What is this document?

Gehl Studio conducted an evaluation and analysis of the Market Street Prototyping Festival to connect the Festival’s process and outcomes with the urban design goals of the Better Market Street Project, and festival funders’ goal of promoting diverse, integrated public spaces that support civic life.

This research, and the recommendations that derive from it, are summarized on two documents:

1. This document: Makers on Market summarizes key findings and insights from the Festival, identifies prototypes with potential of influencing the design of Market Street, and outlines a framework for using prototyping events as a way to engage members of the public in finding solutions to public challenges.

2. The second document: Prototype for Change establishes criteria for scaling evaluation methods to other projects and provides an evaluation protocol for public space pilot projects in San Francisco and beyond.

Structure

PART I Introduction
Festival background

PART II Festival Evaluation
Evaluates the impact of the Festival through the lens of five themes:
1. Street for People
2. Engaged Communities
3. Shared Civic Spaces
4. Opportunity and Access
5. Building Capacity

PART III Evaluation of prototypes
Identifies the prototypes with the most potential of impacting the future design of Market Street

PART IV Next steps
Outlines a process for applying prototyping as an engagement and testing tool to other urban challenges
MARKET STREET TYPICAL DAY
PART I

INTRODUCTION

Goals of the Market Street Prototyping Festival. Evaluation themes and methods.
WHAT IS THE MARKET STREET PROTOYPING FESTIVAL?

Market Street Prototyping Festival (MSPF), which took place between April 9-11, 2015, connected designers, artists and makers with the diverse neighborhoods along Market Street and encouraged them to develop and test ideas to enliven the sidewalks. The Festival built upon the design process for Better Market Street, a five year effort to redesign Market Street into a lively and attractive destination with vibrant public life. Better Market Street will transform Market Street by creating memorable and active gathering spaces, the ability to promenade, and a vibrant public life. Better Market Street introduced the Street Life Zone, a multi-use area located within the existing sidewalk that will invite diverse public life, “lingering” activities and enhance Market Street’s identity through design, materials and furnishing elements for the entire length of the street.

The Market Street Prototyping Festival was the result of a collaboration between the San Francisco Planning Department and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, with funding provided by the Knight Foundation and other funders. These partners wanted to prototype the idea of the Street Life Zone, transform the public’s relationship to public design by bringing the community engagement process to the street, and to invest in civic innovators in the public realm. The foundation for these goals is a belief that civic innovators help cities attract and keep talented people, expand economic opportunity and create a culture of engagement, and that thoughtfully designed and programmed places create a public realm where a diverse citizenry can come together.

The goals of MSPF:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNITY</th>
<th>CAPACITY</th>
<th>CONNECTION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design with and for community. Ask the community to reimagine and activate the Street Life Zone, make public space more active, vibrant and engaging.</td>
<td>Increase designers’ capacity by connecting selected project teams to resources and a professional network. Generate institutional knowledge on community engagement through the partnership between the government and cultural institutions involved in the process.</td>
<td>Select projects that encourage people to linger, socialize and spend time. Reflect the identity of the districts and create a unique San Francisco experience.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Prototyping public space is a way of involving a range of stakeholders in generating many potential solutions to a physical design challenge in a temporary sitting. When done using an inclusive process, it involves the public in a direct and tangible manner into the physical planning process. **Prototyping** potential solutions to a design challenge can show the public the many potential ways that a public space can be transformed, and lets them experience those possibilities in real life.

Good reasons to prototype:

- Shorten the distance between citizen and decision-maker, thereby creating more productive and meaningful form of citizen engagement
- Shorten the distance between idea and implementation
- Unlock the potential of civic assets of people and place
- Envision the unimaginable
- Create a feedback loop between – community need, intervention, and use

**prototyping** [proh-tuh-tahyping] to create, test and try an experimental model of a new idea or object.
FESTIVAL EVALUATION

We evaluated the Festival according to five themes that touch on the ways the Festival can impact Market Street and the people who use it, looking at the event both as a one-time festival, and as an idea-generation tool for the future re-built Market Street

1. A Street for People
2. Engaged Communities
3. Shared Civic Spaces
4. Opportunity and Access
5. Building Capacity
EVALUATION THEMES

This evaluation is organized around five themes. These themes were crafted by Gehl Studio as a synthesis of the overlapping goals of the institutions that came together to produce the Festival. Below are the questions we used to structure our evaluation.

A STREET FOR PEOPLE
How successful was MSPF in creating more invitations for lingering and walking? Did MSPF improve the perception of Market Street for a diversity of users?

ENGAGED COMMUNITIES
Were communities engaged in MSPF process? How did MSPF event itself reflect the wishes of the neighborhoods it passes through? Which prototypes engaged the public the most?

SHARED CIVIC SPACES
How successful was MSPF in inviting diverse audiences in terms of age, gender, neighborhood, income, and racial identification? Did it present opportunities for mixing between people of different backgrounds?

OPPORTUNITY & ACCESS
How successful was MSPF in bringing new resources and services to the street that expand cultural and economic opportunity and access?

BUILDING CAPACITY
How successful was MSPF in build social capital and skills in its participants and organizers? Did MSPF improve residents’ ability to articulate their aspirations for the public realm?
To complete this evaluation, Gehl Studio gathered information about the Festival through a range of methods:

- **Engagement Records**: Analysis of festival attendance records: Sign-in forms and other materials provided by festival organizers.
- **Social Media Analysis**: Analyzing metadata of social media posts from Market Street during and after the Festival.
- **Online Surveys**: Online surveys of designers and artists who participated in the Festival.
- **Intercept Surveys**: Volunteers conducted over 300 intercept surveys with people attending the Festival and people on Market Street the week after.
- **Observational Analysis**: Gehl Studio trained and mobilized over 50 volunteers to conduct in-person counts of pedestrians and people spending time on Market Street. These surveys were performed at five locations along Market Street on two festival days and two baseline days after the event had ended*.
- **Prototype Evaluation**: Gehl developed and applied a standardized tool to evaluate each of the prototypes against a fixed criteria.
- **Photo Surveys**: The team documented each of the 50 prototypes at different times of the day, each day of the Festival.
- **In-Depth Interviews**: Interviews were conducted with festival leadership and staff at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and the San Francisco Planning Department.

