americas, the establishment of a night markets must under a procedural account for permitting and vending. (Hou, 2010)

In general, the night market is a host providing space for social, political and cultural interactions. These night markets usually operate in parks or plazas to accommodate for recreation and physical space. Night markets also define space in terms of physical boundaries; this brings up different political aspirations from different groups using that particular space. Night markets often times attract a diverse crowd but each organization has their own viewpoints and agenda within the public realm. (Hou, 2010) Representation of cultural diversity is particularly emphasized in these aforementioned metropolitan cities. However, the cultural connection past generations and national boundaries construct a new kind of process of understanding history and heritage. Overall, a lively market fashions potential for reconstructing public space in a way that helps meet the needs of communities regardless of type - daily needs like vegetables as well as social needs like leisure and entertainment. (Yu, 2004)

Today, many night time activities around the world continue to extend into the late hours for leisure and strolling and the night markets have provided exactly that.

Sydney Laneways

Sydney's Laneway Art program is an annual initiative to "reinvent, rediscover and enliven the City's laneways and forgotten spaces" (City of Sydney, 2011). Running from September to the end of January, it is now in its fifth year and has produced a number of artistic installations, and has encouraged the establishment of new, smaller businesses.

One of the program's main ways of revitalizing Sydney's forgotten spaces is through art. Each year, artists and designers are called upon to produce location-inspired pieces to be installed in laneways or other areas in need of livening up. For example, "Are you looking at me?", curated by Barbara Flynn, ran from September 20, 2010 to January 31, 2011. It consisted of art pieces publicly displayed throughout the city's laneways so that pedestrians are encouraged to explore these nooks and crannies, thereby allowing viewers to discover parts of Sydney they may not have known (Priest, 2011). One of the project's contributing artists, Simon Yates, appropriately pasted a large-scale photocopy of an old-fashioned Underwood typewriter on the walls of Underwood Lane. Further into this laneway is another piece by Mikala Dwyer. The name Underwood reminded her of Dylan Thomas. Her work—a makeshift bar with stools, and an array of odd ashtrays—allowed visitors to linger and smoke while enjoying a reading of Dylan Thomas' radio drama Under the Milk Wood by Richard Burton. This piece was aptly named 'Milk and the town went mad."

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18 Forgotten Songs Art Installation in Sydney

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Angel Lane offers another example of how art can enliven a space. In 2009 Forgotten Songs, a project by Michael Thomas Hill, Dr. Richard Major, Richard Wong and David Towey, was temporarily installed in Angel Lane, but is now making a permanent comeback. Forgotten Songs features 120 suspended bird cages, 10 of which are equipped with speakers, which play recordings of bird species that once populated the Tank Stream area but have been pushed out to the outskirts by development. During the day, the sounds of the scarlet robin and white-throated tree creeper can be heard, and by nightfall, the recordings change to the sounds of evening/night birds such as the tawny frogmouth or white-throated nightjar (Moore, 2011). Moreover, Angel Lane will see a number of other upgrades such as outdoor dining areas, new street lighting, and safer pedestrian links to popular destinations like City Recital Hall, George Street, and Martin Place (Aspect Studios, 2011).

Aside from art installations, the laneway revitalization project also encourages the emergence of new, smaller businesses, as demonstrated in 2010, when the City of Sydney Council approved of plans to open a new gallery, coffee shop, and small bar called "Grasshopper" in the central business district (Fabricatorian, 2010). These establishments aim to give Sydney are more Melbournian feel, as Melbourne gives off a more "vibrant city centre" atmosphere. Grasshopper, in particular, will be built from recycled and reused materials, and will fill a vacant building n Temperance Lane. This small bar is to be an alternative to the larger existing venues, which are often noisy and dominated by poker machines.

Pavements to Parks

The San Francisco Pavement to Parks project is a perfect example of the public reclaiming land for its own use and needs. A collaborative effort between the Mayor's Office, the Department of Public Works, the Planning Department, and the Municipal Transportation Agency, this project aims to make better use of streets and rights-of-way that are too large or that contain wasted space. It was inspired by similar projects in New York City, and contains many of the same elements. Excess roadways have been converted to plazas and seating areas, encouraging a more pedestrian-friendly environment, and allowing individuals to relax in the moveable chairs and tables. These areas have simply undergone asphalt treatment or are fenced with protective barriers in order to create a more inviting feel. In San Francisco, this project tests the feasibility of possibly permanently reclaiming these lands as public open space.

One example can be seen in San Francisco's Columbus Avenue Parklet, between Vallejo and Green Streets, which opened in October 2010. A parklet is a type of Pavements to Parks Project. By extending the grade of the sidewalk into the parking lanes, parklets are able to transform parking stall areas into spaces for people to sit and relax, and perhaps enjoy a cup of coffee. Benches, planters, bike parking, and café tables and chairs have been installed. Such an arrangement allows for social interaction, and fosters positive pedestrian-street relationships, and emulates the qualities that Great Streets (Jacobs, 1995) should, and has to offer.

19 22nd and Bartlett Streets Parklet in San Francisco

Another example—this time in the form of a street plaza—is seen on 17th and Castro, and is named “Castro Commons.” This plaza has been made permanent, but like the other Pavement to Parks project, it was once a temporary installation. The 17th and Castro area is a major right-of-ways thoroughfare, but contained a large amount of under-used and unsightly space. These extraneous spaces were painted a terracotta color, and low-water and wind tolerant plants were added. Seating and tables were also installed, giving the space an overall warm and inviting feel. Many users can now be seen congregated in this area chatting in groups, while children can safely play nearby. Like the Great Streets concept already mentioned, this plaza also encourages social interaction, and is deemed an example of good plaza design for the reason that it brings the community together. (“San Francisco Planning”, 2011).

The Urban Plaza Checklist

The previous case studies exemplify well-designed plazas that encourage interaction and activities. Marcus and Francis (1998), authors of People Places, devised a set of design recommendations through the use of a checklist when designing urban plazas. Public spaces feature many configurations, many of which were featured in the case studies above; these recommendations suggest how to best utilize a particular type of plaza. This broad encompassing set of design recommendations entails various contextual settings, uses, and types of movement within the space (Marcus, 1998). The following issues presented should be taken into account when designing a plaza:

Location

The ideal location for the proposed plaza would be well-matched if the placement could draw in a variety of users. This is particularly beneficial to craft vendors and outdoor cafes as they capture a broad audience from tourists to office workers in the area. Marcus suggests that the proposed location for a plaza should consider proximity to open space, retail uses, pedestrian passageways as well as suitable weather comfort. Further details of the placement should also consider applicable grade changes, size, design, setbacks, sidewalk modifications, depth, height and other details.

Size

There are two main, existing suggestions for size of urban spaces. Kevin Lynch,

an urban planner whom emphasizes mental maps in spatial organization, suggests that dimensions of 40 feet is best suited for closer, intimate environments while spaces up to a 80 feet is still human scale comfort, but proposed that small plazas should not exceed 450 feet of enclosure. Jan Gehl, urban designer and researcher on public spaces, suggested that plazas should fit into a sizable area between 230 to 330 feet as this number depicts a maximum viewable distance of facial expressions. Of note, these size recommendations are subject to consideration of location and context and do not promise success if followed.

Visual Complexity

Visual interests involving various forms, colors, and textures pleasantly enhance the plaza users' experiences. Spaces with views such as distant scenic backdrops or waterfronts are preferred by users. This information is based on previous studies and the author's observations in New York and San Francisco. The visual complexity aspect of a plaza serves a relief for many office workers who would gladly welcome a variety of visual elements including colors, textures, sitting places, trees, shrubs, fountains, sculptures, various corners and changes in level. On the other hand, plazas described to exhibit bareness and lacking in a variety of landscaping textures and contracts are less attractive. Variety and density is a good counter balance to the sparseness and repetition in perception of an environment. Pleasing aesthetics should be capitalized to appeal to the senses.

Uses and Activities

Plazas are distinct from walkways and thoroughfares in that people linger in plazas while sidewalks and passageways are just for passing by. For this paper, users are defined as those who pass through or those who linger in a plaza space. Pushkarev and Zupan make two observations regarding plaza spaces: first, that there are users who stay the longest when plazas are not primarily used as thoroughfares, and second, that the circulation and seating functions of a plaza are incompatible with each other. However, if both functions must be present, distinct subareas or transition space should be arranged to resolve the incompatibility. Marcus suggests that there must

a persuasion element in order to encourage people to linger in a plaza. This can be achieved with visual complexity that acts as “anchors”, both physically (eg. sitting, leaning against) and symbolically (eg. standing near, looking at).

In terms of the sexes of users, open spaces tend to be mostly occupied by men. Women, on the other hand, tend to come to plazas and open spaces in groups or in a couple. This is attributed to the cultural biases of women being seen alone in parks as undesirable. However, this is not the case in instances where food establishments are available. Whyte’s observations also indicate that men prefer lingering at the front of locations, while women prefer staying at the back of locations, often in pairs or groups. Monzingo’s studies also confirmed that women overwhelmingly preferred quiet, urban oases rather than busy street plazas due to sensitivity to environmental negatives such as pollution, noise, dirt, and excessive concrete. Monzingo also concluded that men and women have different concepts regarding downtown open space. She goes on to describe the differences, as women tend to seek relief from urban stresses while men see urban plazas as a space for human interaction.

While users select preferences based on environment, the reasons for using an urban space is more unified. Proximity to workplace is often times the top factor for selecting a plaza to visit. A place to eat lunch was cited as the most common purpose that drew people into plazas. Other reasons to visit plazas include: sitting, relaxing, meeting friends, and shopping. Whyte also listed features and amenities (food, water features or fountains, outdoor sitting, landscaping, and sunny environments) as reasons for visiting an urban space.

Users of a plaza do not always include frequent users. The homeless, vandalists, and other “undesirables” are commonly part of the public realm. The longstanding question of “who makes up the public” in public spaces arises here in the context of perceived public safety and comfort of primary users. The presence of homeless, groups of young people, panhandlers, and other groups considered to be ‘undesirables’ are perceived to stimulate a “dangerous” environment. Thus, public spaces often employ

design measures that discourage sitting and lingering, and tools such as local ordinances and curfews in order to keep out such “undesirables”. These users face much scrutiny in public spaces. While segmentation of communities is an unfortunate result of these offenses, Marcus suggests that “seeing each other as fellow inhabitants of the city” would help remedy such apprehension. The core of the challenge is centrally concerned with addressing the needs of a more inclusive “public” rather than seeking to eliminate or exclude.

Potential Service Area

A potential service area is concerned with the users of a specific site. Before a new plaza is implemented, users’ spatial behaviors are a good resource to turn to in order to identify where users come from and how far they would travel to a particular site. The catchment area – the geographical area served by an institution – studies type, location and distance of travelers within the specific site. (Merriam-Webster, 2011) Precedence studies from Eva Liebermann of San Francisco’s Planning Department (1984) indicated that most people would typically travel two or three blocks to reach their destination. The purpose of a catchment area is key in knowing its general use; community users frequent such an amenity as prompted by high visibility.

Microclimate

Often times, one of the most commonly cited uses of plazas goes are sitting and standing. With these two dominant activities and uses of the plaza, it is important to provide a comfortable environment relevant to temperature, sun, humidity and wind. Various weather issues such as sunlight, degrees in temperature, amount of glare, and wind patterns should be accounted for in built environment adaptation. Sunlight in a plaza should be emphasized to receive as much as the surrounding environment would let in. According to authors Gehl, Pushkarev and Zupan, the optimum temperature for activities of leisure walking, standing and sitting in urban plazas occur right above the 55º F mark. However, in urban areas known to have hot summers, shade is a very important amenity to have in a plaza, yet too much shade offered by buildings or structures can overshadow the space; catching sunlight in the right amounts is

beneficial to lingering users and users passing through. Glare is another displaced problem from modern day skyscrapers and styled architecture using reflective materials. Highly reflective surfaces may cause some areas to become overly hot or uncomfortable for the eyes. Modern day skyscrapers and high-rises would also need to account for wind pattern especially in areas know for fierce downturn winds. A too windy or too hot environment is just uncomfortable. The overall comfort of an open space relies on a balanced setting of temperature that would help determine if the environment is suitable for the desired uses in a plaza.

Boundaries and Transitions

The perception of a plaza's boundaries helps the user or any passerby to become aware of entering and leaving a plaza. A distinct place gives an impression of invitation to enter and use. Although street plazas are usually integrated with the sidewalk, users of a street plaza would perceive the implied boundaries of a borderless space. The sidewalk itself is generally widened to complement the adjacent uses where users could also take advantage of the widened space. The corporate foyer utilizes transitions to signify the implied entryway or the presence of the space. Of the four types of transitions noted by Marcus, the corporate foyer transition in a corner location is best for encouraging use as one could take a shortcut through or linger. Walls (planting beds, seating walls, benches, etc) that draw explicit boundaries may send mixed signals to the users. One may feel inclusion with a sense of enclosure or separation from traffic or alternatively, one could feel imposing or has infringed upon other's personal space. Plaza activity should be the determinant if boundaries should offer a visual cue for inviting the passerby.

