



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

**MAYOR BREED ANNOUNCES VACANT TO VIBRANT
AWARDEES AS PART OF SAN FRANCISCO'S ROADMAP TO
RECOVERY STRATEGY**

The 17 grantees will fill 9 vacant storefront spaces as pop-ups in Downtown beginning in September in partnership with the Office of Economic & Workforce Development and SF New Deal

San Francisco, CA – Mayor London N. Breed joined the Office of Economic Workforce and Development (OEWD) Executive Director Sarah Dennis-Phillips and program partner SF New Deal today to announce the first cohort of awardees for the City's inaugural Vacant to Vibrant pop-up concept. The program, a component of the Mayor's Roadmap to San Francisco's Future, is designed to help small businesses, entrepreneurs, artists and cultural organizations activate vacant storefronts.

The first cohort of [Vacant to Vibrant](#), which launches next month, is comprised of 17 local activators who are creating unique pop-ups in nine properties Downtown. Each activation will span three months with the potential for extension and includes local businesses, nonprofit organizations, independent artists, designers, makers, and other merchants. This is the first cohort of three; the other two will be announced and open their doors in 2024.

"San Francisco is open for business and it is great to see the progress being made to revitalize and rethink how our Downtown serves residents, businesses and visitors," **said Mayor London Breed**. "When I announced the Roadmap to San Francisco's Future, finding creative ways to fill our empty storefronts was one of my key priorities, and through a number of policy reforms that will remove unnecessary zoning and permitting barriers, we are making good progress. This is an exciting next step for a long-awaited program that I know will be good for small businesses, residents, and visitors to enjoy."

As the City continues to face challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mayor's Budget builds on investments to help boost Downtown's economic recovery, including efforts to enact new laws to make it easier to fill and convert vacant spaces, reform taxes to recruit new businesses, and deliver key activation efforts to bring more people Downtown to help reimagine San Francisco's future.

The City has implemented key elements of the [Mayor's Roadmap](#) by broadening transportation in the Financial District, heightening safety measures, investing in beautification programs such as Union Square in Bloom, and bringing successful cultural nightlife to Downtown through free



events and activations like the Bhangra and Beats Night Market. Tasked with leading the charge on economic recovery, OEWD supports these revitalization measures through programs like Vacant to Vibrant that bring integral foot traffic to San Francisco's Downtown, while supporting small businesses, the arts, and non-profit organizations.

"Through financial support, interagency coordination, involved building owners and on-the-ground nonprofit partnership support, we were able to help transition small businesses and activators into physical storefronts within months," **said Sarah Dennis Phillips, Executive Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development.** "We are thrilled to have partnered with SF New Deal on this visionary program that activates our streets while building small business momentum."

Accounting for approximately 95% of businesses and employing nearly 1 million Bay Area residents, the small business sector is a vital contributor to the City's economy and vibrancy. Since the start of the pandemic, Mayor Breed has directed over \$83 million in grants and loans to support more than 4,800 small businesses.

Managed by OEWD, Vacant to Vibrant launched earlier this year in April in partnership with SF New Deal, a local non-profit organization that strengthens neighborhoods by making it easier for under-resourced small business owners to succeed. In addition to their recent work with OEWD in designing and operating Vacant to Vibrant, SF New Deal has disbursed over \$36 million in grants and supplemental revenue to more than 690 small businesses across San Francisco since March 2020. SF New Deal also worked to secure additional funding from Wells Fargo Bank, which will be a presenting sponsor of Vacant to Vibrant.

"Pop-ups are an opportunity to try something new, to think creatively, and to support the small businesses, cultural groups and artists that define the culture and identity of San Francisco," **said Simon Bertrang, Executive Director of SF New Deal.** "We have assembled an inspiring group for this first cohort of Vacant to Vibrant, and we look forward to sharing a window into the inclusive, diverse and thriving neighborhood that is the future of Downtown San Francisco."

"Small businesses are the backbone of our communities and we are committed to help them succeed. We are excited to support this innovative initiative to help increase exposure for entrepreneurs and re-energize Downtown San Francisco through compelling activations," **said Christina Pels-Martinez, Wells Fargo Region Executive.**

For the first cohort, OEWD and SF New Deal have provided permit navigation to enable swift openings for the pop-up tenants, and are working together to support each program participant with technical assistance and grant funding, up to \$8,000.