*Baseline: April 16-18, 2015
MSPF: April 9-11, 2015
A STREET FOR PEOPLE

The Market Street Prototyping Festival demonstrated what a Market Street for people might look like. During the Festival, the street became a destination unto itself, offering a wide range of activities and experiences that encouraged people to stay outside and enjoy the public realm.
OUTPOST

The Outpost demonstrated how a considerate marriage of a simple, flexible structure and vibrant programming can transform the sidewalk from a corridor into a destination. The Outpost served the Central Market district, home to one of San Francisco’s densest neighborhoods, and with some of the least access to open space. With a simple modular structure, potted plants, and a patch of turf, the Outpost provided physical and programmatic bones to make the small stretch of sidewalk a community living room. 72 hours of diverse programming included wildlife tours, planting workshops, film screenings, and bike repairs.

Block: Central Market
Team: Studio for Urban Projects
A STREET FOR PEOPLE

As San Francisco’s ‘Main Street’, Market Street should be more than a transit spine, it should be a destination unto itself. There are certain places, identified through the Better Market Street planning process, that are particularly suited for hosting a vibrant street life. What if Market Street was the city’s most vibrant place, where people chose to stop and spend time?

Spending time, enjoying the street

MSPF provided an opportunity to prototype this vibrant street. During the Festival, the character of Market Street changed drastically, with as many as 700% more people choosing to spend time on the street, or “linger.” Lingering activities included standing, sitting, or more active types of staying activities such as playing, buying things on the street, or making or appreciating art.

Much of this increased lingering activity was due to cultural programming: live music, interactive installations, performances, lectures, etc. The teams behind the prototypes served as cultural ambassadors, inviting passers by to stop and enjoy their street.

The intercept surveys revealed that people, across a range of age levels and backgrounds, were more likely to have a positive impression of their block during the Festival, compared to a baseline. This observation was also corroborated with social media activity. While Market Street is already a popular destination for visitors and locals, people were much more likely to post photos on Instagram during the Festival, than during the baseline.

Photo: Mommin_around via Instagram
LINGERING ACTIVITIES INCREASED AS MUCH AS 700% DURING THE FESTIVAL

Measured Types of Lingering Activities:

- Standing
- Waiting for Transport
- Bench Seating
- Cafe Seating
- Secondary Seating
- Folding/Moveable Chairs
- Lying Down
- Children Playing
- Commercial Activity
- Cultural Activity
- Physical Activity

Lingering Activity at Central Market, Weekend, 4:00PM
Lingering Activities

Lingering Activities were measured each hour. Counts for each hour across all districts were averaged by weekday and weekend to produce the average number of people spending time in each district at any given moment by day of week.

LINGERING ACTIVITY INCREASED ON AVERAGE BY **55%** ON WEEKDAYS AND **176%** ON WEEKENDS DURING MSPF
MSPF boosted streetlife - at the times when the street needed it most

By all accounts, public life flourished along Market Street during MSPF. Pedestrian activity increased by over 30% on average during weekdays and weekends, while lingering activity increased by over 55% on weekdays and over 175% on weekends.

The most dramatic increases in public life occurred at the times when activity tends to drop off. Lingering activity usually falls by over 30% along Market Street on the weekends. During MSPF, weekend lingering activity instead increased by 89% over baseline weekday activity. Pedestrian volumes generally drop in the afternoon hours. During MSPF however, pedestrian activity instead began to intensify between noon and 2:00pm, then maintained consistently higher than baseline days into the evening.

MSPF indicates that invitations for public life could invigorate Market Street precisely at the times when it otherwise begins to feel empty.
Lingering Activities
Lingering Activities, defined by sitting, standing, and more active staying activities like playing, were measured each hour. Hourly weekend and weekday counts were averaged for each district to produce the numbers to the right.

Positive Block Perception
Surveys were distributed to pedestrians on Market Street. These surveys included a question about how positively people perceived the block they were on. The percentage of people who responded “Strongly Positive” or “Somewhat Positive / Pleasant” is shown at right.

Central Market had the largest increase in lingering activity and positive block perception during MSPF.

Areas with the largest increases in lingering activity also experienced the greatest improvements in positive perception among survey respondents.
experiences low levels of lingering activity compared to other areas along Market Street, became a magnet for people during MSPF—so much so that it invited more people to stay than any other district. More public life in Central Market is likely why this area also experienced the largest improvement in public perception among survey respondents.

This change indicates the potential of programming not only to create a sense of vibrancy, but to fundamentally alter the social dynamics and identity of a neighborhood.

Some blocks benefited more than others

Market Street runs through the heart of several neighborhoods. Some of these neighborhoods experience higher levels of activity than others during non-festival times. Areas with lots of people tend to feel exciting and interesting, while those with few tend to feel deserted and uninviting.

MSPF was most successful at inviting people to the places that are normally the lowest in activity. Central Market, which generally experiences low levels of lingering activity compared to other areas along Market Street, became a magnet for people during MSPF—so much so that it invited more people to stay than any other district. More public life in Central Market is likely why this area also experienced the largest improvement in public perception among survey respondents.

This change indicates the potential of programming not only to create a sense of vibrancy, but to fundamentally alter the social dynamics and identity of a neighborhood.
MARKET STREET AS A DESTINATION

The prototypes tested a range of invitations for ‘lingering activities’ on Market Street. With a diversity of arrangements in relation to the street and sidewalk, these installations showcased a range of seating options that hosted group activities, privacy, interactive engagement, enclosure, exercise and play.

Here are some of the design principles that proved successful. They can be used as success criteria that inform the design brief for future furnishings on Market Street.

- Offer flexible seating in areas with protection from the sun and elements.
- Allow for a mix of social and solo activities.
- Offer seating in locations that provides opportunities for people watching.
FESTIVAL EVALUATION

Arrange public seating in a position that is conducive for conversation.

Provide amenities for people of a range of ages and skill levels.

Offer temporary activities to increase the feeling of novelty and variety.

Allow for physical activity, play, interaction and entertainment.
A Street for People

INSIGHTS

The Festival succeeded in expanding invitations for spending time and walking along Market Street.

The street was successfully transformed into a more comfortable, welcoming, protected, and delightful space which caused more people to spend time on the street - and supplemented streetlife in the afternoons and weekends, exactly when it drops off normally.

The street has the capacity for this enhanced program, and it’s better for it.

Although much of the public right of way was occupied by the prototypes themselves, there was still room for people to stay and linger, as well as move through. In fact, this compression in some places created a feeling of urban coziness, closeness, and comfort among strangers.
Public programs can be on the street.

Concerts, classes, dance, karaoke, spoken word—the prototypes with performative elements—were some of the biggest draws on the street, contributing greatly to the overall high pedestrian numbers during the Festival. These prototypes weren’t just outliers, but rather showed that performance can live on the street! Ambassadors, in the form of performers or teachers with the right community partner and curation, can drive a vibrant public life every day, not just on festival days.

But, there could still be more variety in the type of programming on the street.

