

Memo to the Planning Commission

INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION HEARING DATE: MARCH 13, 2014
CONTINUED FROM THE FEBRUARY 27, 2014

Project Name: **Plaza Program**
Case Number: **2014.0180T** [Board File No. 140062]
Initiated by: Mayor, Co-Sponsored by Supervisor Cohen / Introduced January 28, 2014
Staff Contact: Planning Department: Aaron Starr
OEWD: Robin Havens

Dear President Wu and Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on the proposed amendments to Section 234 of the Planning Code that could support the more broad Plaza Program, as well as address several common-sense clean-up and efficiency amendments to that section that are not directly related to the establishment of this new program. We look forward to describing the goals and processes of the Plaza Program for you so that you can have more context for the small section of the proposed Planning Code amendments (234.1(e)) that is designed to support this new initiative. The proposed Plaza Program does not establish any plazas, but would establish a program framework.

OUTREACH

- The Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), worked with many public realm stakeholder groups in developing this initiative.
 - Outreach to all 11 Supervisors of the SF Board of Supervisors
 - Outreach to stakeholder groups and businesses with close connections to public realm and activation issues, including: SF Beautiful, SPUR, WalkSF, Parks Alliance, SFSafe, Senior Disability Action, Livable City, OEWD CBD Consortium Group, OEWD Economic Development Partners Group, GAFFTA, ReBar, Center for New Music, Recording Academy's San Francisco Chapter, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, MJM, La Cocina, Urban Table, Mission Community Market, Red Umbrellas, Sunday Streets, Off the Grid, Urban Air Market, People in the Plazas, Activate McCoppin, Proxy, Pacific Coast Farmer's Market, Freespace, Bayview Opera House, Castro CBD, Union Square BID, Friends of Mint Plaza, Excelsior Action Group, Yerba Buena CBD, Portola Neighborhood Association, Valencia McCoppin Neighborhood Watch, NYC Plaza Program and Trust for Public Lands.
 - OEWD formed a Plaza Working Group comprised of City Departments to assess this on-going stakeholder feedback and to craft an approach that could address the challenge of supporting community-based stewardship and activation of some public plazas. Plaza Working Group members include: SFMTA, RED, DPW, Planning, RPD, and the Entertainment Commission. Additional feedback was solicited from SFPUC, Grants for the Arts and the SF Arts Commission.



BACKGROUND

San Francisco: A Track Record of Successful Community-Based Partnerships

- Through innovative approaches to transforming the public realm, San Francisco has demonstrated nationally-recognized and innovative leadership with new approaches to community-based stewardship of the public realm.
 - Examples:
 - Planning Department’s Pavement to Parks (parklets and plazas)
 - DPW/Parks Alliance Street Parks Program
 - PUC/Friends of the urban Forest Sidewalk Garden Project
- San Francisco’s plazas are vital to the livability of the city because they create a sense of place and community for residents and visitors to enjoy the local neighborhoods.
- As the City population continues to grow, the transformation of underutilized public plazas will be instrumental in providing social, economic, and ecological benefits in City neighborhoods.
- *The Challenge:* Some plaza-like spaces emerge that clearly enhance City livability goals, but their longer-term management plans are not always clear. They fall outside of traditional SF Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) jurisdiction and function, and are not temporary.

CURRENT PROPOSAL

The Proposed Plaza Program:

- The new initiative is called the **San Francisco Plaza Program** and aims address this challenge by creating tools and streamlining processes that support stakeholder groups in stewarding and activating plazas with events like art and music events, farmers’ markets, movie nights, local food and retail opportunities and/or taking on the long term plaza maintenance.

The Plaza Program will manage two types of plazas (each, a “Plaza”):

- “Street Plazas” are Plazas in the City right-of-way and under DPW jurisdiction.
- “City Plazas” are Plazas that are not in the City right-of-way and under RED jurisdiction.

Plaza Program Adoption:

- The proposed legislation would adopt the program as a new chapter in the Administrative Code, with companion legislation in the Planning, Public Works and Police Code.
- Plazas could then be adopted plaza-by-plaza into the program by ordinance and only with Board of Supervisors approval.
- Plaza Definition:
 - Plazas that could be adopted in this program would be located on City-owned property in active areas of San Francisco, like commercial corridors, transit or bicycle hubs or other naturally active areas. Each proposed plaza would have a demonstrable need for a long-term activation and/or maintenance solution.
 - Potential plazas would emerge from already established projects and processes. Plazas could have achieved established community support though several years in the Pavement to Parks Program, a community process facilitated by the



Invest in Neighborhoods Initiative, a developer in-kind agreement process or they could be existing City plazas that are underutilized.

