



TRANSIT CENTER DISTRICT PLAN

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW | NOVEMBER 2009



SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING DEPARTMENT



San Francisco Redevelopment Agency

AECOM

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VISION

TRANSIT CENTER DISTRICT IN 2030

The Transit Center District is the bustling heart of one of the world's great cities. Seamlessly tied into regional and statewide mass transit systems, the District's gracious sidewalks and public plazas are filled day and night with workers, visitors, and residents out and about on foot. These public spaces are lined by buildings that, while of great stature, engage the street at a distinctly human scale and create comfortable, fine-grained, and engaging urban spaces for the life of the District to play out. The District is a comfortable weave of new and old, with new skyline additions blending well at the ground with the blocks of preserved historic buildings on Mission, Howard, and Second streets, providing links to the past.

Radiating from the Transbay Transit Center is a network of public spaces that provides both inspiring and functional support for an incredible concentration of activity—people working in, living in, and visiting the area, as well as people simply passing through via the major transit systems that serve the whole city and region. Equally, most find the District an enjoyable and humane place to spend time, not necessarily conscious that the District is an exemplar of comprehensive environmental sustainability benefitting the entire region.

On any one block at any one time, these thousands of people have countless trajectories and stories. Some might be:

...walking down Howard Street from the Moscone Center to the Transit Center to catch a return train to Los Angeles. After grabbing a quick bite at a take-out stand along the pedestrian-only Natoma alley and realizing there are another 20 minutes before departure, they sit in the plaza at Second and Howard and catch up on email before heading down to the train.

...getting off an AC Transit Transbay bus and exiting the Grand Hall of the Transit Center into Mission Square. Easily crossing the transit-only block of Mission Street amidst a constant stream of hundreds of other people heading to work and play, they stroll up the busy, but pleasantly landscaped, Fremont Street to their jobs.

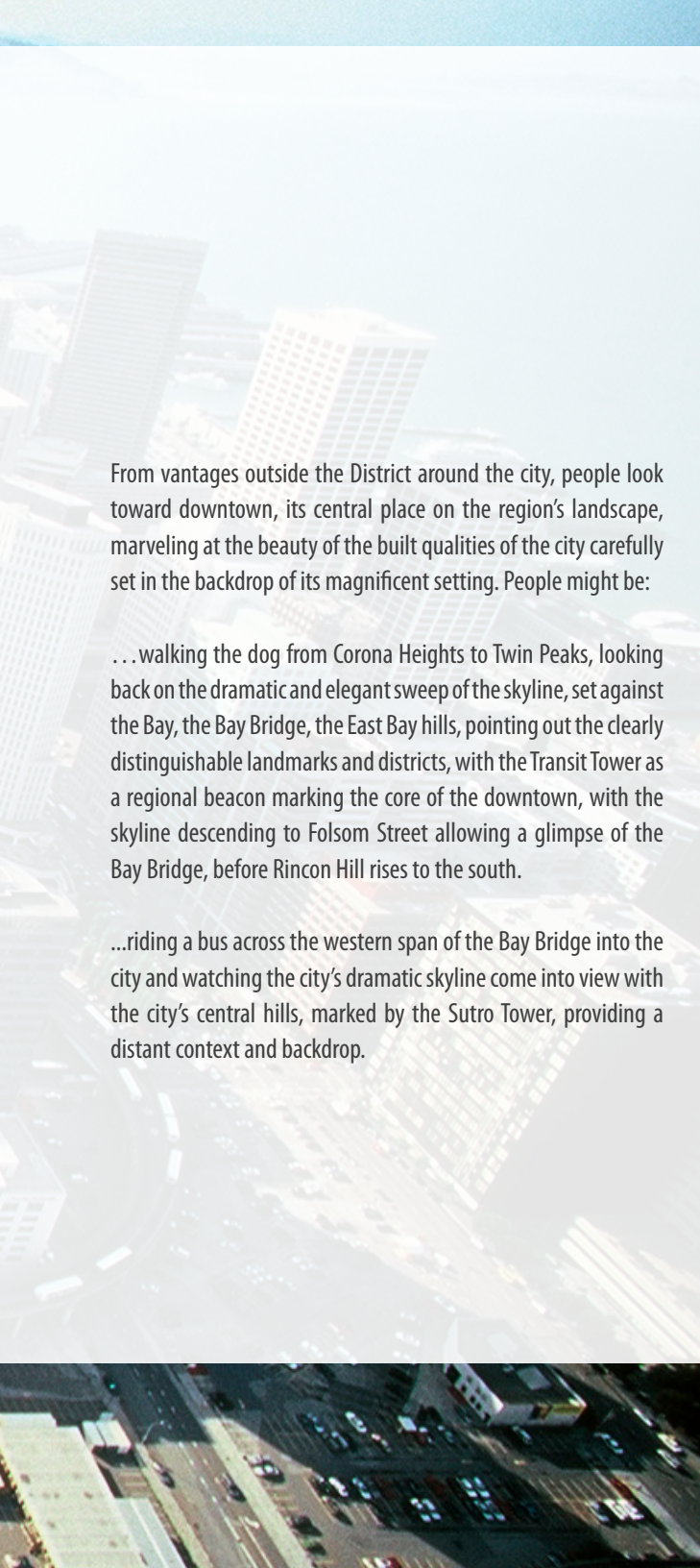
...pedaling east on Folsom Street, then north on the path under the bus ramps, crossing Howard Street at the mid-block signal, then heading down the bike ramp into the station to catch Caltrain to school and work in Palo Alto and San Jose.