Although the number of people on the street increased dramatically, the types of activities they were engaging in did not. Most people choosing to spend time on Market Street were standing. In the Retail Heart, there were even fewer people sitting than standing during the Festival, because of the ‘gather round’ performative nature of some of the prototypes there. Is this type of activation sustainable for the long-term programming of Market Street? How can the street design maintain the energy of higher rates of pedestrians, while inviting for a broader diversity of ways to spend time?
ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

MSPF provided an opportunity for people to experience what a vibrant future for Market Street could be. For a year leading up to the event, Festival organizers engaged a wide range of community of stakeholders. The festival created an opportunity for residents to express, build and inhabit the city that they would like to see, generating social capital through encounters with neighbors, and a shared vocabulary about what they would like to see in their community.

For many artists and designers it was their first exposure to working collaboratively with a government agency. These opportunities to collaborate with others on a creative project expanded designers’ access to skills and resources that can be used in future projects.
Show Box was deceptively simple - stadium seating composed of stacked wooden cylinders overlooking a generous brick bulb-out. It provided plug-and-play infrastructure including lighting, A/V hookups, a roll-out dance floor, and an informational marquee. The crowds often maxed out the seating, thanks to programming by CounterPulse, a community arts group. Performances drew audiences not only from those seated on the structure, but also passers by across the street and from diners in adjacent bars and restaurants. CounterPulse’s programming of socially relevant, homegrown talent was key to Show Box’s success. By providing the sidewalk infrastructure for community artists to share their talent with their neighbors, Show Box provided a model for street design which engages and empowers the community.

Block: Central Market
Team: Jensen Architects and CounterPulse
ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

What better way to engage residents in the future of their civic spaces than asking them to propose, design and experience a vibrant street on a one-to-one scale? MSPF prototyped numerous ways transform the public’s relationship to public design.

Year-long outreach

The engagement process that lead to the Festival convened a range of local stakeholders. The process included the creation of a Community Cohort for each district, charged with helping identify community priorities and conducting outreach. The Community Cohort was formed by representatives of the local Community Benefit Districts, Business Improvement Districts, non-profits and other stakeholders.

The outreach campaign for the Festival included public meetings, open house events, on the street engagement and a social media campaign.
Engagement through social media

Festival organizers made use of social media and a wide range of digital participation tools to increase awareness of the Festival, and to gather feedback on the proposed designs before, during and after the Festival.

A wide array of social media platforms were used to engage the public including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Festival organizers also used engagement platforms Neighborland and OpenPlans to collect specific feedback on prototype designs in development. During the Festival, organizers encouraged the use of hashtags for attendees to provide feedback on individual prototypes.

A platform for public design

The Festival created a platform for anyone to develop and test ideas for the future of Market Street. MSPF put citizens at the heart of the design process, empowering them to bring their vision for the future of Market Street into reality, and allowing those who walk on the streets to experience and participate in that vision.

Meeting people where they are

The Festival prototyped a novel form of community engagement, encouraging discussion of the future of Market Street by testing a wide range of ideas at life-size on the streets themselves. A survey of people who were actively engaged with the prototypes revealed that 73% of respondents had run into the Festival by chance. This means that in this sample the majority of people did not intend to participate in the Festival, but instead ran into it while going about their daily life. By inviting a new group of people to participate in the public design process by putting ideas on the streets themselves, MSPF engaged people as they went about their lives.

“ONE BIG CHALLENGE WAS GETTING THE WORD OUT TO OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES. EVEN WITH OUR NEW PARTNERSHIPS THERE WAS LIMITED STAFF CAPACITY TO DO ALL WE NEEDED TO DO. SO WHILE WE WERE ABLE TO DO A LOT OF ANALOG OUTREACH, WE WOULD HAVE WANTED TO DO MORE.”

-Sandie Arnold, Director of Institutional Giving and Strategic Initiatives, YBCA
MSPF ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

PRODUCERS

SF PLANNING
Better Market Street
Street Life Zone
YBCA
MSPF Vision Creation
MSPF Launch & Call for Submissions
May 27, 2014
Better Market Street Going Through Environmental Review

COMMUNITY COHORT

DISTRICT DESIGN CAPTAINS

CORE PARTICIPANTS

PROTOYPE DESIGNERS
Submit Proposals
200 submissions!

VOLUNTEERS

AUDIENCE

GENERAL PUBLIC
Including residents, businesses, visitors

1,132 people liked MSPF on Facebook

Social Media

MSPF on Facebook
July 23, 2014
Open House
August 11, 2014

Community Idea Lab
August 15, 2014

1,872 people used the #MSPF hashtag on Instagram
1,132 people liked MSPF on Facebook
200 submissions!
1,872 people used the #MSPF hashtag on Instagram

District Community Conversations
September 22-24

Selections Announced
October 29, 2014

Engagement Day 1
November 3, 2014

Engagement Day 2
January 19, 2015

Design Charette
January 21, 2015

MSPF Festival
April 9 - 11, 2015

Evaluate Event
Lessons & Insight

Better Market Street Implementation

Attend Festival & Vote For Prototypes
DIFFERENT WAYS TO MEASURE ENGAGEMENT

MSPF organizers encouraged people to provide feedback on their favorite prototype using social media. Gehl’s evaluation team on the ground counted the number of people who stopped at each prototype at different times during the day.

We learned that social media presence was not always correlated with the activity on the ground. To evaluate the success of the prototypes it is important to observe how people interact with them on the ground.

“A NUMBER OF TENDERLOIN RESIDENTS VISITED OUR PROJECT, INCLUDING SEVERAL WHO CAME BACK EVERY DAY AND WANTED A PERMANENT INSTALLATION. UNFORTUNATELY, MANY OF THEM ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK VIA THE VARIOUS CHANNELS OFFERED, NAMELY THE INTERNET AND HASHTAGS.”

-Threshold CityLabs, Prototype Designers

Photo: @MarketStreetPF via Instagram
MSPF attendees were encouraged to provide feedback on their favorite prototypes by tweeting or Instagramming dedicated hashtags. The size of the circle on the chart to the right indicates the total number of hashtag votes for each prototype. The bigger the circle, the more online votes the prototype received.

People also voted their preference with their feet. Each circle’s position to the left or right indicates peak activity at each prototype from observations at 11am, 2pm, and 5pm on April 9th, 2015 during MSPF. The farther to the right, the more attention this prototype received on the ground.

SHOWBOX ATTRACTED THE LARGEST GROUPS BUT HAD AVERAGE TWEETS

PEEP SHOW ATTRACTED THE MOST SOCIAL MEDIA VOTES, BUT HAD AVERAGE FOOT COUNT
INVITATION TO SPEAK OUT

What if the street were a stage, an amphitheater, a black box theater, or a soap box?