Plaza Steward Process

- Once the Plaza Program is adopted, the program would issue RFPs for City Plazas to identify partners (“Stewards”) for specific plazas; those groups, once identified through this competitive RFP process, would enter into a license with RED to be approved by the Board of Supervisors.
- The Street Plazas would have a similar Steward identification process, with a process similar to a RFP to apply for the permit and with identified stewards engaging in a new type of Plaza Encroachment Permit to also be approved by the Board of Supervisors. Each type of process would include extensive outreach and need for community support of proposed plaza uses and Stewards.

Plaza Steward Partnership:

- Once established, these public-stakeholder partnerships would help strengthen communities’ sustainability by allowing Stewards to generate revenue from plaza activation, sponsorship and donations, revenues that would all be required to go back into funding programming and maintenance costs for that plaza.
- The City will help to encourage these new partnerships through establishment of the Plaza Program and by collaborating with existing City programs like Pavement to Parks, DPW Street Parks Program and Invest In Neighborhoods, helping identify “next steps” for temporary plazas.
- The City would further encourage these new partnerships through new standardized agreements and streamlined event permitting tools.
- The Plaza Program would lower the cost and process time barriers to Stewards programming events by making fewer events require ISCOTT review and fees, as well as allowing Plazas to be part of the Limited Live Performance license that would drastically lower fees for music events.

SUMMARY

OEWD is excited to partner with public realm stakeholders and various City Department on this exciting new addition to the various City efforts that support community-based stewardship:

Support local stewardship efforts:

- Support long-term operation, maintenance and activation sustainability
- Support innovative approaches to transforming the public realm

Enhance coordination and collaboration:

- Coordinate principles and practices in Plazas designated under the Plaza Program with other public agencies operating similar public realm initiatives and projects in the City.
- Leverage existing City, private, nonprofit and local stakeholder efforts

Continue to strengthen San Francisco’s vibrant communities:

- Support vibrant communities of activators: artists, musicians, innovators
- Improve the City’s ability to support more safe, clean, and active City-owned open space than are currently possible with existing City resources



SAN FRANCISCO PLAZA PROGRAM OVERVIEW





SAN FRANCISCO PLAZA PROGRAM

Through an initiative called the San Francisco Plaza Program, the city aims to create an environment where residents and visitors can engage in and implement uses of the public realm for community supported activities such as art and music events, farmers' markets, movie nights, local food and retail opportunities, and much more.

Contents include:

- Plaza Program Goals
- Plaza Types
- Process & Requirements: City Plazas
- Process & Requirements: Street Plazas
- City Responsibilities
- FAQs

San Francisco's plazas are vital to the livability of the City because they create a sense of place and community for residents and visitors to enjoy the local neighborhoods. As the City's population continues to grow, the transformation of underutilized public plazas will be instrumental in providing social, economic, and ecological benefits in neighborhoods citywide.

Through an initiative called the San Francisco Plaza Program, the City aims to create an environment where residents and visitors can use public spaces for relaxation and for community supported activities such as art and music events, farmers' markets, movie nights, local food and retail opportunities, and much more. The initiative aims to address the desire for pedestrian plazas in the midst of busy San Francisco neighborhoods for people to sit, relax, and enjoy the surrounding area. The SF Plaza Program is a new collaborative public realm initiative designed to leverage various City, private, nonprofit and stakeholder group efforts to provide long-term activation, management, and/or maintenance for designated City Plazas.

The Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) is partnering with the Real Estate Division (RED) and the Department of Public Works (DPW) to launch the SF Plaza Program.

This new initiative is designed to activate the public realm while empowering interested and City-identified stakeholder groups to steward the long term care, maintenance and/or activation of plazas adopted into the Plaza Program. If approved by the Board of Supervisors, the program would leverage benefits for the public realm by supporting community-based groups in becoming stewards of their neighborhood open space.