...getting off the Mission Street bus in front of the Transit Tower, then heading into the building up to the public sky lobby observation deck on the 70th floor to get a drink and take in the magnificent 360 degree sunset views, sweeping from the Golden Gate Bridge to Mount Diablo.

...checking out a shared bike from a City Bike Share pod on the gracious sidewalk on Spear Street near Market, in order to head to a client meeting in SOMA.

...sitting on a bench amidst the lush planters on Mission Street during lunch, waiting for a friend, and watching the people pass by and not even keeping track of the time.

...heading down the elevator after work in the new mixed-use tower on the north side of Howard Street, then entering directly into the Transit Center park via a public pedestrian sky-bridge over Natoma to catch some late-afternoon sun, relaxing on the grass and listening to a live band.



From vantages outside the District around the city, people look toward downtown, its central place on the region's landscape, marveling at the beauty of the built qualities of the city carefully set in the backdrop of its magnificent setting. People might be:

... walking the dog from Corona Heights to Twin Peaks, looking back on the dramatic and elegant sweep of the skyline, set against the Bay, the Bay Bridge, the East Bay hills, pointing out the clearly distinguishable landmarks and districts, with the Transit Tower as a regional beacon marking the core of the downtown, with the skyline descending to Folsom Street allowing a glimpse of the Bay Bridge, before Rincon Hill rises to the south.

... riding a bus across the western span of the Bay Bridge into the city and watching the city's dramatic skyline come into view with the city's central hills, marked by the Sutro Tower, providing a distant context and backdrop.

And some key elements of the District's global excellence are equally appreciated, but not apparent to the casual observer, including:

... the plants, pumps, and underground pipes in building basements and streets, providing district-wide systems for energy and water, substantially reducing resource usage and carbon emissions to a level that more than does the District's part to help meet the efficiency and environmental goals of the City and region.

... building systems that use the best available technology, and minimize their ecological footprints well beyond their inherent advantages of density and transit accessibility to make this District the exemplar of transit-oriented, low-carbon development in the region.

... the majority of people traveling to and around the District by means other than private cars, taking transit and taxis, walking, bicycling, and ensuring that everyone can get where they need to go efficiently.



“

Almost every resident, worker, and visitor of San Francisco is a stakeholder in the functions and quality of downtown. The Transit Center District Plan provides the vision and strategies to guide in the creation of this new heart of the city.