Many of the prototypes tested different modes of expression - from big to small, theatrical to one-on-one.

The success of these prototypes illustrates how that the street can be used to speak out in a way that does not disrupt its use as a transportation corridor.
AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM FOR LEARNING ABOUT NATURE

SPACES FOR DIFFERENT NEIGHBORHOODS TO HOWCASE WHO THEY ARE ON MARKET STREET

A PLATFORM FOR INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS TO PERFORM

SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTED TO THE STREET
MSPF brought the community meeting to the street!

By putting design options in front of people, instead of the other way around, MSPF reached new audiences, provoked new reactions, and changed the tone of the community engagement process from formality to fun.
But, the feedback loop between prototype, public visitor, and Festival organizer was not sufficiently robust.

Although engagement numbers were through the roof, the quality of that engagement could be further improved. What exactly did we learn about what types of prototypes were most impactful other than who hashtagged them and who stood around them? How could those without access to mobile social media participate better next time?

The Community Cohort could have been given more leverage.

Although the community engagement was robust, the Community Cohort was comprised primarily of business associations, with limited representation from resident and nonprofit institutions.
SHARED CIVIC SPACES

Market Street is the symbolic heart of the city. It is a civic space where people from all ages and backgrounds can come together and meet eye to eye. Many of the prototypes generated opportunities for meaningful and playful interactions between strangers, fostering a sense of community among the diverse people of San Francisco.
COMMON GROUND
An interactive game combined seating, plants, and water to appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds. Users were encouraged to interact and coordinate their movements to activate water features. The game rewarded participation and cooperation with a surprising, contagious experience by users literally sharing common ground. Common Ground provided a physical and conceptual model for encouraging inclusivity, cooperation and shared experience.

Block: Embarcadero
Team: Cloud Arch Studio
Civic spaces that appeal to a broad spectrum of people from a range of backgrounds and circumstances are a sign of an inclusive city. As one of San Francisco’s major civic spaces, a primary function of Market Street is to bring people together. Many prototypes explicitly addressed this issue and sought to bring people together through play and culture, sparking positive interactions between strangers.

Many of those attending had a chance to interact with new people. Sixty-five percent of survey respondents reported interacting with someone new at MSPF. We also found that MSPF attracted people from a broader range of ages compared to the baseline.

**MSPF reached locals**

MSPF attracted social media attention from people who live further from San Francisco than those who post photos from Market Street at other times. The study suggests that more residents may have visited Market Street from Oakland and San Jose during the MSPF.

**Neighborhood representation**

Estimated home locations of Instagram users who posted photos at MSPF. Areas with residents that posted photos during the festival, but not on the baseline weekend, came from San Jose, areas of Oakland, Berkeley, and other cities in the East Bay.
New invitations for the young and old

Gehl measured the age of people moving through space because making cities accessible to younger and older people - the most vulnerable members of our population - means that the public realm is accessible and safe for all.

The Market Street Prototyping Festival increased the presence of both groups significantly. Compared to the baseline, the number of seniors increased by an average of 25% during the Festival while the number of people under the age of 14 increased by an average of 40%. The Central Market district was especially inviting to children, while the Embarcadero district had the lowest increase in seniors. This could be because the Embarcadero is already quite popular with an older set, while Central Market is not normally a kid-friendly block and the intervention of kid-friendly invitations made a big difference.

![Increase in Number of Seniors During MSPF](chart1)

**Increase in Number of Seniors During MSPF**

- Civic Center: 34%
- Central Market: 20%
- Retail Heart: 35%
- Financial District: 34%
- Embarcadero: 14%

65 and older

![Increase in Number of Children During MSPF](chart2)

**Increase in Number of Children During MSPF**

- Civic Center: 38% 33%
- Central Market: 43% 50%
- Retail Heart: 43% 38%
- Financial District: 44% 43%
- Embarcadero: 27% 35%

0 to 7

7 to 14

MSPF MADE CHILDREN VISIBLE ON MARKET STREET

MSPF OFFERED EXPERIENCES TO OLDER ADULTS
Interactions among strangers

Inviting public life is only the first step to a better Market Street. A truly great street also encourages conviviality among those who enjoy it. MSPF was generally successful at creating a social environment, but interaction was more commonplace for some groups than others. Over 70% of survey respondents identifying as White or Black reported having interacted with a stranger on Market Street during the Festival, compared to only half of Asian respondents and 21% of Hispanic respondents. It is difficult to discern whether this discrepancy is due to linguistic barriers, cultural barriers, or a lack of outreach to Asian and Hispanic communities. Our study found no discernible relationship between social interaction and income, suggesting that differences in income were not a barrier to creating a convivial environment across economic classes.

Race & Income

Although a broad mix of people attended the Festival, not all of them were aware of it prior to encountering it. Those who identified as White were four times more likely to come to Market Street for the Festival than those who identified as Black, who were more likely to partake in the Festival because they were walking by.

Improvements to inclusively for the Festival can be made among the group of prototype designers themselves, of whom approximately 73% identified as White and only 7% and 3% identified as Hispanic or Black, respectively.

Did you interact with someone new on Market Street today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>21%</td>
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People who identified as Asian and Hispanic were much less likely to interact with strangers during the Festival, but the reasons for this difference are not clear.*

What brings you to Market Street today?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Came for MSPF</th>
<th>Came for other reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People who identified as White were more likely than people who identified as Asian, Hispanic, Black to visit Market Street specifically for the Festival, suggesting room for improvement in invitations to minority communities.*

* Our analysis did not comprehensively survey race, ethnicity, or income of MSPF attendees. Correlations between respondent’s stated race/ethnicity and other answers are for those who participated in intercept surveys.
“I BELIEVE IN THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SPACE AS ONE OF THE CRITICAL PIECES OF OUR PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE THAT BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER.”

-Neil Hrushowy
Manager, City Design Group, Citywide Planning, Planning Department, City and County of San Francisco

LOW-INCOME GROUPS WERE LESS LIKELY TO BE AWARE OF THE FESTIVAL

Respondent Annual Household Income
n = 123
ACTIVITIES BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Most prototypes were approachable and engaging. The playful atmosphere made it easy for children, families and people to interact with games, play structures, educational workshops and activities. The invitation to experience Market Street as a series of spectacles proved to be engaging and dynamic, with a sense of discovery.

Here are some examples of street elements that can foster conviviality and casual encounters among people from a range of backgrounds.
CREATIVE GROUP SITTING WITH AN ELEMENT OF SURPRISE

NOVEL OBJECTS RICH ON CONTENT

PLAY TABLES

OBJECTS THAT MAKE SOUNDS AND MUSIC
MSPF was successful in making the street a place that welcomed a broader diversity of ages than normal.