The SF Plaza Program intends to provide a long-term "home" for existing plaza projects created through various City programs, including but not limited to: Pavement to Parks, Invest in Neighborhoods, the Planning Department process for new residential and/or commercial developments and other City initiatives. Plazas that fit criteria to be adopted in this program would be located on City-owned property in active areas of San Francisco, like commercial corridors, transit or bicycle hubs or other naturally active areas. Only City property generally over 2,000 square feet and outside of the Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) jurisdiction would be eligible. Each proposed plaza would have a demonstrable need for a long-term activation and/or maintenance solution. Plazas would need to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors on a plaza-by-plaza basis as part of the Plaza Program.

The SF Plaza Program is an exciting new step in building on local efforts to implement more innovative, sustainable and livable solutions that engage and support San Francisco's many vibrant communities.

PLAZA PROGRAM GOALS

1. Continue to strengthen San Francisco's vibrant communities by lowering City barriers to community and economic development-enhancing partnerships for City-owned open space. New standardized agreement forms, systemic processes and customized event permitting tools could make it easier for communities to activate their local plazas and craft long-term sustainable management plans.
2. Improve the City's ability to provide more safe, clean and active City-owned open spaces than currently possible with existing City resources.
3. Adopt innovative approaches to activate and manage Plazas that have been adopted by the Board of Supervisors into the program ("Plazas") in the urban public realm and share these approaches nationally.
4. Work towards operational and fiscal sustainability of the Plazas; revenues generated in a Plaza could support plaza activation, maintenance and operations costs and, sometimes in the case of an excess, cross-fund other Plazas.
5. Dedicate a staff person assigned to coordinating the City-wide, cross-departmental efforts to maintain and/or activate these spaces.
6. Establish an Interagency Plaza Program Working Group to advise the Plaza Program Coordinator, the Directors of Directors of Department of Public Works ("DPW") and Real Estate Division ("RED"), as well as the Board of Supervisors, on Plaza Program actions and Steward identification criteria, evaluation and processes.
7. Develop, by April 1st 2014, standardized agreements and administrative processes that describe and manage Steward obligations, liabilities, and requirements.
8. Submit proposals for at least three recommended Plaza Program Plazas for consideration by the Board of Supervisors by December 31st, 2014.

PLAZA TYPES

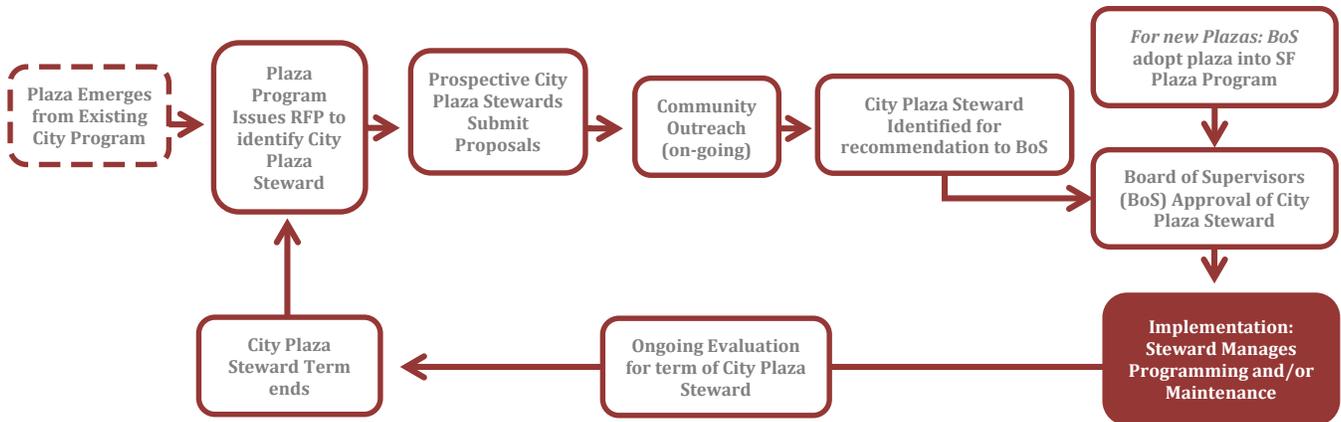
The Plaza Program will include two types of plazas:

- "City Plazas" are Plazas that are not in the City right-of-way and under the jurisdiction of City's Real Estate Division ("RED").
- "Street Plazas" are Plazas in the City right-of-way and under the jurisdiction of City's Department of Public Works ("DPW").