Subspaces

Large plazas should have subspaces that act as smaller pockets of space within the overall plaza. The objective of subspaces is to encourage users to find a niche within the larger plaza. The subspaces are particularly useful to cater to people who prefer to be enclosed rather than exposed. Subspaces can be accomplished through spatial divisions by changes in level, planting, construction, seating and the like. Subspaces

would be imparted through a subtle yet clear separation that leads a user from one space to another. However, the sizes of subspaces should be carefully considered as it is important to make the user feel comfortable within it without worries of feeling intimidated or alienated.

Circulation

A strong linkage between plazas and pedestrian walkways has effects on health improvements and city enjoyment. Marcus suggests that the well connected plaza with pedestrian walkways, malls and street closures further benefits the extensive downtown core. Studies of pedestrian behavior show that the shortest and most direct route is often the most used path to reach the desired destination in regards to circulation patterns. Plaza design should account for predicted traffic movement for those wishing to pass through the space, stroll leisurely, use an amenity of the plaza (cafe, bank, other retail), sit or use a vista area for leisure like food enjoyment, view an exhibit, listen to a concert or the likes. Also, volume of foot traffic should be taken into consideration so that the plaza may accommodate for peak rush-hour flows to building entryways. Pushkarev and Zupan recommend that a minimum of two people per minute per foot of walk width is optimum for unimpeded traffic flows at peak times. In contrast, leisure strolling should be accounted for a different pace for obvious reasons. Pushkarev and Zupan also point out that guidance for directional traffic flow relies on physical form as conveyed through walls, planters, bollards or changes in level of texture as opposed to color or pattern on the ground. William Whyte's observations of that pedestrians have a tendency to take the center of a space have been confirmed by Marcus' studies as well.

Seating

In public open spaces, seating areas are not always designated; therefore other street furniture has been employed to maximize use. Nearby accommodations such as a steps, walls, planting boxes and fountain edges can serve double duty for people looking for a place to sit. Whyte speculated in his studies that while various factors such as food, fountains, tables, sunlight, shade and trees help determine where people

sit, the prevailing conclusion seems to be that people sit where there are places to sit. However, not all management approve of seating amenities in a public space. Fears of "undesirables" are the driving force behind the reluctance to provide seating furniture. In general, it is observed that users would want to sit in a plaza for reasons of: waiting for bus/taxi, looking at passing traffic, people watching, or looking for a secluded/intimate space. Various types of seating is available and should be utilized in an appropriate manner. These styles of seating include: benches, steps and ledges and table seating. The orientation for placement of seating amenities should consider those sitting alone or in groups. For this function, orientation is dependent on individual circumstances.

Planting

Plant material helps contribute to the overall aesthetic quality of the place. Their textures, color, massing, aural and olfactory effects help liven up a space and appeal to the sensory experience. Such techniques may capitalize on "changes in color, light, ground slope, smells, sounds and textures" to entice the passersby. The contrast of soft greenery and vivid plantings with hard building facades produces visual interest in a given space. In particular plazas with the intent of producing an oasis effect should take note in planting variety, height of planting, boundary of plantings, color and fragrance as well as protection of this use. Lawns also fall into this category of design qualities as they are often attributed to uses for "picnics, sleeping, sunbathing, people watching or sprawling."

Level Changes

Changes in level can also enhance visual quality of space as they cultivate aesthetic and psychological desirables in plaza design. Marcus recommends that a "modest but observable change in level" would contribute to the overall aesthetics of the plaza. The different variation is plazas with level changes include sunken plazas and raised plazas. Marcus suggests that subtle level changes help maintain a "visual connection between levels to enhance specific experience" while Fruin recommends an avoidance of any dramatic level changes. A below grade, sunken plaza could draw users in from the street level provided that the space comes with seating amenities. On the

other hand, users exploring an above grade, raised plaza can utilize the space for its elevated vantage point. In addition, it is important to confer with universal access and compliance with these regulations would help ensure that users with disabilities would be not excluded from use.

Public Art and Sculpture

In developing a criterion for art in public spaces, the following is recommended: sense of wonder in city life; stimulated creativity and imagination; stimulated contact and communication; provision of comfort and amenity; and encouragement of interaction. Placement of art in public spaces should also be considerate of locating the piece in appropriate context such that it will not intrude or center too much attention on the piece. Fountains with moving water convey a sense of tranquility with its stress-reducing effects and are effective in reducing traffic noises. The position of the fountain should also be considerate of scale and setting such as not locating a fountain among a cluster of high-rises that would generate turbulent winds blowing water further across than necessarily covers.

Paving

As aforementioned, people prefer a quick route that would take them from point A to point B directly. Ground pavements have the ability to direct traffic flow within an area. A paved surface could guide movement or discourage a certain use of a predicted pathway. Different kinds of paving materials have different effects.

Food

Eating, a basic human need, necessitates a space to consume the goods. Whyte simply states that “food attracts people, who attract more people” and for this reason, food is a good resource to have within a plaza if one wishes to draw in more attention and regular use as supported with tables, seating and the likes. Food kiosk vendors and brown-baggers would be quick to seek out a space to enjoy eating outdoors. Facilities that indirectly support the use of food servicing functions include amenities like trash receptacles, drinking fountains, and restrooms nearby.

Programs

The provision of program management is congruent to the continual success of a plaza long after a designer signs off on the project. Programs in plazas give the space a lively character through all the actors and actions that unfold on stage. The animation and festivities upheld by the participants help makes this atmosphere a performance area. Performances are not only limited to scheduled performances and cultural events but also speeches and street performers as well. The design of a plaza with intentions of future programming aims to include both temporary and reoccurring events. Thus, a plaza should be designed with many audiences in mind. Marcus suggests a few provisions for future development of programmed events in plazas: 1) emphasize the importance of using the plaza space to management, 2) locate the stage in ways that are not obstructing traffic, and 3) ensure that the stage provided can double as seating areas when not in use. When dealing with a larger audience base, Marcus also suggests the following guidelines: 1) try not to interrupt flow of normal circulation, 2) provide portable chairs to help define the distance between performers and observers, 3) ensure that volume between audience and performances are not overbearing, 4) make sure programs occur around lunch hours, 5) provide food through temporary concessions, and 6) erect signs to help promote the event.

Vending

Pop-up retails come in many forms: stalls, wagons, handcarts, and kiosks can be found across many city plazas. The rise of mobile vendors helps draw more people to the plaza. However, this was also seen as unfair competition to the commercial businesses in the area. More health codes arose out of fears of vending in public spaces. Thus, more regulations have been established to define how, what types and where these goods can operate. Vending and permit fees now come hand-in-hand. Vendors selling crafts, to-go foods, and flowers are typical examples. These merchants also utilize the busy lunch hours to appeal to their passersby. In such, transit plazas and sidewalks have a higher likelihood of attracting customers. Many carts and mobile merchants tend to sell goods such as those that are usually not offered in downtown

stores. Farmers' markets with vendors selling fresh produce and goods have become quite popular with increasingly healthy conscious cities. Vendors could set up booths or stalls to run the market in a plaza or parking lot on a regular basis with a customer base. Farmers' markets have been rather successful when located close to downtowns and other active places with food concessions.

Information and Signs

Signs are helpful in way-finding in unfamiliar places. It is also a message that serves the public and promotes good urban design. In addition to way-finding, signs also point out both obvious and non-obvious information like the name of the building and additional building entrances. Signs should also be utilized to point users to nearby transit options. Maps are excellent tools to display this information.

Maintenance and Amenities

Continuous care for a public space is an ongoing function of a successful public place. Maintenance of a plaza shows that management cares, and keeps the users coming back. Any outdoor space often needs amenities beyond their current use. For example, trash receptacles should be adequately provided.

With these factors and issues addressed, the following chapter will discuss observational methods in which are used to observe the presence of issues described above.

The United Nations Plaza in Central Market Street area of San Francisco was selected as a research case study. Upon the original design of this place, the UN Plaza was originally intended as an open air pedestrian walkway leading up to the City's Civic Center. Yet, the site is greatly underutilized, lacking in pedestrians and bare with cold granite. This site was chosen as a research case study for its existing opportunities, challenges, as well as high potential in exploring temporary urbanism in an environment that critically needs pedestrian engagement and reactivation of a lively atmosphere.

A brief history...

20 "People like to walk - everywhere. In the cities where people are attracted by lively shops, tree-lined avenues, historic buildings, and by other people."

- Simon Breines on planning for pedestrians (1969)

The United Nations Plaza, a 2.6 acre pedestrian mall, was constructed in part with the Market Street Reconstruction Project subterranean installation of a BART station in 1975. The pedestrian mall aims to extend to the San Francisco Civic Center area along Hyde Street. The UN Plaza would also act as a major transportation hub encompassing service for Muni and BART.

Since then, the plaza has been significantly underutilized and has received underwhelming performance scores by many critics. Lawrence Halrpin, landscape architect and the original designer of the plaza, was criticized for the landmark being “overrun by drug dealers, drunks and homeless people.” Indeed, the lack of pedestrians and it was not the picture the city had in mind. The original intent of the plaza entails gateway-like qualities for the Civic Center area. In response to the underwhelming use, the City and County of San Francisco issued an enhancement plan for the plaza in 1995 to include engravings on the walkway commemorating a 1945 international conference that was responsible for drafting the United Nations charter. Halprin responded to his critics by saying that the plaza is really that of a social problem and not an art problem.

21 Fountain fenced off

In 2001, the San Francisco's Department of Public Works attempted to utilize another strategy to relocate all homeless, drunks, drug dealers and panhandlers at the UN Plaza through allowing vehicular access through the plaza. Although the road would still be closed off to vehicular access during events such as the twice weekly farmers market held at the plaza, the idea of making the plaza a through road would decrease the presence of these undesirables. Patrolling and clean up efforts over many years have been ineffective. One drastic attempted included taking out all the benches in the middle of the night. As of today, there are no benches on site.

By 2003, a new plaza redesign was initiated by city staff and community representatives. The proposed $1 million redesign calls for removal of the fountain in an attempt to attract more pedestrians and activities. A heated debate over the redesign of the plaza stimulated much discussion regarding the fountain itself. For a period of time, the fountain was fenced off to discourage needles and human waste disposal. City officials, at one point, contemplated complete removal of the fountain. Although the fountain received many mixed reviews over the years, it is cataloged as a work of art under the San Francisco Arts Commission. Any means of removal would require discussions with the artist as well as extensive public hearings and reviews.

Finally, in 2005, the plaza received a face lift and the plans were deemed more acceptable to the involved community members. The "redesign", as overseen by the city's Department of Public Works, featured a light sprucing. The sprucing entailed retaining the fountain, omitting the taxi lane from previous design plans, and integrating the homeless by "keeping the plaza busy."

1906
Earthquake / fire ravages SF. A great portion of Market's current architecture was designed and built.

1964:1973
BART begins construction; Market turns into a massive, gaping trench diverting traffic away. Mid-Market sinks into a decline from which it has never recovered.

1926
Orpheum Theatre debuts.

1930s:1970s
Central Market was San Francisco's bustling center of commerce and public life. With restaurants and theatres, the Central Market area was the entertainment center of the Bay Area. Market Street was nicknamed The Great White Way in honor of the neon signs lining the corridor.

1922
Golden Gate Theatre opens as a vaudeville venue.

1968
SF approved a $10+ million bond to improve Market's sidewalks and build Hallidie and United Nations plazas.

1989
Loma Prieta earthquake hits. City Hall is damaged.

The main Post Office becomes seismically unstable and closes; a major reason for people to visit the area disappears.

1967
Market Street Beautification Act removes the street's brightly-lit marquees and most of its neon signs.

Construction of MUNI METRO under Market Street begins.

1981
Heart of the City Farmers Market starts; brings fresh food to the Civic Center Wednesdays and Sundays, year round.

1975
United Nations Plaza was built as part of the Market Street Reconstruction Project in conjunction with the subterranean installation of BART. United Nations Plaza is a 2.6-acre pedestrian mall extending from Market Street to Hyde Street in San Francisco's Civic Center area. The plaza is a major portal for all modes of San Francisco's transportation system including Muni and BART.

1920 1960 1980

1995:2005
Mid-Market Redevelopment Committee was formed and spent the next decade surveying the area and crafting a plan to revitalize it. The plan was met with hasty and harsh criticism from local property owners and neighbors. Any hopes for the mid-Market redevelopment plan died in 2005 -- the plan never received a vote.