If a civic space is one that represents the diversity of a community, and where dialogue about the future of this place is forged collectively, MSPF was successful in fostering this civic space, especially with respect to age diversity.

The festival made it very easy for people to stumble upon it.

Most visitors to the festival happened upon it by chance, meaning it attracted people who didn’t plan their time too strictly to have a spontaneous experience. However, most of the intentional visitors identified as White. If organizers wanted to raise the number of underrepresented groups who attended as intentional visitors, more outreach would be necessary to those groups.
OPPORTUNITY & ACCESS

Many prototypes tested ideas that brought resources and services to the community.
Access to quality exercise spaces can be cost-prohibitive for low-income groups. The Tenderloin ExerTrail provided a simple urban fitness trail with a variety of activities that could be used by all fitness levels and ages. Many encouraged team-building and group play. Designed with input from graphic designer and fitness experts, Tenderloin ExerTrail provided an open-access urban gym for people of all ages and income levels. It addressed not only the physical need for accessible exercise space, but also the social need for designing public space that allows people of all economic means to interact.

Block: Central Market
Team: Cheyenne Purrington
OPPORTUNITY & ACCESS

One of the goals of the Festival was to encourage designers to create projects that addressed needs and priorities of San Francisco residents. The needs for each district were articulated in the design brief, a document developed in collaboration with the Community Cohort which summarized the top priorities for residents and businesses.

Our evaluation of the prototypes revealed that many of the designs met this challenge by exploring concepts that were built around ideas of bringing public services, amenities and resources to the street.

Bringing new services to the street

Many prototypes at their essence disrupted the mono-culture of the street by introducing new programs that provided services and amenities. Some examples:

- Understory - Ecological Habitat
- Data Lanterns - Illuminating Urban Systems
- Ping Pong - Play
- PPPlanter - Public Facilities
- Tenderloin ExerTrail - Exercise
- Walk Market Street - Culturally Relevant Signage
- Neighborhood Preparedness Unit - Disaster Preparedness
- ProtoHouse - Housing

“I WISH THERE WERE MORE EFFECTIVE WAY TO COMMUNICATE THE EVENTS WHEN PEOPLE JUST PASSED BY AND HAD NO IDEA OR NO INTENTION TO CHECK THE WEBSITE.”

-Hsuan Yang, Festival Volunteer
Legibility and communication

Many people who engaged with the Festival were passersby who did not know about the event, but were welcomed to it by volunteers and designers. The Festival was open and public, but not everyone understood its intent or extent.

Pedestrians approached volunteers with questions about the event and expressed desire for maps that showed the location of all projects. Some people did not realize the Festival continued along Market Street because of the lack of visual connection between the various districts.

Reviving the civic commons

We know that many of our cities are more segregated by income and political affiliation than ever. There are fewer places for people who are different from one another to mix and share in civic life together. Yet public space remains one of these places. If cities care about having diverse members of society coming into contact with one another on a regular basis, and the effects that mixing may achieve from economic opportunity to greater tolerance, then the design of these public spaces is very important. By centering opportunities to interact with diverse publics on Market Street, the Festival revived the historic center of the city as the region’s civic spine.
BRING RESOURCES TO WHERE PEOPLE ARE

Many prototypes explored concepts that involved bringing services and amenities to the streets, democratizing access to resources.

These examples illustrate some of the amenities that could be offered on Market Street.

A PLAY AREA FOR CHILDREN

A PUBLIC BATHROOM

A PLACE FOR CALM AND MEDITATION
AN OUTDOOR GYM

AN OUTDOOR GALLERY FOR NEIGHBORHOOD ARTISTS

A PROTOTYPE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A STREET LIBRARY
INSIGHTS

Opportunity and Access
Bringing services to the street is a radical democratization of opportunity.

Public lavatories, exercise equipment, creative wayfinding, all these prototypes - as well as soliciting feedback on the street itself - brought resources to the street level where everyone had equal access to it. Because the street is a public space with no barriers to entry, bringing services here democratizes their access.

Successful prototypes plugged into neighborhood groups.

Prototypes that were in partnership with local social service and arts organizations had a stronger impact, both because they were more likely to have ambassadors running programming which drew people in, and because they had the capacity to champion the prototype’s further development on behalf of the neighborhood.
BUILDING CAPACITY

The Market Street Prototyping Festival created a platform for building skills, developing networks, and realizing efficiencies for governments, non-profits and the public to work together in new ways.
The Youth Project: Tag Tunnel succeeded in celebrating and showcasing its creators. The teens involved in creating the project identified the missing voice of youth and a lack of destination spots for teens as key problems. Large chalk boards created a gallery tunnel displaying art by youth street artists. The exterior boards allowed anyone to express themselves. Tag Tunnel gave teens a platform for expression and a safe, fun place to hang out on Market Street. By putting the spotlight on the teen designers who created Tag Tunnel, this prototype encouraged all age groups to consider youth in urban space.

Block: Financial District
Team:
Teaching Artists: Jova Vargas, Craig Hollow, Jake Levitas Youth Team: Diana Aleman, Vicky Chong, Milos Comito-Stellar, Megan Duung, Robin Espinoza, Alice Kuang, Chanel Peng, Kseniya Romanenko, Vanessa Thalhuitzo, Violet Vance, Ivy Yu
Building the public’s capacity to engage in design by bringing the community meeting to the street

A typical community engagement event during the Better Market Street process brought several hundred people together to comment on the vision of the future of Market Street. By contrast, every hour during the Market Street Prototyping Festival, nearly 1,000 people walked through a transformed Civic Center district. The impact of asking members of the general public to engage with visions for the future of their city’s civic spine is significant, enhancing the public’s capacity to articulate their desires for this place, and expanding the reach of the citymaking process beyond the bounds of the community meeting.

Building the skills of designers

The Festival brought value to designers and design teams who staged their work on Market Street. These designers reported that the experience of public prototyping built upon their experience with the design-build process and that the opportunity to test their ideas with immediate public feedback provided a valuable design platform. MSPF also helped them build relationships with fabricators, fellow designers and others who will increase their capacity to do future work.

However, the names and identities of the designers were often obscured through the process, and a brighter spotlight could be shown on the individuals behind each prototype. Prototype signage only conveyed the name of the project, not the creators, and the Festival website did not provide contact information for the designers. For future events, designers should be offered more opportunity for recognition along with their work.

