

MINT PLAZA

CMG Landscape Architecture

The project eliminates vehicles and establishes a safe, pedestrian environment in the middle of the street. We believe that pedestrians feel a palpable sense of relief when in an environment safe from the threat of cars. This sensation is heightened when one's body is in a location from which it is typically excluded. Like cycling in Critical Mass, the monthly bicycle rally, one feels empowered when safely and casually cruising in the middle of a typically dangerous downtown street.

We treat (urban) landscape as a unified and individual organism. We believe that the health of this dynamic complex rests in the broad diversity of its parts and their inter-relationships. By design, we engender, facilitate and sustain these inter-relationships. Cars and their attendant infrastructure dominate the public realm of San Francisco. In downtown more than 70% of the public landscape is dedicated to vehicles, precluding other public activity. Adding public open space that privileges pedestrians is essential to create a diverse and healthy urban landscape in the city.

While every project must be addressed on a case-by-case basis, the following principles can carry over from one urban landscape project to another: 1) Consider and capitalize on every opportunity unique to the project, and inherent in the material and social/cultural conditions of the site, 2) Maximize diversity (function/performance/causal-relations) by design, 3) Extend pedestrian-focused, public open-space to strengthen non-vehicular connections between city neighborhoods, 4) Maximize treatment and infiltration of storm water within the project area.