2003
Asian Art Museum relocates to Civic Center location.

1999
City Hall completes its earthquake resistant base isolation upgrade.

1998
The Orpheum Theatre completes its $20 million renovation.

1996
A new $140 million SF Public Library opens at Civic Center.

1993
Yerba Buena Gardens opens.

2007:2011
Recession impacts the US and the rest of the world.

2007
Federal office building across UN Plaza is abandoned for new Civic Center location.

2011
SF supervisors approve a payroll tax exemption in the Mid-Market area.

2006
Westfield SF Centre Mall reopens after $460 million remodel.

2010
CityPlace, mid-Market rejuvenation / 250K SF retail space, clears appeal for environmental review.

SF Arts Market begins; runs on Thursdays in Summer / Fall at UN Plaza.

2009
Art in Storefronts Program begins in the Mid-Market / Tenderloint area.

Mint Plaza opens; maintained and operated at no cost to the public.

1990 present

RIDIAN/OF LONGITUDE

Event happenings

The Central Market area including the UN Plaza offers the following schedule of both temporary and year round events:

22 Heart of the City Farmers' Market at the UN Plaza

Heart of the City Farmers' Market is a Certified Farmers' Market and non-profit organization to deliver fresh and local produce, meat, fish, flowers and prepared food on every Wednesday and Sunday from 7am to 5pm at the UN Plaza. The gathering of local farmers and vendors sell a variety of edibles to grocery shoppers and the community. Lunch time hours also feature music and entertainment. The mission of *Heart of the City's Farmers Market* is to bring fresh and reasonably priced food from local farms within 200 miles to San Francisco's Civic Center, Tenderloin, South of Market, and nearby neighborhoods as well to promote healthy eating and living. The Farmers' Market project was initiated by The Great Market Street Development Association and the American Friends Service Committee's Produce-Consumer project. The intent was to generate more pedestrian activity and enhancements on Market Street. These activities are aimed towards promoting activities such as shopping and socializing in a central gathering area.

Mobile food vending is popular in many cities including San Francisco. A mobile vending consultancy called *Off The Grid,* whose tag line is “bringing the best street food straight to you”, coordinates business development, social media, operations, permitting and web services for mobile vendors on board the on service. *Off The Grid* operationally manages food trucks around the City at specific sites including the Central Market area, one at the UN Plaza and another at Civic Center. The UN Plaza mobile vending meets on Thursdays from 11:30am to 2:30pm and on Fridays from 11am to 2:30pm. The street vending and food trucks have the lively effect of gathering people for the common act of buying food and eating. For a few hours a day, the lunch hour atmosphere in Central Market, particularly the UN Plaza, is filled with eager and hungry customers. As of writing, *Off The Grid* has expanded to offer lunch hours on Tuesdays at the UN Plaza as well.

23 Off The Grid
mobile food vending

The Arts Market is a partnership between the Independent Arts and Media (Indy Arts) and the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development to encourage local artists, arts organizations and performers to support and create exciting events for arts in the community. The Arts Market liaisons with local arts communities and artists with small businesses relating to arts, crafts, literature, music and performance. The Arts Market SF runs seasonally on Thursdays from 11am to 5pm at the UN Plaza, utilizing the open air pedestrian atmosphere to gather people.

In addition, the San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) curates the ARTery Project, "an exciting series of art events, fairs, installations and performances taking place along Market Street between UN Plaza and 6th Street." (SFAC, 2011) The project is host to a variety of programs such as *Lights on Market Street,* a series of art installations aimed to reactivate the central Market area with new exhibitions. These new exhibitions include various temporary art installation projects that will be featured along central Market Street from December 2010 to June 2011. The following information explains more about the three exhibitions as these the works of three different international artists:

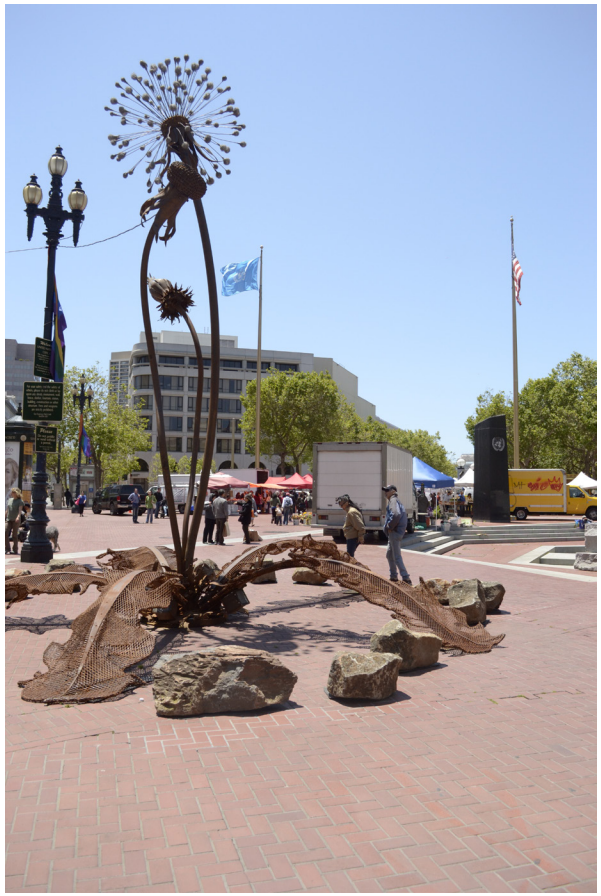
- Jim Campbell's Urban Reflection, located at 1119 Market Street shows distorted reflections of walkers along Central Market Street.
- Paul Notzold used poems from the students of WritersCorps to create his installation Storylines, located at Renoir Hotel at Market and Seventh Street.
- Faces by Theodore Watson is an interactive installation where viewers can take their picture at the capture station located at 998 Market Street to see their faces projected on the building across the street at 1017 Market Street.

Among these art installations are two of Karen Custolito's flower sculptures at the UN Plaza. Culsolito's two flower sculptures stands at twenty feet tall and each is placed on the sidewalk of each side of the street, directly across from each other. The two flower sculptures, titled Market Street Blooms, is one example of using installation art to get people to notice the urban landscape and revitalize the once thriving commercial

corridor that is Market Street. The flower sculptures are constructed of metal and “ sprout up triumphantly amidst the bustle of this urban landscape, making a stand for public art that belongs to all.” Other works by Cusolito as a part of her sculptural series has been previously exhibited at Burning Man event as well.

Art in Storefronts started as a citywide initiative in the past year and will be returning in the Central Market area to enliven empty storefronts and exterior walls. Many dynamic works of art pop up during evening, post business hours and draw attention to art displays and capture attention that the arts, artists and the streets have to offer. This exhibition has also captivated the interests of a local non-profit, San Francisco Planning + Urban Research (SPUR), to lead a walking tour of the art installations and lead discussion about the opportunities and challenges of public art in the streets.

24 Installation art on Market St



The SFAC is also host to other temporary art events such as *Frozen in San Francisco. Frozen in San Francisco* is an event organized via online social media, contends a flash mob to "stay frozen" with body language and motions for five minutes on point and then proceed to go on with their normal activities as if it did not happen.

Not last but least, the homeless population at the UN Plaza is not difficult to spot on any given day. In over a decade of history, the City and the homeless at the UN Plaza has fought for their differences in the use of the space. As the name suggests, the homeless here are lacking some very basic necessities like shelter, food and a place of abode. While the debate of the placement of homeless in San Francisco has raged on for many years, the basic needs are not placed on hold. A collective group scattered around the nation called *Food Not Bombs* where the San Francisco chapter regularly serve meals to the hungry at the UN Plaza. The homeless, or rather anyone hungry, is entitled to a free, vegetarian meal during their hours of what they call sharing. The group's slogan is that of a provocative one: "Food Not Bombs is protest, not charity." Although various chapters around the nation may have their own accommodations and specific to the location ideals, the group mainly carries three main pieces of principal as their foundation. These are: non-violence, consensus decision making and vegetarianism. *Food Not Bombs* does cooking around 3:30pm through the help of volunteers and staff, then commence sharing (serving meals) three times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays) around 6pm. (SFFNB, 2010)

Alas, the need to refresh and revive the Central Market area –including the UN Plaza– is indisputable. The city and many public agencies are in the process of reactivating the space through various means such as art and gathering people for one of life's core necessities - food. The current bareness of the Central Market area including the UN Plaza holds much potential for living up to what the original designers intended the place to be. The open air pedestrian walkway can be restored as a grand gateway to the City's civic structures. The pedestrian walkway can also have pedestrians lingering and leisurely using the space.

In order to understand the types and uses of temporary urbanism, one must begin with conventional uses of public spaces and its relationship to normal operations. The public space, such as a plaza, is flexible and its plasticity is capable of many transformations including temporary uses. The objective of this study is to understand how those temporary transformations is used in a public space.

For that reason, the research questions are posed:

1. What are the characteristics and principles of temporary spaces?
2. How are these different from conventional spaces? And how do such principles and characteristics make successful temporary spaces?
3. How do these characteristics and principles apply to the UN Plaza and the surrounding Central Market Street area?

In order to answer these questions, a case study methodology was adopted. The conventional and temporary use of temporary plazas was systematically observed and the results were compared to each other and existing literature.

In order to investigate these relationships, behavioral mapping techniques were employed to illustrate the types and location of those activities as identified through symbols on a series of base maps outlining the UN Plaza area. This mapping exercise was replicated to create a series of maps comprised of ten minute intervals for each segment. This was carried out with structured direct observations, walk by observations as well as unstructured direct observations including photographs and field notes. These techniques were employed to record the interactions and activities on both typical weekdays and temporary use days were utilized. The hours of observations at the UN Plaza on typical weekdays was observed from 11am to 2pm to reveal conventional uses. Other hours of observations were varied, depending on the hours of event happenings per each event's time frame as discussed in the following chapter will describe the results of the research.

In defining these new phenomena, it is important to observe existing means of observing human behavior in relationship to the built environment.

Unobtrusive measures

The practice of observing behavior and interactions require a form of measurement that will not (or at least minimally) disrupt the natural setting. The act of observing behavior in a given setting for evaluation purposes depends on reliability of the data. The objective of measuring behavior through evaluation is an attempt to observe people in their natural state in a given space. However, “evaluation apprehension” – the fear of being evaluated — is counter-conducive to recording reliable behavioral data. The introduction of a bias, including a reactive nature to being observed, alters the respondent’s actions. Consequently, the job of the researcher is to reduce reactivity in an observational setting. The validity of the behavioral data from observation demands the use of unobtrusive measures.

There are three main types of unobtrusive measures. First and foremost, physical traces are evidence readily observable to the investigator. These include two subtypes: erosion and accretion measures. Erosion is helpful as it provides confirmation of such physical trace in materialized form. This is accomplished through manipulating erodible material. A popular cited example would be observing wear and tear parts of ground coverings to determine areas of frequent use. Accretion is a form of physical trace that examines the history. Furthermore, remnants of physical trace is an indication of behavioral traits of past activities. One’s trash collection can be indicative of a personal environment or industrial setting. The data gathered from physical traces are mostly reliable in the sense that the form of measurement is non-reactive in nature.

Second, archives are also helpful as they are usually and readily supplied by mass media and institutional record-keeping. This form of measurement is repeatedly used in documentation and data collection. This type of observation allows the researcher to observe in a non-obtrusive manner. After all, most archives are accessible in running records. However, archives are not generated in absolute: discontinuity and selectivity are two general biases of this form of study. Records are usually not continuously recorded and even so, must survive the selection process. Running records include four kinds: actuarial records (eg. birth, marriage, death), political and judicial records (eg. registered parties), government records (eg. receipts), and mass media (eg. news and major events). Of note, private records are generally unavailable to the public and are subjected to interpretation.

Lastly, unobtrusive methods involve observation. Simple acts of observation are generally nonintrusive and studies behavior on a micro level. In regards to environmental behavior observations, the observation measure is most particularly interested in how humans act and interact with the built environment. This method allows the researcher to experience the design being evaluated as well. However, in becoming a part of the evaluation, the researcher introduces bias into the study. The variables in an observational setting are to be considered when analyzing data collected from the site. First of many, the researcher must gather data regarding the exterior - apparent physical signs. Next, body movements are to be noted as a form of communication. Positions and placement within a given setting is also very useful. The location and proximity to an individual or a group of individuals can transmit details about a conversation. Sampling among conversations is also encouraged. Uses of technology such as hardware may also be utilized to take advantage of observing from a distance and if well hidden, can become a nonintrusive technique. Furthermore, the time of sampled observations is an important component to measurement. Observations sampled must be reflective of the time measured.

Applications of unobtrusive measures would be utilized to study the UN Plaza.