MSPF Applicant Pool

THE LARGEST GROUP OF APPLICANTS WERE PROFESSIONAL DESIGNERS
Developing Institutional Partnerships

MSPF created an opportunity to develop new ways for the city to collaborate with institutions and to shorten the distance between the public and the public design process. The Festival was possible due to the success of the partnership between the SF Planning Department and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Both institutions benefited from the capacities of the other.

There are tasks such as contracting experts, fundraising and promoting public events that benefit the experience of a cultural nonprofit like YBCA. On the other hand, there are functions, such as granting permits to stage temporary installations in public space, that fall under the jurisdiction of the city.

In the end, the whole was greater than the sum of the parts: in fact, YBCA and City Planning have many common goals, although they come from different institutional backgrounds. Both seek to build meaningful relationships with communities by using creative engagement strategies to build broader consensus in the citymaking process.

MSPF allowed them to prototype this working relationship and shared vision.

“THE MARKET STREET PROTOTYPING FESTIVAL COULD ONLY COME ABOUT FROM THE SF PLANNING DEPARTMENT’S RELATIONSHIP WITH YBCA–THEY KNOW HOW TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC, AND WE WERE ABLE TO BUILD ON THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO ENSURE MSPF REPRSENTED THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY.”

-Neil Hrushowy
Manager, City Design Group, Citywide Planning, Planning Department, City and County of San Francisco
BUILDING CAPACITY

The makers of the prototypes represented many neighborhoods and facets of the city with their work. Among the creators were advocacy organizations, conservancy groups, musicians and students who invited participants to learn about the diversity of communities around Market Street.
FABRICATION: BRINGING DESIGN IDEAS TO REALITY

RESEARCH: IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY NEEDS

TEAM BUILDING: WORKING TOGETHER ON THE INSTALLATION AND CLEAN UP

WORKING WITH SENSORS AND ELECTRONICS
MSPF built capacity in designers, city agencies, nonprofit institutions, and the public at large.

Designers made new connections and gained exposure to propel their future work. City agencies tested new capabilities by collaborating on a large-scale event production that will serve creative planning efforts in the future. Nonprofit institutions built new relationships with policy change-agents. The public at large practiced literacy in expressing their likes and dislikes about changes in the public realm.

But, capacity can still be built for amateur designers and members of the public wishing to participate in the design portion of the prototyping process.

The vast majority of prototyping teams were professional designers. How can more non-designers play a role in idea-generation and execution in the prototyping process?
And, individual designers could have been better celebrated in the process.

Many designers gave hundreds of pro-bono labor hours to see their projects realized on Market Street. How could a future festival recognize the unique talents of these civic innovators?
EVALUATION OF PROTOTYPES

Gehl developed a method of evaluating each prototype according to a set of criteria unique to the goals of a Better Market Street.
PROTOTYPE EVALUATION

Gehl developed seven evaluation criteria to assess prototypes and use successful examples to inform long term design and programming along Market Street. The criteria considered MSPF as a process as well as a design challenge. The following pages offer case studies in exemplary prototypes for each criterion.

Methodology

Gehl staff visited each prototype during the Festival and observed the design, construction, use and programming of installations in action during the middle of the day on Friday and Saturday of the Festival. The prototypes were scored by multiple reviewers, and the scores were averaged. Within each of the following seven categories, weighted subcategories were considered, along with a bonus section for unique characteristics. While our results were concrete and numeric, because of the subjective nature of the scoring we have visualized each prototype’s score as a radar plot rather than quantitative scores. This highlights the relative category performance—or “performance profile”—of each prototype.

In order to emphasize the differences between prototypes, each radar plot segment is scaled in size according to the minimum and maximum scores awarded within that evaluation category. The highest scoring prototype in a given category will therefore have a full segment, while the lowest will show no segment.

While some prototypes were clearly more successful than the rest, it is difficult in most cases to compare the success of individual prototypes against each other. Rather, each prototype represents a unique profile that could operate in an ecology of different installations.
### How to Read:

*Larger wedges indicate a stronger fulfillment of the corresponding criterion*

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**MIXING SPACE**

Does the prototype encourage the social life of the space?

- Draws people to it
- Promotes staying activities
- Fosters casual/passive mixing
- Fosters active mixing/conviviality

**Case Study - Arena Play**

**TEAM**

Gensler: JJ Beard, Justin Choy, Laura Denton, Gabriella Folino, Jonathan Gotianse, Sondra Law, Julianne Rodriguez, Sarah Szekeres, Reuben Verkamp

Build Group: Jonathan Hoopes, Darcie Reynolds

**IDEA**

Arena Play rethinks a basic game: ping pong. Its hexagonal shape, however, creates the opportunity for up to six people to compete at a time. The game experience is enhanced for players and onlookers alike by integrated LED lighting responsive to the ball. Seat groupings define Arena Play’s edges, allowing pedestrians to enjoy the spectacle and await their own turn at the table.

**WHY IT WORKED**

Arena Play succeeded at inviting life to Market Street with the enticing opportunity to play in the streets. Not only is ping pong a game with which most people are already familiar, the possibility of six-player games made interaction between strangers a natural experience.

Arena Play’s simplicity strengthened its ability to lower the barriers of social interaction in public space. Even for those not playing, the sight of two or more people playing provided a spectacle which passersby were delighted to stop and watch. For the more passively engaged, Arena Play provided seating opportunities to invite further activity. As many as 18 people were observed interacting with Arena Play at a time, among the most of all prototypes.

**MARKET STREET CAN INVITE PUBLIC LIFE BY DESIGNING FOR PLAYFUL INTERACTIONS**

**LESSONS FOR MARKET STREET**

Market Street can and should be a place for social activity, and there is perhaps no better way to invite social activity than through play. Market Street should consider design elements that invite active and passive interaction – a thing to do and a place to watch – through opportunities to play in public space. Ping pong, fusball, arcade games, chess, climbing walls, slides, swings and many other playful interventions could make Market Street fun.
HAPPINESS & WELL-BEING

Does the prototype make people comfortable and happy?

- Creates human scale space & comfort
- Encourages healthy behavior and activities
- Makes necessary activities easier or more fun
- Improves safety

Case Study - Common Ground

TEAM
Cloud Arch Studio: Derek Ouyang, Sinan Miheleci, Tina Vilfan, Rebecca Díaz-Atienza, Victoria Flores, Nicholas Petitmaire

IDEA
Common Ground is three, simple, networked surfaces - seating, landscape and pavement. The surfaces sense when a person is sitting or walking by.

These inputs from corresponding cells of seating and pavement trigger an unexpected water feature within the landscape. Reactions occur sequentially as more cells are activated in sync along the path. No water feature is activated unless both the seat and the pavement are activated, and if the whole path is activated then the installation will offer a grand finale feature.