While both types of Plazas will be included in the Plaza Program and share the program goals, they each require slightly different processes and requirements.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVATION

ACTIVITY	EXAMPLES	EXAMPLE LOCATIONS
Farmer's markets	Bayview Hunters Point Farmers' Market, Castro Farmers' Market, Divisadero Farmers' Market, Mint Plaza Farmers' Market	Bayview Opera House, Noe Street in the Castro, NoPa, Mint Plaza
Music/Dance	Lindy in the Park, People in the Plazas events, jazz events, DJs, Benefit for Typhoon Yolanda	Golden Gate Park, Activate McCoppin, Jane Warner Plaza, Hallidie Plaza, Mint Plaza
Arts/Technology events	Photo class, craft making events, painting events, drawing classes, Crochet-Jam, chalk party, screen printing class, Build an Inflatable Workspace (Headland Center for the Arts artists-in-residence), Red Umbrella Open Air Art Exhibition, Living Innovation Zones,	McCoppin Hub, Union Square, Market Street
Community events	Valencia McCoppin Neighborhood Watch meeting	McCoppin Hub
Public talks and lectures	SF Beautiful brown-bag talks	McCoppin Hub
Exercise classes	Yoga classes, exercise boot camps	Proxy, McCoppin Hub
Movie nights	Kids movies, local-made movies and documentaries	McCoppin Hub, McCoppin Park
Non-profit events	Rocket Dog Rescue pet event	McCoppin Hub
Retail events/vendors	Holiday Maker Mart, Flea Market, Urban Air Market, mobile vending carts	McCoppin Hub, Old Mint, Alemany Flea Market, Patricia's Green/Hayes Valley, various RPD locations
Game events/recreation	Ping-Pong, Scrabble-a-Thon, RPD Mobile Recreation Program	Sunday Streets, McCoppin Hub, various RPD locations
Food	McCoppin Hub and Fort Mason Off the Grid food truck markets	McCoppin Hub, Fort Mason