The following observations will highlight the differences between typical weekdays at the UN Plaza and surrounding area without events and weekdays with temporary events. Findings will address the characteristics and principles of temporary urbanism as described in previous chapters, and how such features apply to the UN Plaza and the surrounding Market Street area.

People

One of the major characteristics of temporary spaces, as observed at the UN plaza, is the attraction and attendance of locals. During temporary event hours, the plaza is bustling with hungry lunch-goers and shoppers. Although the *Heart of the City* Farmers' Market and *Off The Grid* are attractive to passersby, most people who come to the plaza seem to be nearby office workers dressed in office attire. These attendees wishing to purchase food from vendors come in groups to make their orders, or to buy groceries. This exemplifies perhaps a characteristic of successful temporary spaces: they attract not only locals, but also encourage groups of them, as opposed to singles, to attend.

This contrasts greatly with the majority of users of the plaza on a typical weekday. These people are usually passersby without any intention of lingering. They usually traveled in singles or pairs. The sidewalks and the connected pedestrian walkway are mainly used as a transition space for most users. The temporary events, then, help lend the location to becoming a destination location rather than a passage. In this case, an average user coming to the plaza stayed significantly longer due to activities such as grocery shopping and

food orders. The diversity in people that also come to the plaza also greatly increases. When there are events, people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds come to the plaza to meet for the common act of socializing, shopping, eating or just people watching. The only observed users occupying the space statically on typical weekdays are homeless people. In general, the homeless seem to stay there the entire day, or at least the entire duration of the observational period. However, during temporary hours, a majority of the homeless people observed on typical weekdays are further away from the vendors, and interactions with the customers are very limited. Upon walking further to Hyde Street and Fulton, however, the homeless were seen gathered at the Pioneer Monument.

26 Homeless at Pioneer Monument

Behavior

The UN Plaza holds much potential for food opportunities such as farmers' markets or food trucks to serve the traveling and nearby community in general. For events involving food, the need for trash receptacles is higher. During *Off The Grid* lunch hours, not all mobile vendors provided trash receptacles for customers. The plaza as a whole, in general, shows more traces of trash on the ground than on a typical weekday. During event days, attendees wishing to purchase food from vendors come in groups to make their orders and buy groceries. During the earlier lunch hours, 11am to 12:15pm, most lunch-goers buy and take their food to go while lunch-goers past 12:15pm like to order their food and eat on site with others.

27 Off The Grid
mobile food vending

In addition, *Off The Grid* management provides foldable chairs arranged in groups of three in a triangular formation, which can be easily rearranged to the users' needs.

28 Foldable chairs (for the ease of transport and storage) are provided for customers

Since there are no tables provided, some users were observed using other chairs as tables to hold their food while engaging in conversation with other users. Some users also prefer to break up the groups of three to form other groups of chairs to sit together. Very few individuals were observed using the planter edges as seating during lunch hours.

These observations bring up the issue of flexibility—another characteristic of temporary spaces. It can be concluded that event management must be flexible to accommodate for the changing needs and wants of attendees. A coffee mobile vendor (J. Greene, personal communications, 2011) who vends regularly at a permanent location (Rincon Hill of San Francisco) compares his vending experience in a temporary location with a permanent one, describing that the temporary vending process is much more flexible in terms of operating a mobile vending business. At the UN Plaza, the foldable chairs which can be arranged and rearranged, for example, offer a great deal of freedom to lunch-goers. They can choose to sit with whomever and wherever they wish. Such freedom is attractive, as opposed to rigid structures such as planter edges, where people choose not to sit. Moreover, such flexible seating arrangements encourage social interaction, bringing in more people who may wish to spend an afternoon with colleagues and friends. Additionally, the timing of events is also flexible, as these events need to cater to the desires of attendees, and should be suited to particular windows of time. For example, food trucks conveniently come out to the UN Plaza during lunch hours. Other temporary events in the area selectively chosen to operate in other time frames are the Lights on Market Street and Art in Storefronts, which operate during evening, post business hours. These events operate for a few hours at a time with both organized and unorganized arrangements to create a dynamic space fostering an interactive environment.

The events observed require a certain level of organization whether through online social media outlets or other management means. Organization, then, is another principle by which temporary spaces run. The coffee mobile vendor mentioned above confirmed that people (customers) are usually very responsive when there are

OFF THE GRID
· SAN FRANCISCO ·
WHAT'S COOKIN'?

promotions in which vending is disseminated through social media outlet, Twitter. Other spaces and events may be put on by the City for economic revitalization purposes and non-profits working to help gather people within the community. Any relevant interest groups are also involved.

The organization involve is also coupled with another aspect of temporary spaces: a common cause and purpose, which will bring people together. *Off The Grid*, specifically, aims to bring sustainable food that will benefit both customers and vendors. On a larger scale, the Central Market area's general goal is to reactivate and generate more positive pedestrian activities, though within each program exists an underlying goal for the program. However, a strong interest or advocacy to a particular goal could vary in context. In the case of the San Francisco Arts Commission, an active participant group is working towards the overarching goal of revitalizing the Central Market area. The current initiative involves bringing in Arts in Storefronts program to make the pedestrian atmosphere more inviting.

Lastly, there is not very much interaction between the homeless and passersby. Sometimes, a homeless will try to talk to passersby but are often times ignored. Homeless are also observed walking around the food trucks and trash receptacles in search of left over and unwanted foods. The homeless in UN Plaza during *Off The Grid* hours have been reported as an issue and *Off The Grid* management has resorted to hiring private security and personnel. A beat of two police officers were also observed circling the premise to discourage illegal street vending (vendors without permits) during typical weekdays and temporary events. This was observed once per 3 hour observational study.

Environmental Factors

The UN Plaza sits between three buildings: the former Federal building and the two campuses of the Art Institute of California. Downtown San Francisco is notoriously windy and the Central Market area is no exception. Gusts of wind were frequently

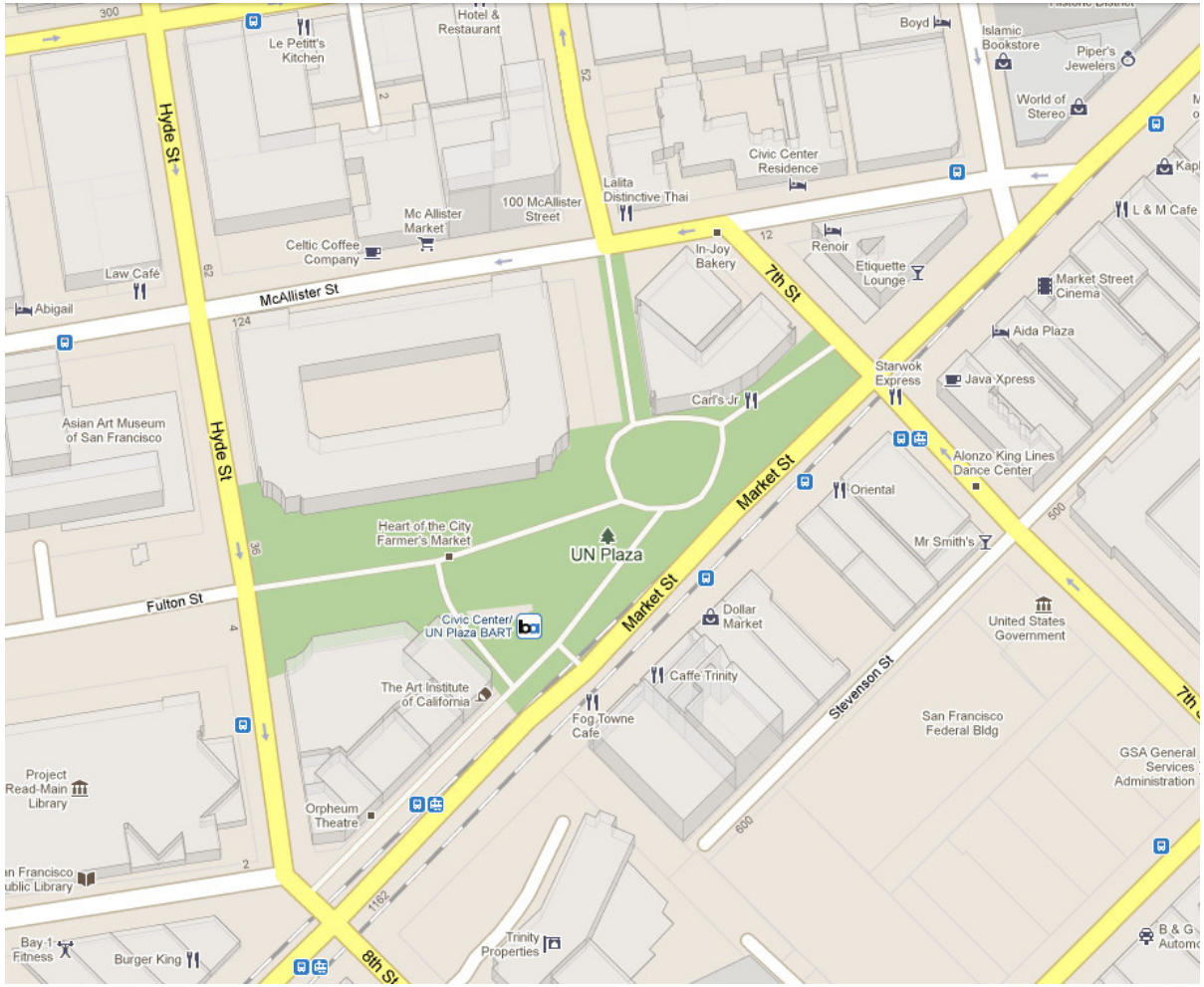
observed coming in from the Embarcadero/Port of San Francisco direction. On a typical day, the wind blowing across the plaza drives some fountain water away from the fountain and onto the plaza. However, the gusty winds are not countered with any forms of wind-blocking including large canopy trees or structural elements. The only trees present on site are trees situated along the sidewalk and along the corridors on large rectangular planters. One can argue that the gusty winds make activities that require some duration of time rather uncomfortable. This aspect will be discussed in later chapters.

29 Splashing fountain creates an uncomfortable atmosphere for lingering

Transit modes

The UN Plaza is a major transportation hub. On the street level, San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) provides light rail and bus lines. On the subterranean level, Muni and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) provide service to users. In addition, there are multiple access points and transit stops in and around the UN Plaza.

30 Map of transit stops in and around the UN Plaza



31 (opposite page) Different modes of transportation along the Market Street corridor

A number of users were observed using the elevator (see map) to bring their bikes to and from the BART station. In addition, there is an overall lack of bicycle parking for those wishing to use transit as well as those who commute by bike to the plaza to eat or shop. Transportation will also be discussed in later chapters.

TOW-AWAY
NO STOPPING
ANY
TIME
GUARDIAN
SF WEEKLY
TAXI
481

lifornia-San Francisco
10 UNI TIONS PLAZA
For your own safety, please do not climb or lay on this foundation.
Park Code Section 5.01

Interaction between plaza hardscape and people

Although the overall interaction and lingering among users in the plaza is quite low on a typical weekday, one would occasionally stop to take a picture of Halprin's fountain, the engraved black marble obelisk commemorating the UN charter signed in San Francisco, or the view to San Francisco's City Hall and the general Civic Center area. Most people utilizing the plaza as a passageway to the adjacent streets on foot and by bicycle rarely stop to linger. Even so, very few passersby lingered in the plaza to talk on the phone or chat with someone. However, groups of young people, perhaps students, congregated to smoke together nearby the Art Institute's building entrance on a typical weekday. Other young folks were observed using the fountain's ledges or building's steps to skateboard on both typical weekdays and temporary event days. Additionally, these young skateboarders were also observed asking people sitting on ledges of the fountain and planter to leave as they would want the ledges for skateboarding. While this area is a busy area as a transportation hub and future shopping district, there are very few users observed lingering in plaza for sitting or people-watching.

32 Commonly sighted interactions with the fountain at the UN Plaza

In contrast, the homeless groups observed utilized many more areas within the plaza. The homeless were observed using the planters' edges, building steps, and the niches of space between the fountain blocks to be most useful for sitting, standing and sleeping. Some homeless tended to congregate in small groups (3 to 5 people) while some homeless individuals observed prefer to sit or sleep on ledges alone in an isolated spot.

Using the information gathered from observations of the UN Plaza and the Central Market Street area, the following chapter will discuss implications for design.

TRUT

After multiple site visits, including short visits (about twenty minutes) and longer visits (3 hour observation studies), the implications for design have been organized into categories by subject matter.