WHY IT WORKED
While Common Ground was successful in inviting people to sit and stay, its deceptively mundane appearance made the unexpected reaction of water features even more exciting. Common Ground offered elements of surprise and delight to the public realm. As users realized that their own actions (in conjunction with friends and strangers) caused the water features, a playful and social game would begin to unfold.

LESSONS FOR MARKET STREET
Market Street should never feel dull. Design elements that defy people’s expectations in ways that entertain and delight provide a sense of excitement draw people. Art and music in unexpected places like bus stops, playful crosswalk signs, colorfully painted intersections and motion-activated lights, sounds and water in the streetscape could reframe the tone of life on Market Street.

MARKET STREET CAN OFFER ELEMENTS OF SURPRISE AND DELIGHT TO THE PUBLIC REALM
Does the prototype address larger urban systems?

- Meets an unmet need
- Has potential to be scaled up to multiple installations
- Synergizes with urban systems
- Supports / connects urban strategy or policy
- Creates impactful precedent
- Addresses sustainability

**Case Study - Neighborhood Preparedness Unit**

**TEAM**
Urban Risk Lab: Miho Mazereeuw, David Moses, Justin Lavalee, Nicholas Polansky, Christopher Dewart, Maya Taketani, Aditya Barve

**IDEA**
The Neighborhood Preparedness Unit is an infrastructure system designed to respond to community needs during the first 72-hours after a disaster.

This particular unit, “The Communications Tower” integrates a broadcasting system, lighting, emergency supplies, mobile phone power charger and a radio channel through which to deliver public emergency information. As everyday public infrastructure, the prototype is also a seating area that can play music and provide power.

**WHY IT WORKED**
The Neighborhood Preparedness Unit provided an excellent example of dual-functionality and design for resilience – while providing amenities for everyday life it also served a vital purpose for rare but critical moments of crisis. Some features, such as the charging station, provided a public amenity in both circumstances. A compact modular design insured easy distribution while the integration of natural hazard education further strengthened the community impact of this prototype.

**LESSONS FOR MARKET STREET**
Market Street should be a flexible space – one that provides during occasions both joyous and traumatic. The Neighborhood Preparedness Unit reminds us to consider the design of the space and elemental provisions during potential fires, power outages and earthquakes. Market Street should simultaneously invite public life while supporting communities in times of disaster with reliable off-grid power, water, heat, and communication. The installment of these streetscape features should also educate the public on proper response to disasters and how to access and operate the provided emergency services when necessary.
SPECIAL IMPACT

Does the prototype help people who need it?

- Creates opportunity for empowerment
- Builds capacity in individuals/citizens
- Builds capacity in organizations/groups
- Makes under-represented groups more visible
- Culturally inclusive
- Supports family/children
- Relevant to broad users/visitors

Case Study – Guerilla Street Museum

TEAM
CCA Architecture Guerilla Street Museum Studio: Adika Djojosugito, Joy Fu, Danny Hsieh, Eva Jin, Saharsh Khaitan, Fredy Lim, Susan Lopez, Lu Li, Martin Setiawan, Andrea Tse, Melody Villavicencio, Christopher Baile with Associate Professor Neal J. Z. Schwartz

IDEA
The Guerilla Street Museum was a series of creative kiosks that provided critical information, unseen stories, and points for outreach to at-risk and homeless LGBT youth. The prototype was developed in collaboration with Larkin Street Youth Services, an organization providing assistance and resources to homeless youth in San Francisco for over 30 years.

WHY IT WORKED
In order to provide help to at-risk and homeless youth, at-risk and homeless youth must be aware that help is available and know how to reach it. This is why shedding light on access to assistance and resources in the public realm has a real impact on the lives of those at risk. The Guerilla Street Museum provided a public access point for help exactly where it was needed most – the streets of San Francisco. For the general public, the prototype also succeeded at raising awareness and telling the stories of those in their community who are otherwise unheard.

LESSONS FOR MARKET STREET
Market Street should be a place of tolerance, awareness, and service. No other street in the city hosts a broader range of people, making it the ideal place to provide resources for the hardest populations to reach and help. Nonprofit organizations that address critical challenges to San Francisco such as homelessness, at-risk youth, drug addiction, personal health and housing affordability should be given priority over advertisers to reach target populations in the visual space of Market Street.

MARKET STREET CAN HOST ACCESS POINTS FOR HELP WHERE IT IS NEEDED MOST.
DESIGN & IDEATION

Is this a clear, legible and good idea?

- Supports Better Market Street concepts and goals
- Intelligible to general public
- Invitations are appropriate to the context
- Stacks functions (i.e. does multiple things)
- Novel, inspiring, provocative solution for Market Street
- Invites for new activities
- Elicits positive user response

Case Study - PPlanter

TEAM
Urban Biofilter and the Hyphae Design Lab:
Marisha Farnsworth, Brent Bucknum, Graham Prentice

IDEA
The PPlanter is an environmentally sustainable public restroom designed to fit in a parking space much like a parklet. The structure lets men and women urinate standing up (women are provided a disposable funnel) with their mid-sections covered by a panel, offering enough privacy for user comfort without so much as to invite potential illicit activity. A foot-pump provides just enough water for hand washing, which then washes urine through the system to an airtight tank for the planter where it serves as fertilizer for bamboo plants.

WHY IT WORKED
Cities can be frustrating places for even the most basic of human needs – PPlanter addressed the need for public restrooms in an environmentally conscious way while contributing to the greenery of Market Street. The design process for this prototype produced a pragmatic, creative and context-sensitive solution for an everyday urban problem and served multiple functions with a simple, streamlined system.

LESSONS FOR MARKET STREET
Market Street should be a place that provides for basic human needs with clean water fountains, clean air, and places of reprieve when nature calls. If these provisions can be linked into a symbiotic system that conserves resources and takes care of people’s needs, the city as a whole can become a more natural and nurturing place. Prototypes like PPlanter could serve as an iterative stage of larger environmentally-sustainable networks between infrastructure, green space and people.
LONGEVITY

With refinement or more durable construction, could this idea last on Market Street?

- Translates to durable and sustainable construction
- Suggests a “version 2.0”
- Mobilizes stewards and champions
- Avoids maintenance issues
- Avoids user conflicts
- Avoids safety hazards

Case Study - Walk Market Street

TEAM
Walk [Your City]

IDEA
Walk Market Street is a modular urban wayfinding signage system that helps locals or newcomers navigate the city by foot. Signs point to nearby attractions, amenities and services with an estimate of the time needed to travel by foot. Pedestrians with smart phones can scan a QR code for more detailed directions.