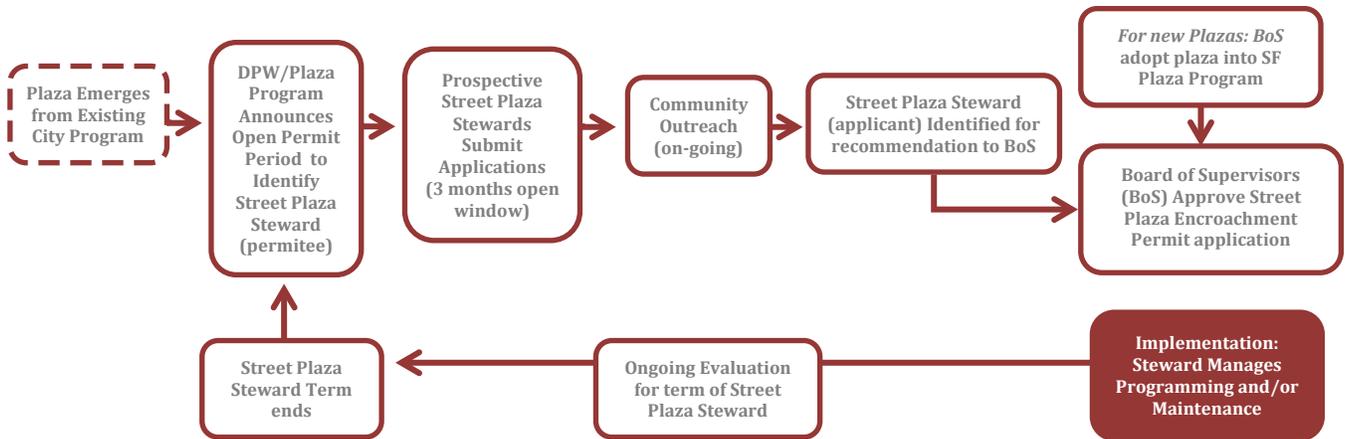


1. A Plaza emerges from an existing City program that meets criteria.
2. Plaza Program releases a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a City Plaza steward ("City Plaza Steward"). The RFP will be posted at the plaza site and on City websites. The Plaza Program will provide opportunities for any eligible party to make a stewardship proposal for a Plaza. Eligibility criteria, proposal requirements and operations obligations would be further detailed in each individual City Plaza RFP, but would broadly include the following:
 - a. Eligibility criteria:
 - Be a registered non-profit corporation with programs based in San Francisco.
 - Be able to demonstrate a strong connection to the neighborhood in which the Plaza is located.
 - Be able to demonstrate capacity for long-term management of the Plaza.
 - b. Proposal requirements: Plaza Plan describing vision and strategy for the subject Plaza:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization Background Contact Information • Organization Qualifications • Staff Qualification • Community Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Design, Site and Feasibility • Evaluation/Communications • Signage Plan • Program and Respondent Budget
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 - c. Operations obligations - submit as a Plaza Plan:
 - Commit to enter into a license agreement with the City for stewardship of the Plaza, if approved by the Board of Supervisors.
 - If approved, maintain clear, on-going lines of communication with community stakeholders, as detailed in the approved license agreement.
 - If approved, agree to activate and/or maintain the Plaza through programming, marketing, management and event management, as described in the approved license agreement.
 - Maximize events that are free to the public.
 - Maintain insurance, as necessary.
 - Participate in periodic Plaza Program Steward meetings and workshops.
 - Plan for partnering with existing City programs that activate City property through public-private efforts.
3. Prospective City Plaza Stewards submit proposals.
4. On-going outreach: Proposer garners community support and Plaza Program raises local awareness of stewardship and program process.
5. Proposals reviewed by Plaza Program Review Committee and City Plaza Steward identified for recommendation to Director of RED, who would then recommend the proposer for approval as City Plaza Steward by Board of Supervisors. Apparent City Plaza Steward and RED negotiate terms and prepare draft license agreement. The Plaza Program will only recommend one City Plaza Steward per Plaza.
6. If the plaza has not yet been adopted into the program, submit to Board of Supervisors for adoption as a Plaza Program City Plaza in Chapter 94 of Administrative Code
7. Board of Supervisors approval of recommended City Plaza Steward.
8. Implementation: City Plaza Steward begins stewardship of Plaza (programming and/or maintenance).
9. Ongoing Evaluation for term of City Plaza Steward.
10. At end of term, begin process again with a City Plaza Steward identification RFP.

Notes:

- City Plaza RFPs may occasionally offer associated grant opportunities that would be contingent on final approval of the respondent as that City Plaza's Steward.
- RFP Review Committee Evaluation Criteria, based on a 100-point scale:
 - o Community Initiative- (25 points)
 - o Proposal Design, Implementation Approach and Site Context (25 points)
 - o Proposer Qualifications, Capacity and Staff Assignments (25 points)
 - o Project Feasibility, Evaluation Methods and Sustainability (25 points)



1. A Plaza emerges from an existing City program that meets criteria.
2. DPW/Plaza Program announces open permit period to identify Street Plaza Steward (the permittee for a Plaza Encroachment Permit). The announcement will be posted at the Plaza site and on City websites. The Plaza Program will provide opportunities for any eligible party to make a stewardship proposal for a Plaza. Eligibility criteria, application requirements and operations obligations would be further detailed in each individual Street Plaza open permit period announcement, but would broadly include the following:
 - a. Eligibility criteria:
 - Although not required, groups with non-profit corporation status with programs based in San Francisco are preferred.
 - Be able to demonstrate a strong connection to the neighborhood in which the Plaza is located.
 - Be able to demonstrate capacity for long-term management of the Plaza.
 - b. Application requirements: Plaza Application describing vision and strategy for the subject Plaza:
 - Organization Background Contact Information
 - Organization Qualifications
 - Staff Qualification
 - Community Initiative
 - Program Design, Site and Feasibility
 - Evaluation/Communications
 - Signage Plan
 - Budget Projections
 - c. Operations obligations:
 - Commit to complete and sign Plaza Encroachment Agreement, if approved as the Street Plaza Steward by the Board of Supervisors. Maintain general liability insurance, and naming the City as additional insured.
 - Maintain clear, on-going lines of communication with community stakeholders.
 - Activate and/or maintain the Plaza through programming, marketing, management and event management, as described in the approved permit agreement.
 - Maximize events that are free to the public.
 - Participate in periodic Plaza Program Steward meetings and workshops.
 - Plan to partner with existing City programs.
3. Prospective Street Plaza Stewards submit applications: Each Street Plaza application is a proposal to become the recommended Plaza Major Encroachment Permit applicant. The open permit period to identify Street Plaza Permittee shall be open for ninety (90) days.
4. On-going outreach: Applicant garners community support and Plaza Program raises local awareness of stewardship and program process.
5. Applications reviewed by DPW/Plaza Program staff for eligibility. If more than one proposal for application is received, DPW staff will review all proposals to determine whether there is more than one eligible proposal. DPW shall schedule a public hearing to review eligibility of all potential applicants. Based on the information provided, and testimony presented at the hearing, the DPW Hearing officer shall make a recommendation to the Director of Public Works, upon which, the Director shall select a final applicant. After such selection, DPW shall meet with the applicant to determine what outstanding information and/or materials are necessary to complete the application process. The DPW Director will only recommend one Street Plaza Steward (applicant) per Plaza.
6. If the plaza has not yet been adopted into the Plaza Program, DPW and Plaza Program staff would prepare legislation proposing adoption of the plaza into the Plaza Program as per Chapter 94 of Administrative Code, prior to approval of a Plaza Encroachment Permit. Board of Supervisors approval of Plaza Encroachment Permit application.
7. Implementation: Street Plaza Steward begins stewardship of Plaza (programming and/or maintenance).
8. Ongoing Evaluation for term of Street Plaza Steward.
9. At end of term, begin process again with an open permit period to identify Street Plaza Steward.