33 Biweekly farmers' market held at the UN Plaza

Events

The UN Plaza is a major transportation hub and at times, brings a feeling of fast paced atmosphere with people and transit modes, during the busy hours. This constantly changing landscape of people's faces and movement makes it rather interesting and dynamic. When the plaza is empty, it is quite bare and blends into the background; it is not that the place is void of people but rather no one really seems to want to linger. But it also has a lively side. The plaza that blends into the background becomes more colorful with vivacity when there are events happening. Give a reason for people to go to an event at the UN Plaza and people will come. In such, the *Heart of the City* farmers' market is a popular one here. This farmers' market is year round and takes place every Wednesday and Saturday at the plaza, drawing a bustling crowd eager to shop for their pick of groceries and goods. Though the farmers' market started as a City initiative, it has since been well received and is attended by locals and tourists alike. The take-home lesson here is to provide more opportunities for events (easily arrangeable) so that people may come for their festivities or daily necessities such as food.

34 Impromtu game of chess on the streets, half a block away from the UN Plaza

Opportunities for social activities

Socializing is a very important aspect in what makes a plaza lively and attractive to passersby. During the busy hours of lunch or event days, the plaza is heavy with foot traffic, drawing people in from all directions of the site. With such an atmosphere, this plaza makes for a good place to linger for a while. However, the lack of seating in the plaza makes it difficult for passersby to stop and pause. Ample seating may provide an environment for socializing opportunities at leisure. During the observations, for example, a group only half a block away was seen gathered for some friendly games of chess over foldable tables with chess board paper taped on top. Currently, there are spaces within the plaza that would not necessarily allow for this type of setting; hence that is why it may located off site. This scene of a spontaneous game of chess further solidifies the potential for non-permanent, flexible applications where the UN Plaza would be a resourceful and accommodating urban environment.

In order to accommodate for the different activities a user or passerby may choose, the opportunities for such an event should be first provided on site. Once established, the users of the space are encouraged to create their own seating arrangements for their comfort. Such daily amenities can be incorporated into the design of the space while accommodating for different uses per the event's needs each time via modular urban furniture design. With the existing lack of subspaces, modular urban furniture will offer flexibility in uses according to different needs while creating subspaces to provide a sense of enclosure and intimate space rather than the undesirable flat openness. Modules can also help break up the space by decreasing continuous surface ledges available for skateboarders. Skateboarders have been observed asking people sitting to leave so that they may use ledges of planters as skateboarding space, further discouraging people from using the plaza. The plaza, a communal space, should be shared and enjoyed by all rather than being taken over by a specific need or group.

SPEED
LIMIT
10
BREEZY

35

The street is a room by agreement...
a community room dedicated to the city for common use...
its ceiling is the sky.

Louis Kahn, 1959

Movement in the plaza

The UN Plaza is situated along Market Street, one of the busiest streets and commercial corridors in San Francisco. It is also in close proximity to many significant buildings including the City's civic buildings such as City Hall, Orpheum Theater, the Public Library's main branch, Asian Art Museum, U.S. Court of Appeals, Warfield Theater, and many others as well. This central location combined with the possibilities and potentials of mixing the Street Plaza, Transit Foyer, and Grand Public Space typologies create an atmosphere that is flexible for socializing and commercial opportunities. While the plaza is constantly busy with people passing by and passing through the space, many hardly take a moment to stop and linger. The mass transit aspect of the plaza would avail itself to the interest of the users while they are already going to the plaza for their choice mode of transportation. The various transportation choices make it easy for people to come to the plaza. The circulation within and around the space is busy and its sporadic movement creates a kind of dynamic that is characteristic of an urban downtown.

These characteristics, in turn, make the plaza a great place for people watching - one of many favorite past times. The plaza also helps frame the view of the City's Civic Center in the background as it is one of the most commonly photographed landscapes by passersby and tourists. The plaza's connection to the City's Civic Center draws on the idea of the Grand Boulevard from the City Beautiful Movement. The City Beautiful Movement stemmed from the notion of constructing civic spaces modeled after expositions and World's Fairs from the early 1900s. This model of civic spaces is popular in many major American cities, and San Francisco, a cosmopolitan city, is no different. Hence, it is only reasonable to provide a variety of transportation choices to reach such a destination. This major transportation hub is serviced by both Muni and Bart, and other means such as the private automobile or even walking and bicycling. The San Francisco Bicycle Coalitions' *Connecting the City* campaign is an ambitious effort to make bicycling in the City more efficient and safer. It is no surprise that Market Street is one of the busiest streets in the city but it is also one of the safest streets to bike along due to separate bike lanes and newly installed bike boxes at many

intersections. Market Street is a dynamic street cutting the grid system at an angle on the City map. This convenient street also helps draw more commercial business by bike. In observed events, there is no shortage of bicyclists that go to events at the plaza by bike. However, attendees and passersby that come by bike have no place to lock or store their bike while they buy groceries or ready to eat foods from mobile vendors.

In addition, universal design and access should also be enhanced for those wishing to use the space. Bicyclists, pedestrians, dog walkers and skateboarders alike all are frequently observed using the connecting corridor to cut through the block onto the other side. The current use of the plaza calls for organizing and balancing the needs of all types of users.

36 Lack of bike parking available

Appreciation for art

The art installations along Market Street as a part of the *Better Market Street* initiative are aimed to revitalize the area through art. Newer and more retail stores (big and small) coming in to the Central Market area provide for commercial opportunities to reactivate the space and economics. While these new commercial aspects have yet to completely take off and open to the public, these art installations encourage more interactions with the street's hardscapes such as boarded walls prior to a store's grand opening or sides of buildings as artistic medium for displaying content. The San Francisco Art Commission's *Art in Storefronts* program is intended to help encourage more users to linger, and is also an expression of appreciation for local artists' works. *Art in Storefronts* run post business hours their lighting up until midnight also helps with street safety through its bright illuminations. Art in the storefronts also allows for busy downtown passersby to appreciate the artistic expressions in San Francisco along the ever changing landscape of Market Street. The redesign of the plaza should aim to continue providing opportunities for artistic endeavors and showing how vibrant and diverse the city really is.

37 Faces By Theodor Watson

Environmental Factors

The surrounding area can be depicted with towering buildings casting long shadows onto the sidewalk, giving the space a cold and damp illusion. While on the streets, one would hear the echoes of aggressive panhandlers in the quiet corridor. Within the UN plaza, the vast openness brings about a quality of bareness to it. Overall, the lack of protection from the elements is a concern to those who wish to linger in the plaza. Despite that the temperature is usually moderate in the 60s degree Fahrenheit, there are no shade structures to provide relief from the sun. In the rain, there are also no shelters available to hide. The wind remains the biggest concern as the wind patterns in this particular area is strong and difficult to escape. There is an overall lack of landscaping and planted materials to help block the strong winds or provide shade. The existing trees are mostly sidewalk trees and trees situated on the planters. The redesign of the plaza would incorporate plantings and landscaping materials to reflect California's Mediterranean climate and native vegetation. In addition, the strong wind also diverts a lot of water from the fountain, making it uncomfortable to stay in the plaza for long. There are also issues concerning the fountain where people use it as a bathroom to shower and eliminate bodily waste. The fountain should provide traffic noise relief and should be aesthetically pleasing to look at; however, it does neither. The City's choice to put a wire fence around the fountain has proven to be ineffective and fruitless. While the plaza would certainly benefit from having a fountain feature for both noise and aesthetic reasons, the location of the existing place is not the best choice. New water features that are not prone to the drafty winds should located away in an area where it neatly tucked away from heavy traffic and wind making it more appealing to passersby and plaza users. The fountain should also discourage bathing and urinating. Most of all, a calming effect from the fountain should be emphasized rather than the waters pouring out and crashing on to concrete blocks in the depressed mound.

Political

The UN Plaza is frequently used as place or starting point for demonstrations in the City of San Francisco. Democracy is often times discussed in the literature relating to temporary urbanism. Just four blocks away from City Hall, the plaza intends to allow its users and passersby to connect with the City's Civic Center and the Central Market Area. The United Nations Association states that:

> *"The UN works to stop wars between countries and to provide a platform for dialogue. Its multiple subsidiary organizations carry out its mission to facilitate cooperation in international law, security, economic development, social progress, human rights, and peace."*

Thus, this important plaza should have a space that can act as a platform for dialogue available to all. The vision of a platform is not merely just a place of debate or speeches but rather, is a space designed to encourage gathering people of the same interests for the same cause in a peaceful and egalitarian manner. As the name suggests, the UN Plaza should do just that.

Homeless population

There are many groups of homeless that stay in the plaza for long periods of time. Some groups of homeless were observed sitting, conversing, eating or sleeping. The homeless population is a part of San Francisco and especially in difficult economic times, homeless need a home, and whether it be a street sidewalk, planter edge or steps of the fountain, this is their place of abode. In such, the homeless are more likely to stay at the plaza as food sharing organizations such as *Food, Not Bombs* come to the UN Plaza 3 times a week (Monday, Wednesday and Sunday) to serve food to the homeless dwellers here. As food is a necessity for all living things, birds tend to visit the site as well. Some passersby including some of the homeless in the plaza have been observed feeding birds, namely seagulls and pigeons, with small pieces of food such as crackers. This attracts a bird population throughout the day and encourages their staying. Surprisingly, with even more food present, the birds feeding incidents are down from a typical day. However, food is present in the area from either farmers' markets

or mobile food truck vending; the birds fly over the plaza circling around, looking for unwanted pieces of food on the ground throughout the day. Needless to say, the plaza is littered with bird feces, which may be discouraging to many passersby and users lingering the plaza.

There are many observations of homeless attempting to interact with users such as during lunch hours with *Off The Grid* food truck vending. Aggressive panhandling discourages staying in the plaza. The redesign of the plaza should not discourage homeless populations but rather, should find means to share the space and allow their coexistence.

38 Homeless sleeping in the UN Plaza

These factors and concerns would be taken into consideration when redesigning the UN Plaza.

Design Principles

39 We do not merely need grand plans, conceived freshly, for entirely new neighborhoods where we have cleared away acres of slum. We also need piecemeal solutions that can be applied on a small scale, seizing each small opportunity that will go toward the fulfillment over the years of a much larger design.

Lewis Mumford on the philosophy of urban open space, 1969

The redesign of the UN Plaza illustrates applications and principles of temporary urbanism. As aforementioned, the Central Market area was once a thriving commercial corridor that is now in need of help in economic revitalization, pedestrian environment improvement, as well as incorporation of future plans within the planning framework. These changes include, but are not limited to, circulation, safety and other functional and operational aspects. The following is a summary of design principles applicable and site specific to the redesign of the UN Plaza. The following elements of design should be incorporated:

Flexibility

The planning of the space should allow for flexibility in general use as well as arrangements per the user's the needs and desires. The focus is geared towards accommodating for different events through the day. The flexibility allows for a quick rearrangement and creation of new subspaces. Each time a new arrangement is created by the user, the plaza also changes slightly, thus creating a changing gallery type of effect.

Movement

Traffic circulation at the UN Plaza is rather unorganized. However, this redesign could help adapt existing patterns into the circulation patterns. Since the UN Plaza is both a transit foyer, street plaza and a grand public space (see typologies of urban plazas) it is essential to ensure that both foot and bicycle traffic flows through the plaza smoothly and efficiently through design of the space. The space should also accommodate for everyday use as well as special events.

Environmental Comfort

Protection from the elements is particularly important as downtown San Francisco is affected by the high rise buildings in the area creating a wind tunnel effect. The site is particularly prone to these gusty winds, and individuals must be in a comfortable environment to want to linger [cite Checklist]. In addition, the lack of shade also calls for a structure that would provide both wind protection and shade. The use of materials should also be carefully considered in order to ensure that such amenities are appropriate for site context as well as existing and future architectural styles.

Safety

In order to attract more people to come linger in the plaza or for temporary use, passersby and users should feel safe. Facade lighting on the sides of the building should help illuminate the edges of the plaza. In addition, street lighting during the evening and night hours should be enhanced to provide pedestrians a better view of the area they would be walking to and through.

