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MID-MARKET BUSINESS ASSOCIATION AND FOUNDATION LAUNCHES MARKET STREET ARTS

Kicking off in Fall 2023, the recovery plan for San Francisco's Mid-Market neighborhood capitalizes on the creative infrastructure of San Francisco's historic theater district.

SAN FRANCISCO (August 29, 2023) – **Mid-Market Business Association and Foundation (MMBA&F)** announced today the launch of **Market Street Arts**, a recovery plan for San Francisco's Mid-Market neighborhood. Guided by the vision of Mid-Market as an internationally recognized arts, culture, and entertainment haven, Market Street Arts will invest in attracting diverse artists, art organizations, and creative entrepreneurs to vacant storefronts and public activations while also supporting at-risk, long-standing, and new small businesses and art institutions in the Mid-Market area.

Mid-Market has long been the center of the City's cultural landscape and a vital economic driver since the American Theatre first opened in the neighborhood in 1907. Today, with over 16,500 seats in five venues across a three-block radius, Market Street Arts capitalizes on the creative infrastructure of San Francisco's historic theater district and will transform the area into a thriving, world-renowned arts and culture district, on par with elite international cultural districts such as the Quartier des Spectacles in Montreal.

In its first year, the program will welcome more than 15 local arts organizations into inaugural **Creative Hubs**, which are MMBA&F-managed and subsidized spaces for creative uses in formerly vacant storefronts. Market Street Arts will also launch a series of **Public Events** ranging in size and scale, bringing live music, murals, window installations, and more to the corridor year-round. Together, these on-the-ground actions will create joyful opportunities for residents and visitors to discover the area's many businesses and cultural organizations.

“Mid-Market is unique, it has been the backdrop for a diverse array of experiences: world-renowned Pride parades, impassioned political rallies, complex social and economic issues. In many ways, it reflects our beloved city itself – teeming with life and myriad contradictions,” said **Steve Gibson, Executive Director of MMBA&F**. “This public-private recovery plan preserves and builds upon the history and strength of Mid-Market and is a necessary step in elevating Mid-Market’s central role in Bay Area arts and culture. It will alter how we experience Market Street, seamlessly combining shopping, dining, live music, theatre, gallery exhibits, and more.”

In developing Market Street Arts programming, MMBA&F engaged with local arts leaders and stakeholders to select arts organizations for its cultural hubs, following an open call for creative concepts. The schedule of events and locations of the cultural hubs will be announced at a later date.

“Mid-Market is a vital neighborhood to San Francisco’s rich history and integral to the city’s future. It serves as a connector to many neighborhoods and draws residents, workers, and people from around the globe,” said **Sarah Dennis Phillips, Executive Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development**. “Market Street Arts grounds the community’s long-term vision for economic revitalization and recovery and helps build on strategies that strengthen arts and entertainment and our local business community.”

Aside from top arts and cultural organizations, Mid-Market is also home to expansive public spaces, thousands of socio-economically diverse residents, multinational corporations, and beloved small businesses. The tides of global economic forces and only-in-San Francisco phenomena all intersect here. With the number of residents in Mid-Market having grown by 33% between 2019 and 2023 and the influx of pedestrians during events, local businesses have even more opportunities.

“Bill Graham Civic Auditorium hosts some of the Bay Area’s largest concerts and events, with up to 8,500 guests attending an event any given night. Initiatives such as Market Street Arts will celebrate the art, innovation, and creativity in the neighborhood while energizing the public spaces and connecting our patrons to all of the new and long-standing retailers and arts organizations,” said **Mary Conde, Sr. Vice President, Another Planet Entertainment**.

“When American Conservatory Theater renovated the Strand Theater in 2015, we were excited by the opportunity to join the existing arts community in the neighborhood and contribute to the vitality of the Mid-Market area,” said **Jennifer Bielstein, Executive Director of American Conservatory Theater**. “Market Street Arts will build on the work and investment in the

neighborhood, adding positive activity for our audiences to experience when they come to see a show.”

“The arts are at the center of our development, and we support the vision of promoting urban design as a canvas for the arts. It activates street frontages, supports artists, has lower tenant improvement costs, and contributes to the spontaneity and surprise that draws us to urban living,” adds **Mark Shkolnikov, Principal of Development of Group i – led by Joy Ou.**

The plan is the result of a multi-year community engagement and data analysis process led by **Urban Place Consulting Group, Inc.** Findings from this process, including contributions from national experts, determined that the recovery plan must capitalize on the creative infrastructure in the Mid-Market corridor, including the significant performance venues and dozens of area arts organizations.

In addition to private funding, Market Street Arts will need sustained political support and public funding to succeed. Mid-Market faced hard economic times in the past, but the last public-private recovery plan yielded substantial investment in the neighborhood, including major economic transformations, new housing, refurbished buildings, and revamped streetscapes.

Mid-Market has been the center of revitalization in the last decade, but the pandemic challenged all the progress made. Today, Mid-Market has a unique opportunity to redefine its distinctive character, and Market Street Arts provides a roadmap to the reinvention and revitalization of the neighborhood.

About Mid-Market Business Association & Foundation (MMBA&F)

The Mid Market Business Association (MMBA) is a 501c6 that advocates on behalf of businesses, property owners, and other stakeholders along Market Street between 5th and Van Ness and surrounding areas. The Mid Market Foundation (MMF) is a 501c3 nonprofit established in 2020 that accepts charitable donations and seeks funding to conceive, implement, and manage transformative programs. The Mid-Market Business Association & Foundation has a multi-year history of serving this neighborhood and partnering with local businesses and community-based organizations.