



ILLUSTRATION

POPOS—Privately-Owned Public Open Spaces

Secrets of San Francisco

Downtown San Francisco is peppered with vibrant privately-owned, publicly accessible spaces thanks to the regulatory and outreach efforts of the San Francisco Planning Department.

In the downtown office district of San Francisco, the city government owns and manages just five benches and a few ledges for sitting and relaxing by the public. Yet, this work and living space for over a quarter million people has a rich and diverse network of plazas, terraces, atriums, small parks, and small, sunny sitting spaces called snippets. These are developed and maintained by the private sector as Privately-Owned Public Open Spaces, or POPOS. Many of these were deliberately designed to be obscure or inaccessible despite the public's right to use them, until in 2012 when the city actively intervened with a new legislation that upgraded

signage controls and increased public outreach efforts.

Today, every POPOS has to be accompanied by a standardised plaque bearing a “Public Open Space” logo and comprehensive information, including directions to the space where it is not visible from the public sidewalk. To increase public awareness, the San Francisco Planning Department put up an online interactive map that allows users to search for all POPOS by location, opening hours, and availability of seating, food and restrooms. More information appears when you click on each pin. ●





Sun Terrace at 343 Sansome Street

- Hours:** Open during business hours
- Seating:** 18 chairs, 50 linear seats on planter box sizes
- Food:** None
- Restrooms:** None
- Location:** 15th floor
- Description:** This 15th floor open space has excellent views of surrounding buildings and streets, as well as the San Francisco Bay. It has various types of seating and landscaping. It also has art in the form of a large sundial.



Green House at 222 Second Street

- Hours:** Open during business hours
- Seating:** 13 tables, capacity of 61
- Food:** Cafe
- Restrooms:** Yes
- Location:** Ground floor lobby
- Description:** An enclosed open space, with operable floor-to-ceiling windows and doors; located within the street-level lobby.



Urban Garden at 560 Mission Street

- Hours:** Open at all times
- Seating:** 45 chairs with 15 tables, 134 linear seating on ledges, 10 linear seats on benches
- Food:** Cafe
- Restrooms:** None
- Location:** Plaza: northeast of building; side of building; indoor part/arcade along Anthony Street
- Description:** This large plaza features a sculpture in a pool of water, a large bamboo grove and various forms of seating. It is served by a cafe.