CITY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Separate from, but in coordination with, the Plaza Program, the City may elect to install temporary or permanent improvements at the Plazas, depending on funding.
- Plaza Program staff will monitor and regularly inspect Plazas to assess and confirm that the Street and City Plaza Stewards are fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Plaza Program Coordinator will be responsible for promoting the development of comprehensive Plaza Program policies and strategies; managing Plaza Program evaluation, reports and fees and networking Street and City Plaza Steward efforts and opportunities; leading a City Department Plaza Working Group and acting as liaison between Street and City Plaza Stewards and relevant City agencies. The Coordinator will also sustain strategic program-wide partnerships for Plaza maintenance and activation with community organizations, non-profits and businesses.
- The City has proposed several measures that aim to minimize cost and process time of permits for events in adopted Plaza Program Plazas. The Coordinator will continue to seek opportunities to streamline activation in an effort to increase public benefits of activation.



FAQs

Q: Which plazas could be in the Plaza Program?

A: Plazas will not be directly created by the Plaza Program; the Plaza Program is intended to provide a long-term “home” for existing plaza projects created through various City programs, including but not limited to: Pavement to Parks, Invest in Neighborhoods, the Planning Department process for new residential and/or commercial developments and other City initiatives. Plazas must 1) be generally over 2,000 square feet, 2) located in active areas of the City, like commercial corridors, transit or bicycle hubs or other naturally active areas, 3) not be primarily athletic or urban agriculture facilities, 4) have a demonstrable need for activation and/or maintenance, 5) have existing community support for public-private activation, and 6) have at least one identified potential partner that has capacity to steward the identified plaza for the proposed length of the agreement term. All Plazas would need to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors on a plaza-by-plaza basis as part of the Plaza Program.

Q: Can public art be incorporated in the Plaza?

A: Yes, through the San Francisco Art Commission process or other related art processes.

Q: How can I hold an event in the Plaza?

A: Events that comply with Plaza Program event requirements can be scheduled through a City or Street Plaza Steward. Interested parties can contact a City or Street Plaza Steward directly to learn more about scheduling events. All Plaza City and Street Plaza Stewards will be listed on the Plaza Program website.

Q: Can Plaza City and Street Stewards generate revenue? How can they use that revenue?

A: Yes, a City and Street Plaza Stewards can generate revenue from activities that are permitted under their relevant agreement with City, but that revenue can only be used to support the activation, management and maintenance of that Plaza. If a City Plaza Steward generates more revenue than it needs for its budgeted activation, management, maintenance activities, it can place some of that excess revenue in a limited reserve fund and the City would use any remaining excess revenue to fund activation and management activities in other City Plazas that have inadequate activation and management funds.

Q: Will advertising be permitted?

A: Although general advertising will not be permitted, City and Street Plaza Stewards may recognize the financial sponsor of an event through signage approved by the Plaza Program staff in advance of the event.

Q: Will these Plazas be open to the public?

A: Yes, all Plazas must generally remain open to the public. They will feel similar to other City-owned open space, with similar regulations. Some Plazas may have a limited number of private events in order to support their respective Steward’s activation and maintenance obligations for those Plazas.