”

INTRODUCTION

Like no other part of San Francisco, the downtown is central to the life of the city and the region: functionally as the primary job, shopping, and cultural center, and physically as the hub of its transportation network and the prominent skyline visible from around the city and Bay. Changes to the downtown affect all San Franciscans and people in the region, not just those who work or live there. There are those who work in downtown daily, others who travel through it on their way somewhere, increasing more who live in and around downtown, and many others who visit regularly to shop or enjoy its cultural richness. Almost every resident, worker, and visitor of San Francisco is a stakeholder in the functions and quality of downtown. The Transit Center District Plan (TCDP) provides the vision and strategies to guide in the creation of this new heart of the city.

The TCDP builds on the City's renowned Downtown Plan that envisioned the area around the Transbay Terminal as the heart of the new downtown. Twenty-five years later, this part of the city is poised to become just that. The removal of the Embarcadero Freeway, along with the adoption of plans for

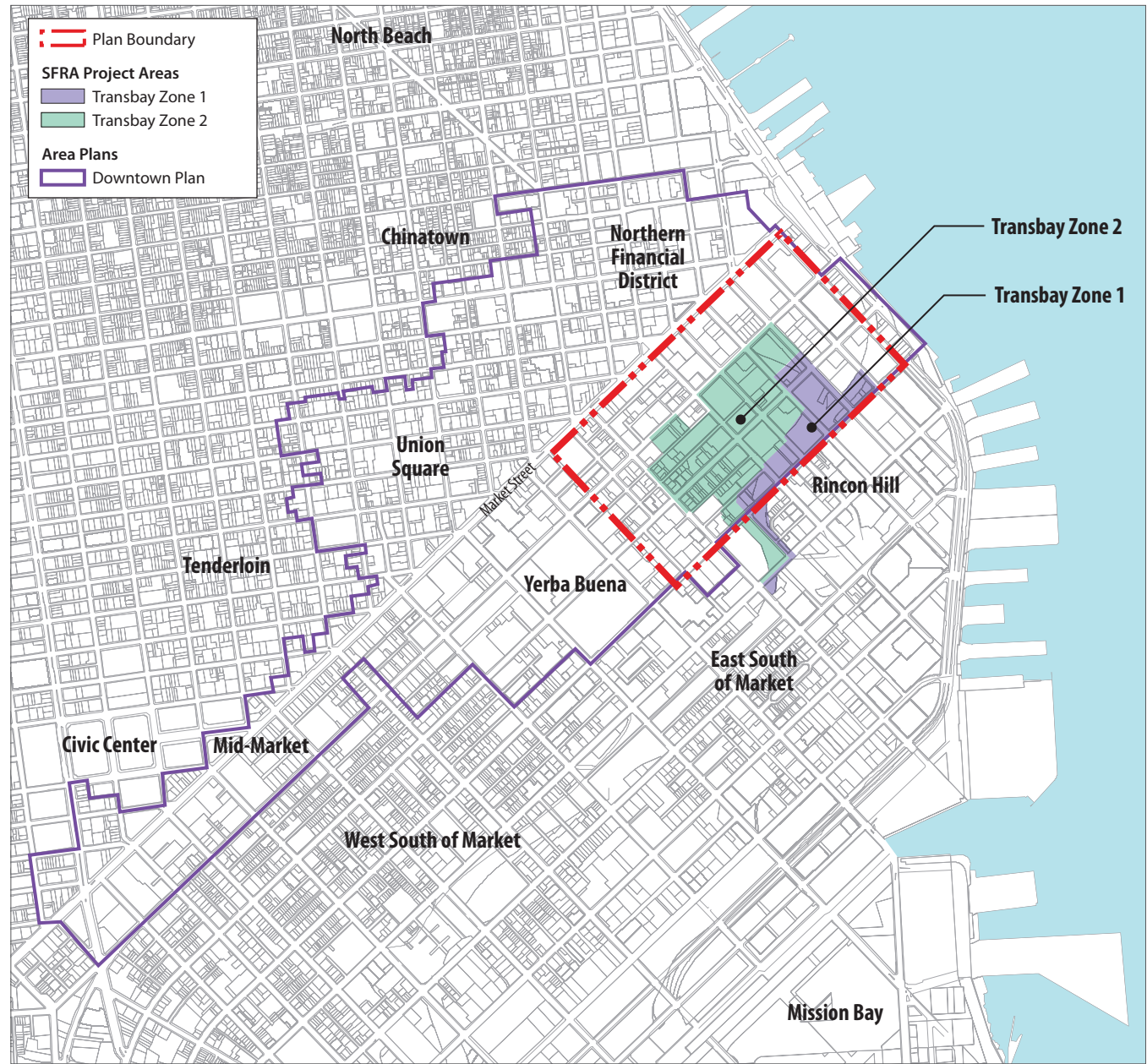
the Transbay Redevelopment Area and Rincon Hill, has allowed the transformation of the southern side of the downtown in the cohesive way envisioned in the Downtown Plan. Projected to serve approximately 20 million users annually, the new Transbay Transit Center will be an intense hub of activity at the center of the neighborhood.