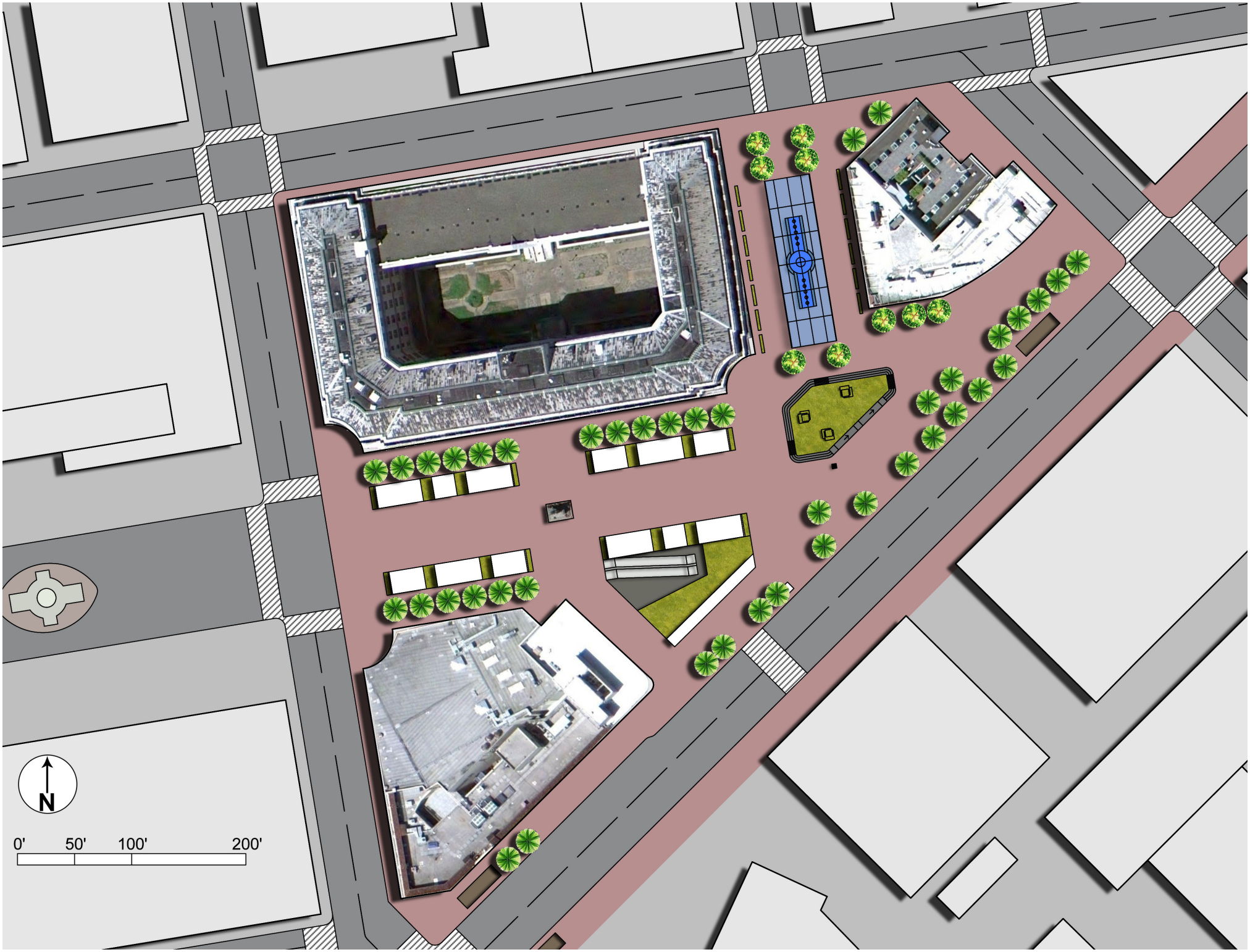
In addition, the UN Plaza is also a major transportation hub where more users may opt for a bike or mass transit options. For these users, a bike parking and storage area should be provided for their convenience. Commuters using the bicycle as an everyday transportation tool should be able to do their shopping, socializing and commutes without worries.

Opportunities for Art

The San Francisco Arts Commission and the City are strongly encouraging the initiative and applications of public art. The UN Plaza, a place for gathering, should be suited for a variety of activities including art viewing and enjoyment. The plaza space is vast but art events may also be situated in the smaller, pocket spaces. This would benefit the art exhibition as it would attract users. However, it should not impede the flow of foot and bicycle traffic that is prevalent throughout the day. In addition, the plaza is also a center of transportation, thus making it a prime space for hosting and holding temporary art exhibitions and events to catch the attention of passersby. Art exhibitions within the space are highly encouraged as they would promote more interaction with passersby that travel along this corridor and plaza space.

Proposal for Redesign

The redesign would demonstrate principles of temporary urbanism and applications of such use in a way that is suitable and appropriate for the context and environment of the site.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100'
200'

Design Features

The following design features are recommended for the UN Plaza.

41 View of UN Plaza from Market Street

Modular street furniture

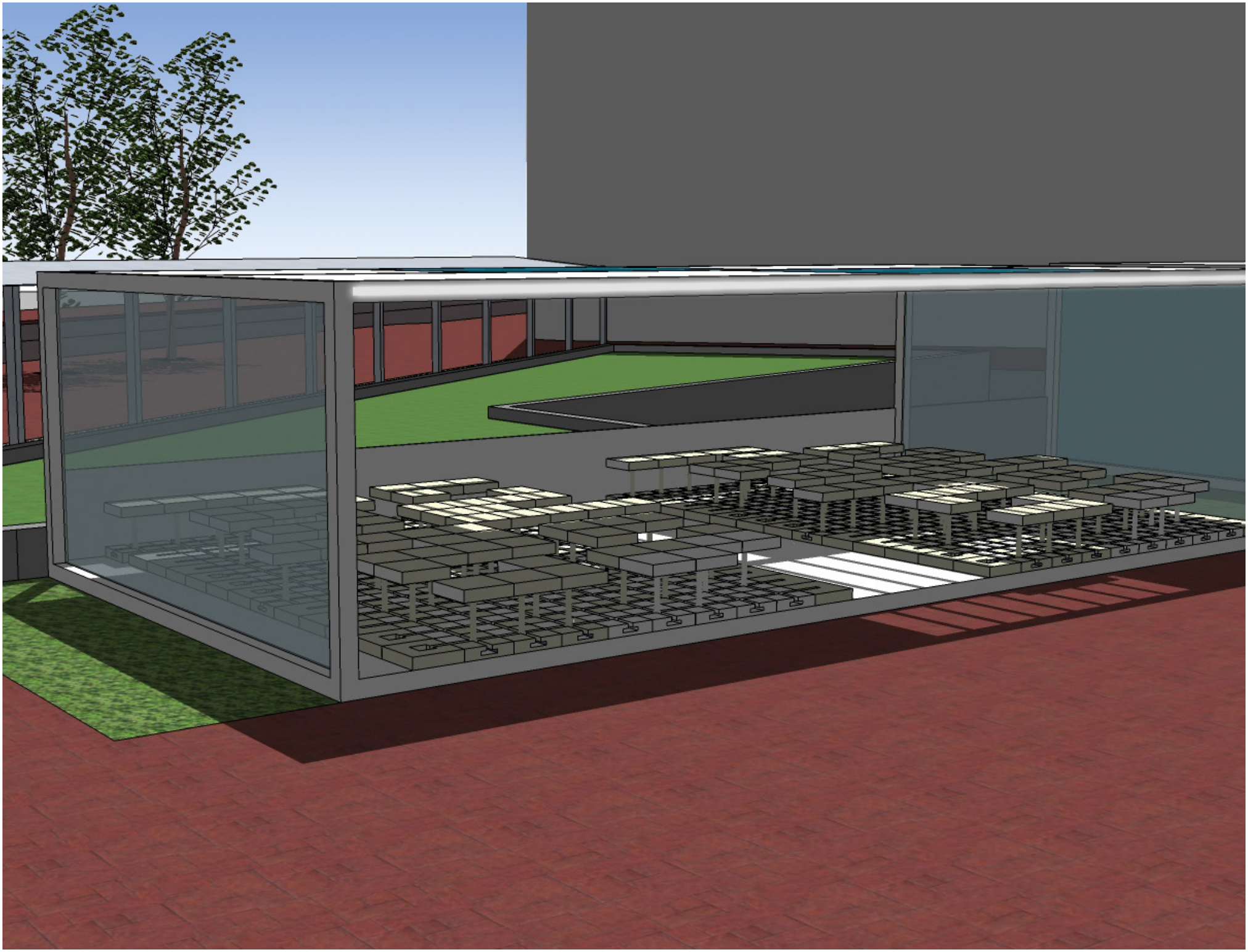
Modular furniture that operates within a grid system would be placed in smaller pockets of the plaza. The placement of these modular furniture also help break up the vast space, creating subspaces and niches, which are recommended design measures by Marcus and Francis [year]. This is also particularly helpful in inviting more users to linger; the plaza is public and sharing should be encouraged. Offering flexibility is one of the principles used in many instances of temporary urbanism and features of a temporary space. The idea is to allow these changes quickly and efficiently per the user's desires and needs. In addition, these pocket spaces may serve as a temporary exhibition set for art installations over these modular furniture. The furniture is designed in a way to allow for creating space, both horizontally and vertically. Although the furniture is confined to the boundaries of the grid system, the furniture would provide flexibility for the user in adjusting distance from another chair or in adjusting the height of the chair pneumatically for comfort. The flexibility in adjusting the height of the chair would also allow for table use so that one may not have to arch his or her back to use another module as a table. This type of furniture would offer a surface for lunch-goers to eat, as food is considered a main attraction to temporary spaces (Marcus, 1998), so areas and structures suitable for consuming those goods should be provided.

42 Flexible seating with protection from elements

Shade structure and wind protection

Two shade structures would be provided. These include structural enclosures that wrap around the two sides of a rectangular box. The box would sit over a set of modular furniture. Two sides of the box would be partitioned with glass to allow visibility and transparency. Users would be able to take advantage of viewing the sites in the area, such as City Hall in the background, as these sights contribute to the visual complexity of the area [cite Checklist]. The top of the box closure would be connected by a series of rows that would extend from one side of the box to the other. With the arrangement of the rows, the sitting space underneath would be partially shaded but would also allow for some sunlight to come through. The rows could also sustain plant life in the form of vines that would sprawl across the rows. In addition, the landscaping of vines sprawling over the rows would continue the effect of the grand boulevard, one of the characteristics of grand civic space planning that grew out of the City Beautiful movement at the turn of the century, in the early 1900s. In plan view, the continuation of the landscaped areas should help carry the extent of the long rows out and anchor at the end of the boulevard as it meets Market Street. The height of the structure would help frame the viewing of City Hall in the background.

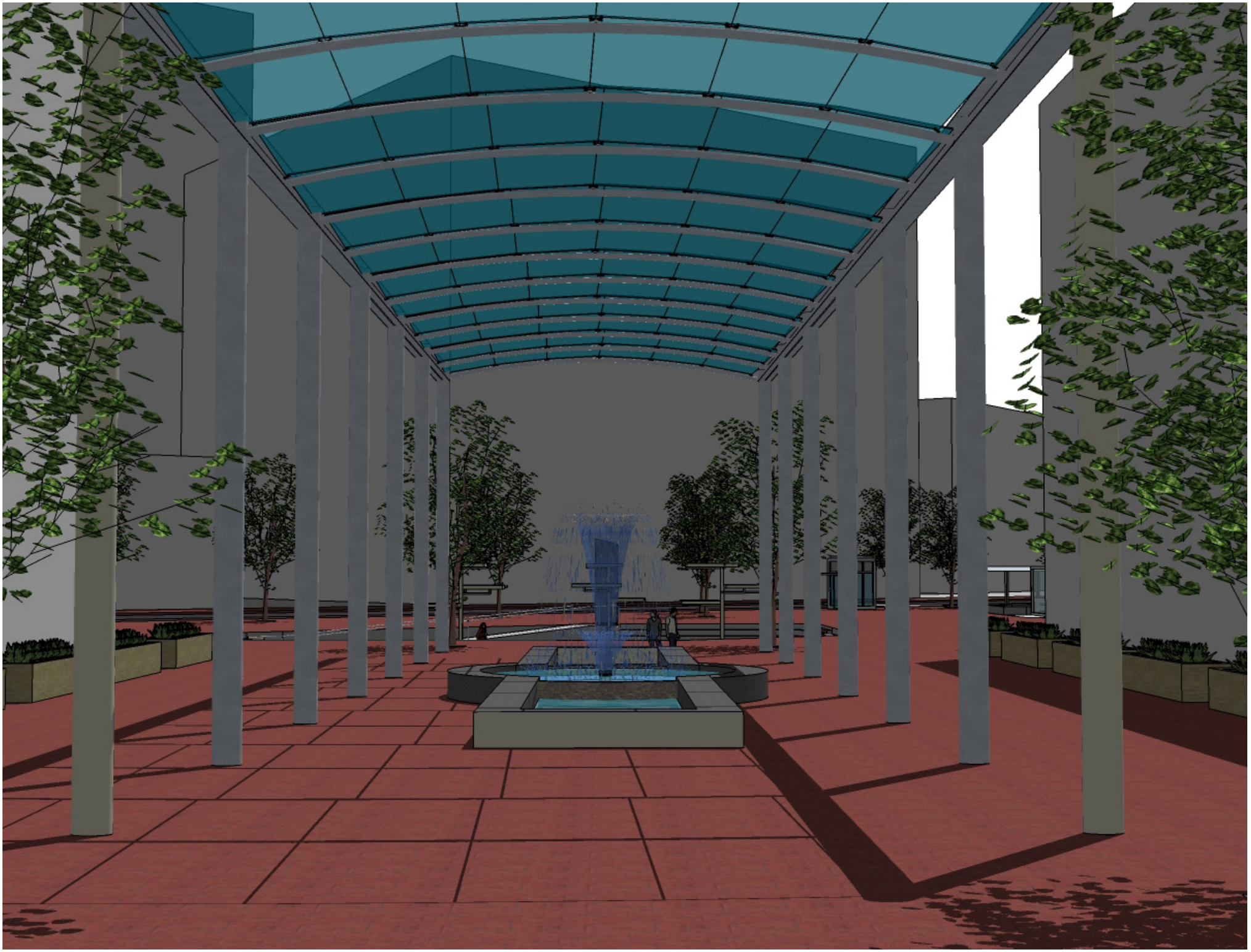
The second set structure would be placed along the corridor connecting to McAllister Street, parallel to Market Street. This part of the plaza is not adjoined with the grand boulevard stretching from City Hall, thus allowing for a second set of materials that would be better suited to match new architectural styles planned for the area. As new commercial retailers come into the Central Market area, renderings of this new shopping mall follow the style of the existing shopping malls on the block of 5th and Market Street. The style of the architecture is modern with a glass and steel building envelope. These materials, glass and steel, are recommended for this shade structure on this side of the plaza. Since the adjacent buildings to the corridor are rather tall, this area is mostly shaded throughout the day. Hence, the use of glass would allow sunlight to pass through and keep the space well lit during the day. Overall, the structure aims to provide protection from the elements and possible bird droppings since the area often attracts many birds.