WHY IT WORKED
The reasons for Walk Market Street’s success are threefold: utter simplicity of concept and execution, navigable directions to places not easily found on Google Maps, and a sometimes startling awareness of just how close even commonly known places are to people who may have otherwise taken a bus or car. Walk [Your City] is a community-driven project; anyone can create and print way finding signs for the places they love in their cities.

LESSONS FOR MARKET STREET
Between Yelp and Google Maps, it’s easy to find restaurants and businesses in a new place – Walk Market Street shows the need for wayfinding for experiences and local knowledge as a public service. For example, how far away is The Wiggle and how does one get to it? In what alley do street artists exhibit their best work? Where is a nice quiet place to enjoy the water? Market Street should be a legible environment for newcomers and locals alike.
EXECUTION

How well was the prototype made, within the Festival context?

- Works well within neighborhood, block, streetscape
- High level of craft and thoughtful detailing
- Construction materials are efficient, sustainable
- Realizes its ambitions as a project in festival context

Case Study - Outpost

TEAM
Studio for Urban Projects: Richard Johnson, Alison Sant, Jessica Fine, Ryan Mesch

IDEA
Outpost is a prototype of both program and structure. The installation piloted 72 hours of programming to provoke new ways to interact with nature, enhance the life of the street, and connect people to active transportation.

Outpost hosted tours of the wildlife in the area, planting workshops, film screenings, bike repair lessons, food and play, all from within a simple prefabricated structure.

WHY IT WORKED
Many prototypes provided a novel experience predicated on the surprise and delight of the first interaction. Outpost, on the other hand, provided a constantly changing program of events that drew people back for entirely new experiences on each occasion. The flexibility of the space and diverse programming created a successful place for people to gather. Outpost scored among the top four prototypes in every criterion of Gehl Studio’s prototype evaluation.

LESSONS FOR MARKET STREET
Places for public life are about more than design—the programming of different activities and events make spaces dynamic and diverse. A movie night, a Latin funk band, poetry readings and gardening lessons can all happen in the same urban space and invite people from a variety of age groups and cultural backgrounds to enjoy the city, with more to look forward to for the next event. The design of Market Street should be flexible and layered with ongoing programmed activity to reinforce invitations for vibrant public life to all residents.
Evaluation of Prototypes

**INSIGHTS**

The curation of the prototypes on each block was very important to individual prototype success. Two types of curatorial approaches stood out as successful, and could inform future prototype incubation strategy for Market’s Street Life Zones:

1. **Full profile stand-alone** - Prototypes that scored well in many evaluation criteria could have stood alone on a block. These prototypes had a complex meaning that drew people to them for different reasons, creating a durable experience that attracted many people to them, and could be returned to again and again for a new experience.

2. **Narrow profile mix** - Prototypes that scored well in just one evaluation criteria needed other complementary elements to succeed. These prototypes punctuated the space, but needed either other continuous design features in the streetscape or complementary prototypes in order to be successful on the block.
Some prototypes had a concept, but failed any standout experience

Because of poor execution, flawed design concept, or for other reasons, some prototypes failed to legibly communicate their contribution to the streetscape.

More resources for test installations, peer critique sessions, or other collaborative design processes may have helped these prototypes become dynamic contributions to the streetscape.

Successful prototypes didn’t hijack the street experience

Successful prototypes prioritized the right-of-way of pedestrians in a way that allowed people to choose their participation level. In successful prototypes, participants never felt ‘stuck’ in the prototype experience, which allowed for maximum interaction and engagement because people had the freedom to always enter back into the flow of the street.
Evaluation of Prototypes

INSIGHTS

The physical design of the prototypes had a big impact on their success. Patterns that worked could be built into a future evaluation criteria or design brief:

1. Permeable enclosure through “street rooms” with various thresholds between the pass-through space of the sidewalk and the prototype itself. These street rooms provide the comfort of a partial-buffer from the stressors and stimuli of the street, and allow visitors to engage more fully in people watching, play, social interaction, or other activities the prototype invites.

2. Visual beacon that draws a pedestrian towards an area they might not have walked towards, or a landmark that lets one know they’ve arrived. Once they have done so, the prototype has an intimate scale up-close.

3. Ability to view people from a safe vantage point (prospect/refuge)

4. Furnishing for staying, including a varied ecology of seating. For example, benches for one, two, or more people, at different heights, combined with places to lean.

5. Successful prototypes merged content with placemaking

6. Designing for play is a powerful way to break the monoculture of the street. Asking pedestrians to engage in new activities made the street a place with a gravity unto itself. This impacts other pedestrians as well, not only the game-players.

7. Signage doesn’t have to be just utilitarian, it can inform and change mindset. Streets and sidewalks are useful for transportation, but they also hold the history and meaning of a place, and can provide direction to spontaneous experiences.
Programming and community partners elevated prototypes from good to great

The quantity of programming changed the quality of the prototype. Prototypes that had consistent programming throughout the day could be counted on which meant experiences didn’t have to be scheduled, creating maximum buzz and serendipity.

Collaborations with community organizations were best when they provided site-specific programming, instead of just putting their mission on the street.
SOLUTIONS TO URBAN CHALLENGES

MSPF process worked well to activate Market Street with new ideas from the bottom up, but could the process be used to tackle other challenges faced by cities?

The prototyping festival provides a model for partnership and creative problem solving that can be adapted and applied to other pressing urban challenges.

Prototyping allows city departments to engage constructively with citizens, transferring agency to the community and providing a platform for new ideas to be developed and tested.

By convening non-traditional actors such as community organizations, academics, citizen groups, and experts from a range of disciplines, prototyping can enable the discovery of new solutions quickly. Opening the process has the added potential of building trust in civic processes.

The collaboration between the SF Planning Department and YBCA also offers a model for institutional partnership. Government organizations can team up with non-profit organizations and civil society groups that share an interest in a public goal.

Prototyping differs from traditional engagement, in that idea proponents are tasked with building and testing the solution they are suggesting in a low cost and low risk environment. Testing the idea in the public realm offers the opportunity to materialize ideas and present them to an even larger set of constituents.

THE SECOND DOCUMENT IN THIS SERIES PROPOSES HOW PROTOTYPING MIGHT BE USED TO TACKLE OTHER URBAN CHALLENGES
THREE KEY STEPS

Prototyping works particularly well for challenges of creativity or vision, in which anyone has the potential for great ideas. The prototyping platform could be the missing link between these ideas and the implementation of pragmatic solutions.

- Build partnerships around common challenges
- Invite new actors to test ideas
- Learn and adopt solutions for a better city