Rather than rethink the Downtown Plan, however, this Plan seeks to enhance its precepts, to build on its established patterns of land use, urban form, public space, and circulation, and to make adjustments based on today's understanding of the future. The Plan presents planning policies and controls for land use, urban form, and building design of private properties and properties owned or to be owned by the Transbay Joint Powers Authority around the Transbay Transit Center, and for improvement and management of the District's public realm and circulation system of streets, plazas, and parks. To help ensure that the Transbay Transit Center and other public amenities and infrastructure needed in the area are built, the Plan also proposes mechanisms for directing necessary funding from increases in development opportunity to these purposes.

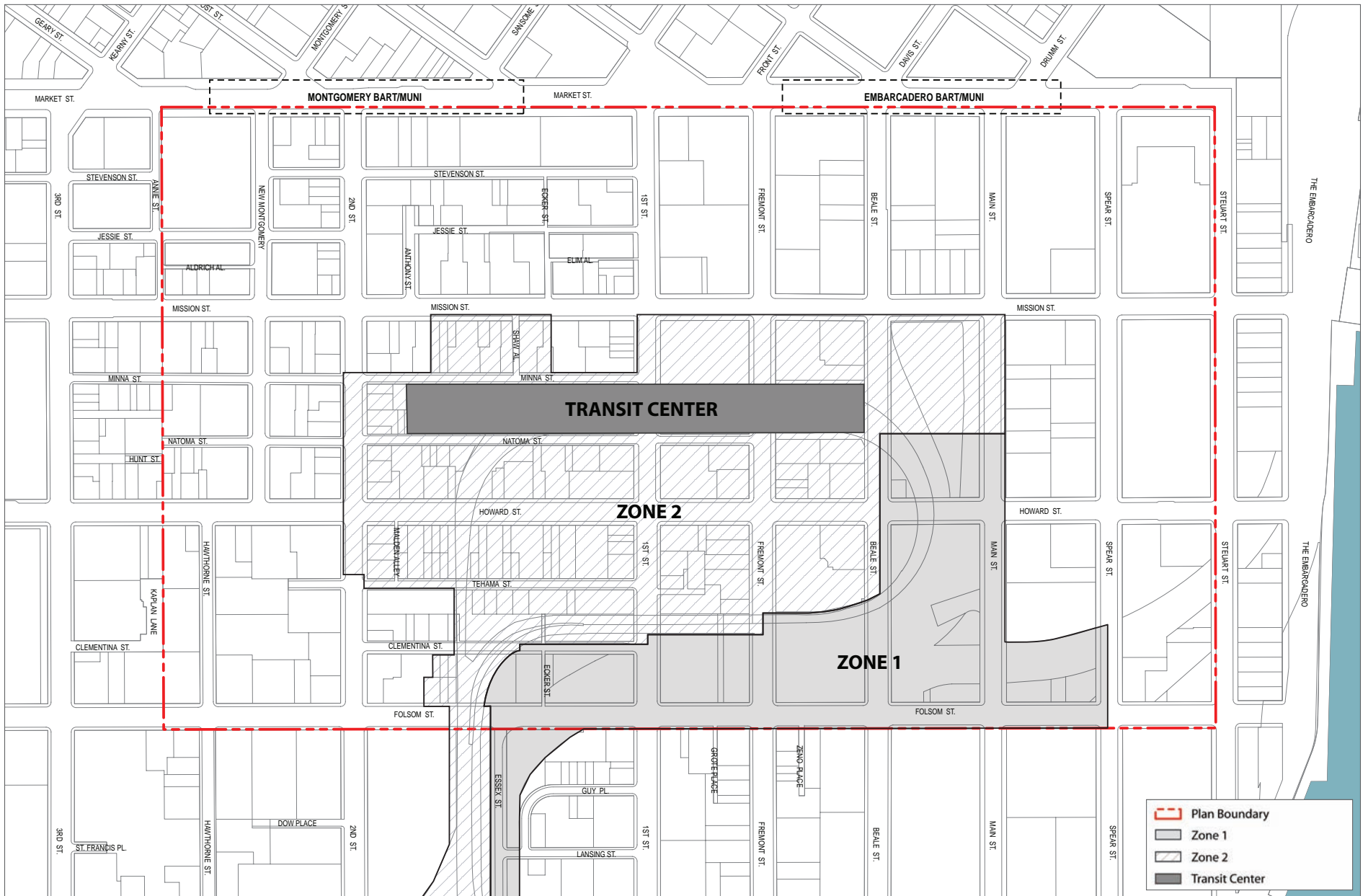
PROJECT AREA BOUNDARY

The Transit Center District, or Plan Area, consists of approximately 145 acres centered on the Transbay Terminal, situated between the Northern Financial District, Rincon Hill, Yerba Buena Center and the Bay. The boundaries of the District are roughly Market Street on the north, Embarcadero on the east, Folsom Street on the south, and Hawthorne Street to the west. While these boundaries overlap with those of the Transbay Redevelopment Project Area, this Plan will not affect the adopted land use or development controls for Zone 1 of the Redevelopment Area (see section below in this chapter regarding the Transbay Redevelopment Plan for an explanation of the Redevelopment Plan’s Zones 1 and 2), and is consistent with the overall goals of the Transbay Redevelopment Plan.

