



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

**SAN FRANCISCO MARKS PROGRESS ON
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION**

Mayor Breed's Roadmap has made progress changing laws to fill vacant space, reforming taxes, launching Downtown activations, and making streets cleaner and safer

San Francisco, CA – Mayor London N. Breed today provided a [six-month update](#) on the Roadmap to San Francisco's Future, which is the City's plan to transform Downtown into a stronger, resilient, economic and global destination. The Mayor joined key business stakeholders at the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce where she emphasized the City's ongoing work on prioritized efforts and progress made across several Downtown recovery strategies.

Earlier this year in February, Mayor Breed set out a vision for a revitalized Downtown during the State of the City address when she announced the launch the [Roadmap to San Francisco's Future](#), along with five key priorities:

- An economically diverse and resilient job engine
- A welcoming clean and safe environment
- A dynamic destination active at all hours, every day
- A world class transportation experience
- An equitable economy that supports full participation by all

“We have been working both aggressively and methodically to deliver key changes to support our economy and Downtown's revitalization,” **said Mayor London Breed**. “While this work takes time, we have already seen successful efforts to bring people back Downtown and increasing excitement about San Francisco's future. This fall we will again welcome major events like Dreamforce and Fleet Week to Downtown, and capture the world's attention when we host APEC, drawing all the government and business leaders from Asia for a major summit here in San Francisco. With growing industries like AI taking hold in our City, continued focus on making our streets clean and safe, and key activations bringing on the ground changes, I'm optimistic of what lies ahead.”

In August 2023, some key 6-month milestones for the Roadmap to San Francisco's Future include:

Strategy 1: Ensure Downtown is clean, safe, and inviting with smart and strategic investments that increase public safety and improve street conditions in a coordinated, efficient, and effective manner.

- Achieved largest new police academy class in three years; increased starting pay to be among highest in the Bay Area.
- Budgeted nearly \$50 million for non-police community-based ambassador programs over the next two years.



- Secured funding to ensure a total increase of over 15,000 housing slots and nearly 4,000 shelter beds since 2018.

Strategy 2: Attract and retain a diverse range of industries and employers by identifying and recruiting strategic sectors that support San Francisco's resilience.

- Increased office attendance by more than 38% since July 2022, the largest year over year back-to-office gain of any American city.
- Saw office demand increase by over 10% by the second quarter of 2023, the only major city aside from New York to see a positive trend in office demand.
- Saw AI companies continue to grow, with a reported demand of up to 800,000 additional square feet on top of current holdings.

Strategy 3: Facilitate new uses and flexibility in buildings by maximizing the ability to update and adapt buildings to meet the needs of new interested tenants.

- Amended City codes to ensure flexible zoning to accommodate the widest possible range of activities and uses.
- Initiated plans to bring more public employees Downtown, by working with the City Administrator, the School District, and City College to identify opportunities in underutilized buildings.
- Received submittals of interest for five potential downtown residential conversions, in response to recent Request for Information (RFI).

Strategy 4: Make it easier to start and grow a business by creating transparency, streamlining processes, and building out systems to support new businesses opening in San Francisco.

- Matched aspiring entrepreneurs and artists with vacant ground floor space Downtown through the Vacant to Vibrant program, with activators opening in September.
- Extended the First Year Free program to eliminate City permit costs for new business ventures.
 - 4,873 businesses have benefitted from the First Year Free program to date.
 - 5,578 new business registrations have been filed to date in 2023.
- Facilitating over 100 changes to the Planning Code to ease permitting of ground floor commercial spaces, via pending legislation.

Strategy 5: Grow and prepare our workforce by preparing San Franciscans for growing industry sectors, as well as new ways to unlock housing production to meet the demands of a growing labor force.

- As part of the Housing for All Plan, advanced sweeping changes to make housing construction financially feasible, and continued efforts to reform administrative City approval and permitting process.
- Enrolled 2,630 San Francisco job seekers in workforce services in the first six months of 2023, with over 1,954 candidates referred through Neighborhood Job Centers.
- Connected over 1,000 job seekers with 80 employers at the Ferry Building job fair in April.

Strategy 6: Transform Downtown into a leading arts, culture, and nightlife destination by creating an entertainment zone and seeding new businesses, events, activities, and experiences for a more vibrant Downtown.



- Supported activations and events like Bhangra & Beats Night Market, Union Square in Bloom, UNDSCVRD SF Block Party events, and World Cup Village watch parties.
 - Over 10,000 people attended the first two Bhangra and Beats Night Market events downtown, with surveyed participants spending \$89 on average before or after each event.
 - Approximately 4,350 people attended Women’s World Cup Village events, with 33 vendors nearly selling out of food and beverages.
 - Expanded the UNDSCVRD SF Block Party, now in its 7th year, bringing an average of 6,000 attendees downtown per event.
- Advocating for state legislation to allow for outdoor alcohol consumption in Entertainment Zones.