The first cohort consists of nine primary tenant activators who may be eligible to extend their lease with the property owners at the end of the three-month period and eight supplementary tenants who will also be present in these storefront spaces.



With property placement centered around San Francisco's Financial District, the cohort includes the following small businesses, nonprofit organizations, artists, and makers:

- Bee Between (artist)
 - Hosted by The Swig Company at 220 Montgomery Street, Suite 100
- BRUJAS (skate collective / streetwear apparel brand)
 - Hosted by The Gateway at 201 Jackson Street
- Creativity Explored (art nonprofit)
 - Hosted by The Swig Company at 220 Montgomery Street, Suite 100
- Devil's Teeth Bakery (bakery)
 - Hosted by BXP at One Embarcadero Center, Suite R1113
- Holy Stitch! (apparel education)
 - Hosted by Pembroke at 100 California Street, Suite 140
- GCS Agency (multi-media agency)
 - Hosted by The Gateway at 201 Jackson Street
- KALW-FM 91.7 FM (radio station)
 - Hosted by The Swig Company at 220 Montgomery Street, Suite 100
- The Mellow (performance venue / plant store)
 - Hosted by Lincoln Properties at 332 Pine Street
- Nature's Keeper (outdoor apparel brand)
 - Hosted by Pembroke at 100 California Street, Suite 140
- Risa Iwasaki Culbertson (artist)
 - Hosted by The Gateway at 151 Jackson Street
- Rosalind Bakery (bakery)
 - Hosted by BXP at Four Embarcadero Center, Suite 4054
- Sucka Flea (retail shop)
 - Hosted by Lincoln Properties at 332 Pine Street
- Teranga (restaurant)
 - Hosted by BXP at Four Embarcadero, Suite R4104
- Victoria Heilweil & Phil Spitler (artists)
 - Hosted by Lincoln Properties at 332 Pine Street
- Whack Donuts (bakery)
 - Hosted by BXP at Four Embarcadero Center, Suite 4507
- Yonder (retail shop)
 - Hosted by The Gateway at 151 Jackson Street
- York Street Café (restaurant)
 - Hosted by BXP at Four Embarcadero Center, Suite 4507

“As a local business owner, I would like to share my excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to expand my Holy Stitch Factory Fellowship program while reaching more youth across San Francisco,” **said Holy Stitch! Factory Fellowship owner Julian Prince Dash.** “This collaboration with Vacant to Vibrant is a true testament to the resilient and innovative spirit of San Francisco.”



Pop-up activations were selected from a pool of over 850 applications and were narrowed down through a comprehensive review process by an advisory committee made up of local business owners, artists, community-based organizations, and property owners. Finalists were presented to participating property owners, who made the final selections.

“Devil's Teeth is delighted to be a part of San Francisco's downtown revitalization,” **said Devil's Teeth Baking Company owner Hilary Passman.** “The Vacant to Vibrant program is an exciting step towards San Francisco's economic recovery. We are proud of our city and invested in its future.”

Over 80 property applications were received to participate in the program and provide ground floor space for the pop-ups in exchange for an activated space, and up to \$5,000 to cover utility expenses and tenant improvements. The 38 activators selected as finalists in the first cohort met with property owners to explore potential property matches and locations across the Financial District. Property owners were presented with up to three options from the finalist pool, and made the final selection of who would activate their space. Of the 17 tenant activators, nine are primary and eight supplementary.

“BXP is committed to supporting a strong Downtown and our vibrant San Francisco community by supporting local businesses and connecting with local community groups,” **said Rod Diehl, SVP, San Francisco Region, BXP.** “We are proud to partner with SF New Deal and the City of San Francisco’s Vacant to Vibrant program by hosting four pop-up activations at Embarcadero Center that will further our collective efforts to revitalize downtown by supporting local artists, entrepreneurs, and small businesses.”

The City’s Vacant to Vibrant program is actively accepting applications for consideration for both activators and property owners in future phases of this program as it extends beyond the inaugural first cohort this fall.

Visit www.VibrantSF.org or call (415) 480-1185 to learn more. Follow along on Instagram at [@VacantToVibrant](https://www.instagram.com/VacantToVibrant).

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