43 Covered fountain to minimize wind blowing and discomfort

Fountain

The existing water feature, unfortunately, creates more trouble than it provides relief and comfort. A water feature ideally should provide relief from the busy street traffic and noise as well as comfort, suitable for all ages [cite Checklist]. However, the fountain is unnecessarily causing more safety and health issues as many homeless in the area use the fountain to shower and excrete bodily waste; this is unsanitary, inappropriate and discouraging to passersby and users. For these reasons, the fountain should be relocated to another space where the strong winds would not blow the water across the plaza or used for bathing. A smaller, narrower and shallower pool of water with minimal water jets is recommended and would be situated under the glass overhang. A calm pool of water would serve as a place for reflection and tranquility.



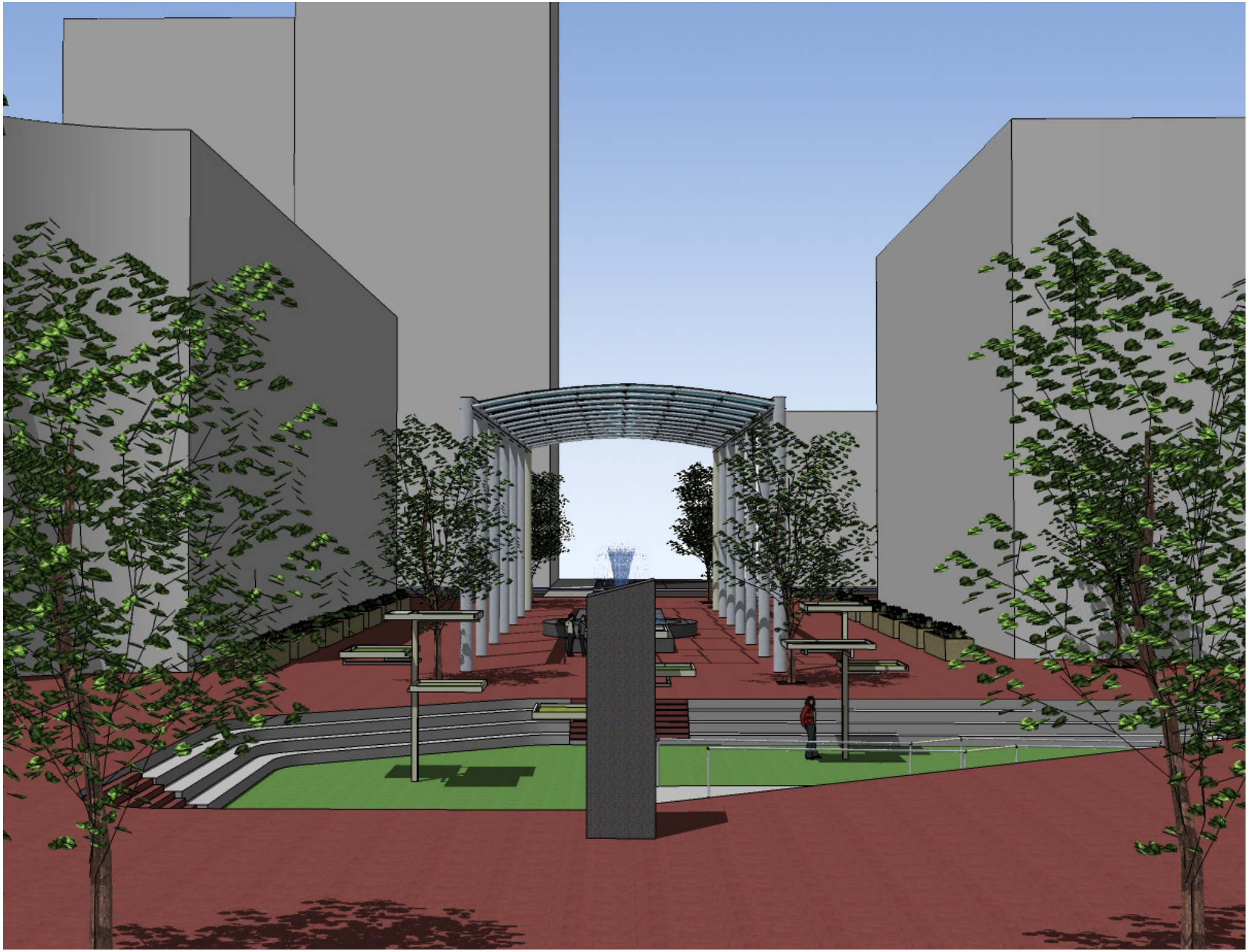
44 Sunken garden slightly depressed from street level

Urban oasis sunken garden

In general, the plaza space is a busy corridor as a transportation hub and passageway. During temporary event hours, the plaza could be especially busy drawing more people in. While the plaza space is vast, it is also very flat and lacking in level changes. While the plaza may experience different traffic levels due to the difference in time of day or special events taking place, there should be a place for escape from the busy street (Marcus & Francis, 1998).

Nearby office workers could take advantage of a sunken garden as an Urban Oasis as described in the typologies of urban plazas. This type of urban oasis is highly landscaped and ideal for those wishing to relax or enjoy their lunch under the sun (as it is mostly open and vegetated with grasses and artificial trees that will be discussed next). This particular area will include natural plants as well, which will take into account color, variety, and height (Marcus & Francis, 1998). Specifically, native California flora will be planted.

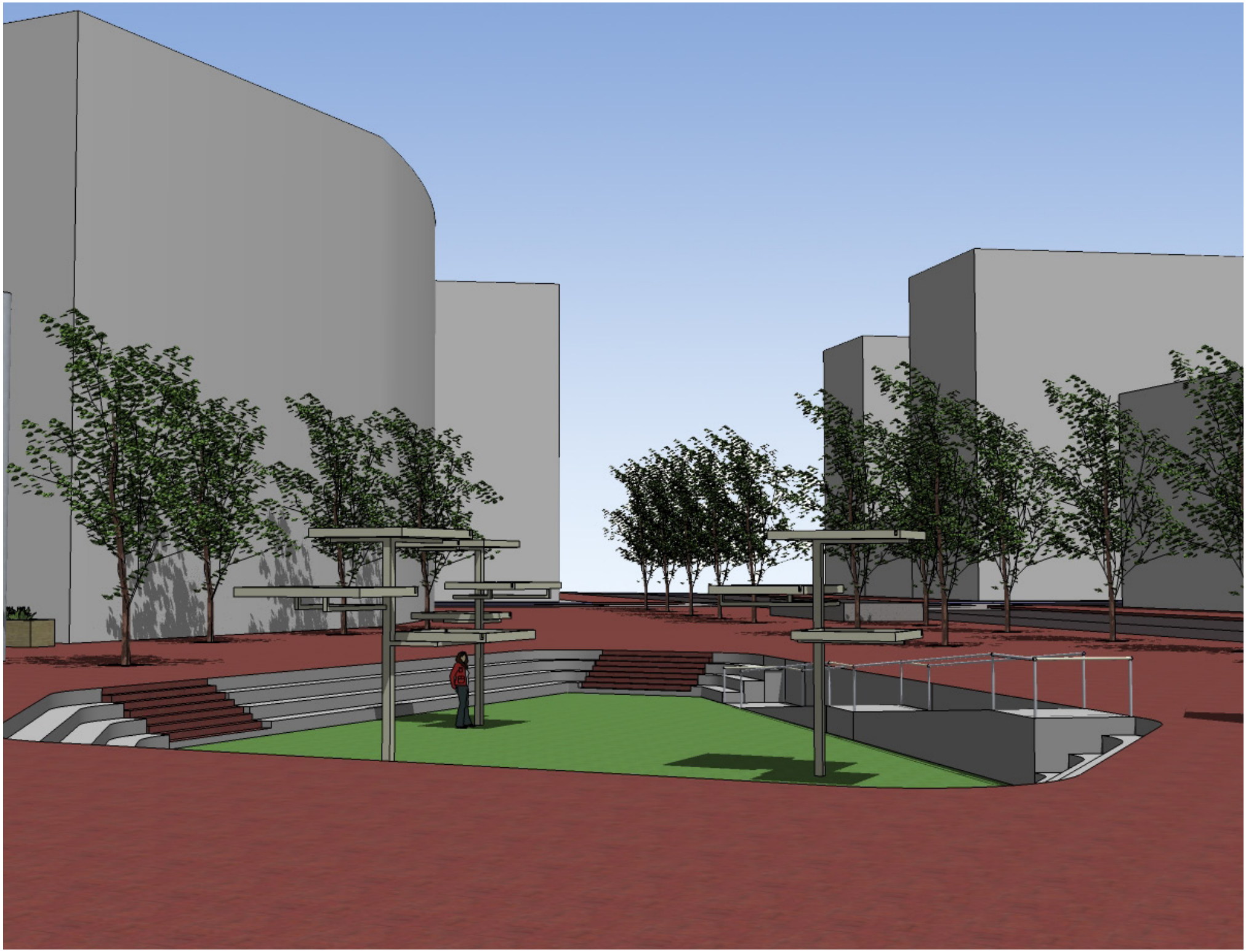
In addition, the sunken garden is slightly depressed with a four feet drop from street level. A sunken garden would not obstruct the viewing of City Hall in the background. The sunken garden would also indirectly connect the two corridors, allowing for better circulation (Marcus & Francis, 1998). The accessibility to the sunken garden would use steps as stairs all around the plaza to invite users and passersby to the space but also allow the option to walk around the sunken garden without too much of a detour if one so chooses not to use the sunken garden. The sunken garden is also accessible by ramp and conforms to the American Disability Act (ADA) standards including meeting slope requirements and providing landings where appropriate.