Strategy 7: Enhance public spaces to showcase Downtown by investing in and expanding plazas, alleyways, and other public spaces to improve people’s experience of Downtown.

- Launched efforts to enliven public spaces and plazas, including the family-friendly Civic Center four-day Carnival, and a new skate park to be installed in UN Plaza.
- Funded efforts to reinvigorate Powell Street between the Cable Car turnaround at Hallidie Plaza and Union Square.
- Made the Shared Spaces program permanent to allow businesses to operate in outdoor public spaces.

Strategy 8: Invest in transportation connections to maintain access to Downtown by every mode of transportation available while continuing to improve the reliability, efficiency, and quality of service.

- Secured one-time state funding for public transportation to prevent SFMTA, BART, and other public transit agencies from having to cut service as long-term funding is stabilized.
- Launched programs to increase downtown accessibility, including a pilot program for express service on Muni’s 1 California line during the morning and evening rush hours and a partnership with Golden Gate Transit to add more capacity for downtown bound trips from the Marina and Cow Hollow.
- Saw Muni’s daily weekday boarding increase by approximately 33,000 from the start of 2023, and BART weekday ridership by approximately 25,000 daily riders.

Strategy 9: Tell our story through proactive marketing to emphasize our strengths and reclaim our brand.

- Expanding visibility to a broader national and international audience through fall events like Dreamforce, now the largest AI conference in the world, and APEC, with 21 heads of state including the President of the United States and hundreds of business leaders from the Asia-Pacific region.

"Six months out from the Roadmap being launched, it’s a wonderful feeling to see the work come to life as projects are truly taking shape around the city, and especially downtown," **said Sarah Dennis Philips, Executive Director at the Office of Economic and Workforce Development.** "From nightlife activations that were once brainstormed as part of an RFP, to department-wide programs like Vacant to Vibrant, to new visions for shared spaces that will now change the way office communities and residents downtown interact with an open space like the Landing at Leidsdorff, our team is seeing real change with



these projects as well as ‘green shoots’ of organic change all around the city as we turn the corner on economic recovery.”

"The pandemic hit San Francisco hard, but we're not going down without a fight. Thanks to Mayor Breed's leadership, we've breathed new life into our economy and made real progress toward making Downtown a destination for all," **said Rodney Fong, President and CEO of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.** Visitors are feeling safer, businesses are facing less red tape, and our open spaces are buzzing with activity—and the best part? We're just getting started."

“UNDSCVRD is an important initiative to help transform SoMa into a vibrant arts and cultural destination centered around Filipino-American diaspora,” **said Desi Danganan, Executive Director of Kultivate Labs.** The event is a launch pad for new businesses, art installations, and pop-up activations that will revitalize downtown and nudge San Francisco back on the right path." Kultivate Labs is a nonprofit economic development and arts organization that provides space and opportunities for the arts to flourish so that commercial activities are activated and reflect the community at large in the SoMA Pilipinas Cultural District downtown.

"We're incredibly optimistic about the future of Downtown San Francisco. Through our acquisition of 60 Spear and support of grassroots efforts like the 'WeLoveSF' campaign, we're committed to revitalizing this global innovation hub," **said Cyrus Sanandaji, Founder and Managing Partner, Presidio Bay Ventures.** “While we recognize there's a lot of work ahead, we believe the city is on the right path. Mayor Breed, with support from the Board of Supervisors, has made commendable strides, and this vision aligns with ours for a resilient, equitable, and inviting city. We're excited to partner with the city, community, businesses, and labor to drive this revitalization. Presidio Bay firmly believes that a politics of moderation and common-sense solutions, such as those proposed in the 'Roadmap to San Francisco's Future,' will guide our collective progress toward a brighter future."

Key Economic Data

- According to the July 2023 VTS Office Demand Index (VODI) Report, San Francisco saw an increase in **office demand** of 10% in the second quarter of 2023.
- **Office attendance** is currently at 42%.
- SF Travel forecast 23.3 million **visitors** in 2023, up 6.2% from 2022, and **visitor spending** is forecast to reach \$8.5 billion, up 13.9% from 2022.
- **BART trips** to Downtown SF stations in fiscal year 2023 (27 million) climbed 38% from 2022 (19.6 million) and 218% from 2021 (8.5 million).
- The **number of passengers** at the San Francisco International Airport (SFO) is up by over 20% from January to June 2023 (23.4 million) compared to the same time period in 2022 (18.6 million).
- Comparing August 2019 with August 2023, SFO reported that 94% of weekly **international flights** have resumed, and weekly seat capacity is 93.6% of pre-pandemic levels.

Learn more about the Roadmap to San Francisco's Future on [this website](#).