45 “Trees” peer out of the sunken garden from street level view

Roof garden tree

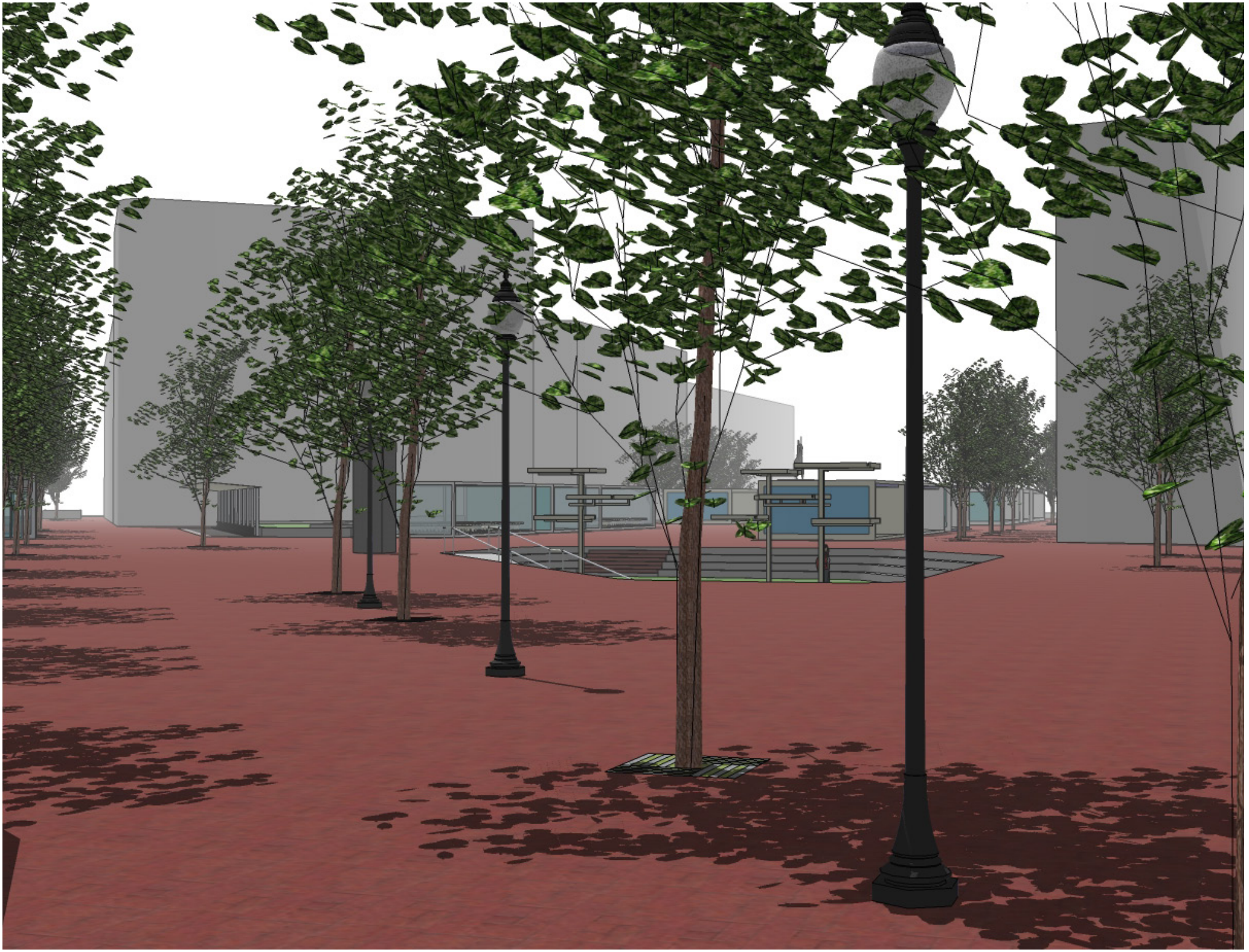
As mentioned above, a few artificial trees should be placed in the sunken garden. A limited number of such trees should be allowed such that more sunlight may come into the sunken garden. The trees would also be artificial due to the sunken garden being depressed into the street, and should be careful to avoid unnecessarily digging deeper into the street. In addition, the City Beautiful movement encourages plentiful landscaping and this would be an opportunity to add more landscaping features to the plaza. The physical shape of the structure should resemble the shape of a tree. Branches of the tree could extend to add flat areas where it could accommodate for small flat gardens much like roof gardens. Since these artificial roof garden trees are situated on the level of the sunken garden, the view from the street level would show these flat pieces to appear from the ground and protrude a shelf-like display. This would also be an area of opportunity for flexible use regarding what the tree shelves would display, such as public art (Marcus and Francis, 1998). This could be used to attract more users and passersby to the sunken garden to linger and experience one of the distinct qualities from the City Beautiful movement in the modern day setting.



46 Lighting is needed for the comfort of pedestrians on foggy mornings and late at night

Lighting

Lighting is particularly important for safety. For this reason, street lighting is proposed to be incorporated into more areas of the plaza. More lighting fixtures will be incorporated into the design of free standing structures and could be attached to one of the box structures. The light fixtures should be slim so that it may fit into the space well and not obstruct use of space or traffic during the day. These light fixtures would placed around the sidewalks and other landscaped areas to provide lighting from dusk to dawn.

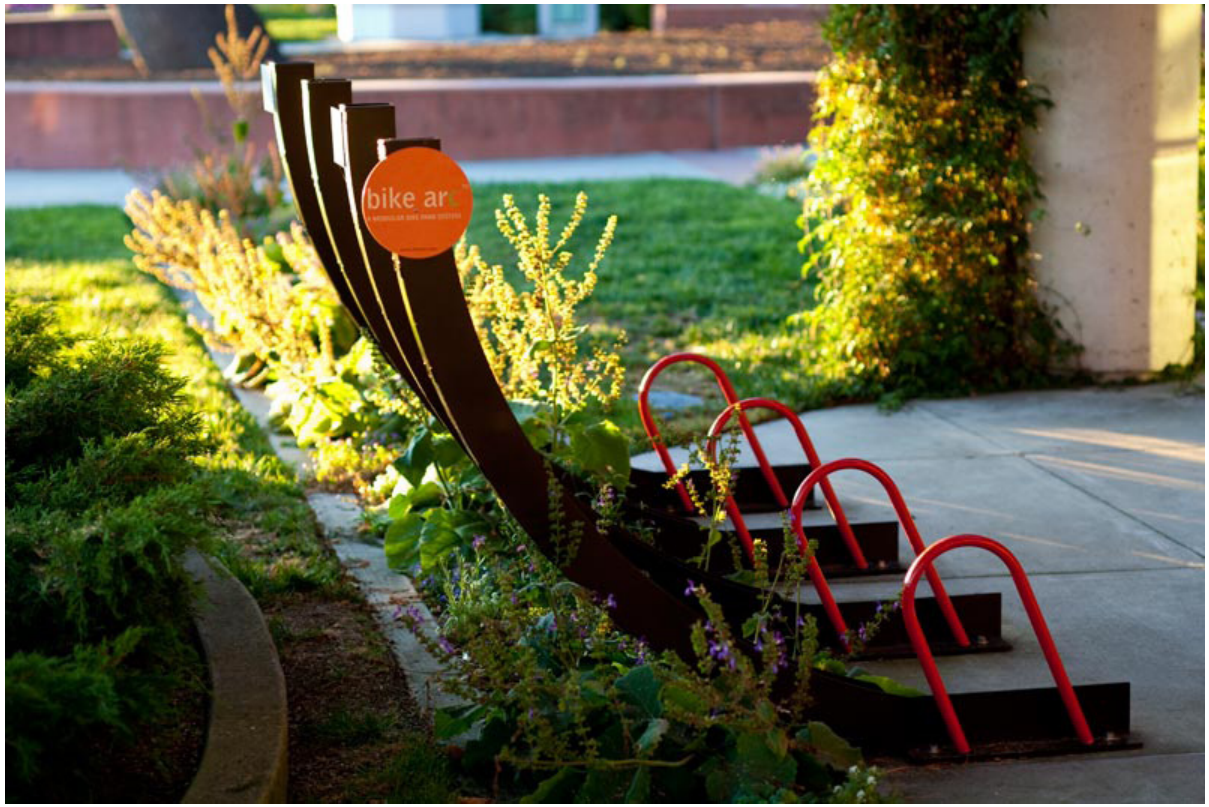


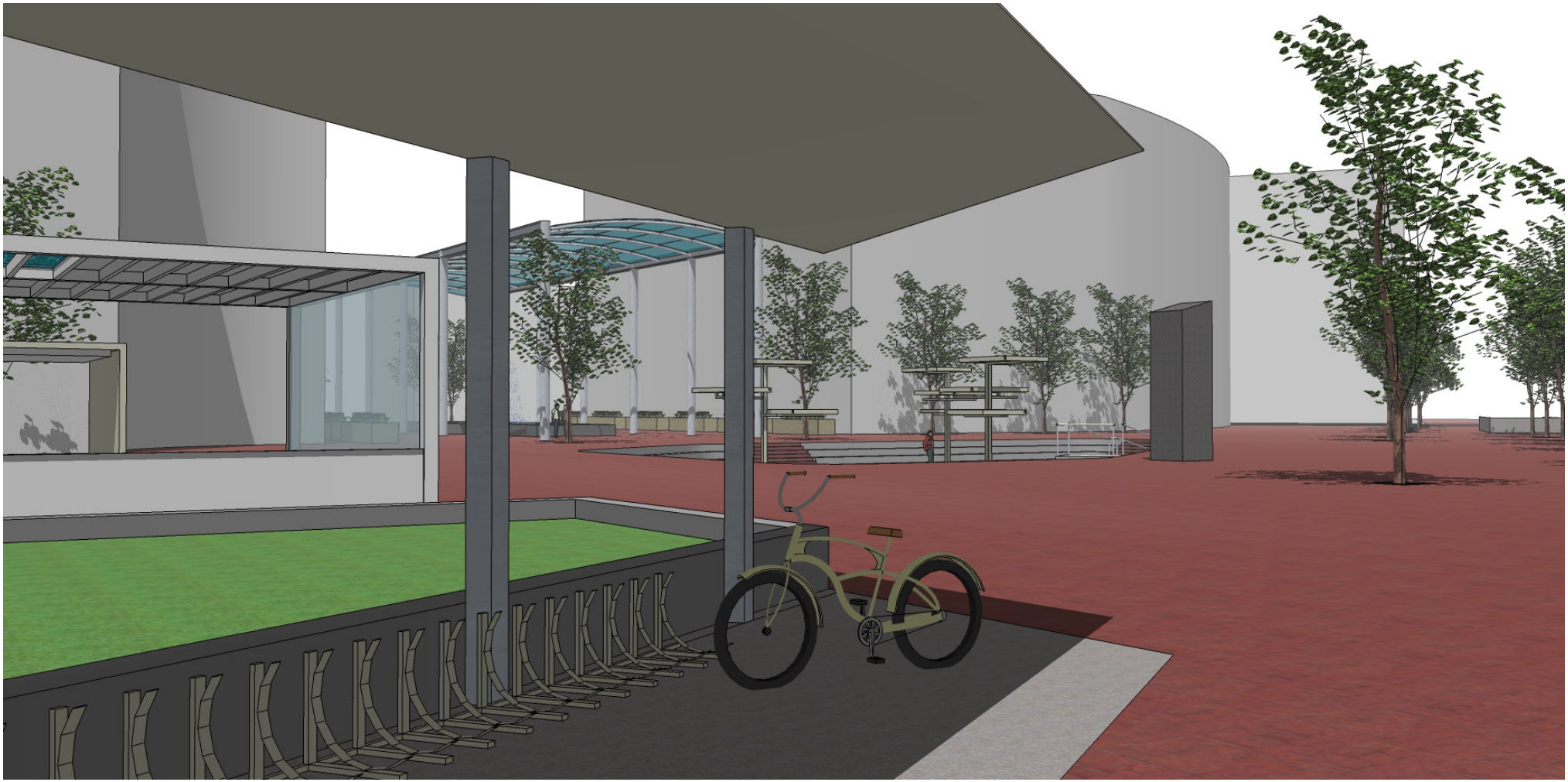
47 More bicycle parking for cyclists as well as encourage alternative modes of transportation

Bike parking

The plaza as a major transportation hub is severely lacking in bicycle parking. A modular bike park system should be available for users. This could also help increase bike ridership to temporary events such as the year round farmers' market, and might increase the catchment area since the event will be more accesible. The plaza should accommodate for various types of transportation and encourage alternative modes of transportation. But first, the infrastructure should be available for users. In such, a modular bike parking system is encouraged. This system of bicycle parking should also be easily adaptable to any future streetscape changes. The placement of bicycle parking areas should be facing the street to deter theft. Moreover, the design of the bike arc should not only deter theft but also provide protection. The bike arc concept (Bike Arc, 2010) is constantly evolving and adaptable to many urban spaces and could easily sit alongside a sidewalk.

48 (opposite page) Bike arc concept used in the plaza redesign





Design Rationale

In conclusion, the redesign of the plaza should accommodate and encourage flexible use and adaptability as these are major characteristics of temporary urbanism. The overall redesign of the plaza is not a dramatic change for the reason that this redesign is meant to illustrate how temporary urbanism is adaptable. This design is also an attempt to illustrate how the constraints of the plaza could be adapted to opportunities. The redesign of the plaza also works with existing Central Market area revitalization strategies such as incorporating and emphasizing public art to encourage more interaction. These accommodations should be complementary to the current strategies and future development of the area. While the main design principle follows the ideals of temporary urbanism, a few enhancements and considerations are site context-specific such as providing safety and comfort, a basic requirement for enjoyment of a space. The safety aspect works with lighting concerns and the comfort aspect works with users' needs by providing amenities designed for seating options as well as protection from the elements. The breaking up of the vast space into smaller pocket spaces is central to the redesign as well. Pocket spaces featuring modular street furniture allows users flexibility. These modular structures allow the user to temporarily adjust the formation of a space until the next user comes along and chooses another arrangement. This type of freedom allows the plaza to constantly change, just as temporary urbanism expects. The redesign also aims to enhance transportation accommodations such as bike parking into the site. Ultimately, the space is designed to encourage interaction and lingering in the plaza. Temporary urbanism principles and applications push for these transformations so that this plaza may exceed beyond the purpose of a simple passageway and transportation hub.

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