Currently, the Plan Area is comprised primarily of office and retail, with smaller but notable amounts of residential and institutional (primarily educational) uses. Located between Minna and Natoma streets, Beale and Second streets, the existing Transbay Terminal and its ramps comprise a major feature of the area. The majority of the land within the Plan Area is privately-owned with the notable exceptions of parcels owned by the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA), of which at least two will be available for significant new development: the site of the proposed Transit Tower (in front of the Transit Center along Mission Street), and a lot (Parcel “F”) on the north side of Howard between First and Second streets currently housing bus ramps to be rebuilt on adjacent parcels just to the west.



Plan Area Boundary and Surrounding Neighborhoods



Plan Area Boundary



PLAN GOALS

The overarching premise of the Transit Center District Plan is to continue the concentration of additional growth where it is most responsible and productive to do so—in proximity to San Francisco's greatest concentration of public transit service. The increase in development, in turn, will provide additional revenue for the Transit Center project and for the necessary improvements and infrastructure in the District.

Increasing development around downtown San Francisco's rich transit system and increased revenues for public projects are core goals of the Plan, but it is also critical that these policies be shaped by the values and principles of place-making that are essential to maintaining and creating what makes San Francisco a livable and unique city. The guiding principal behind the policies of the Transit Center District Plan is to balance increased density with the quality of place considerations that define the downtown and the city. With that in mind, the Plan is concerned with:

- The livability of public spaces; ensuring sunlight, sufficient green space, accessibility, and attention to building details.
- Scale of the built environment and the perception and comfort of the pedestrian.
- The essential qualities and relationships of the built city at the macro level of skyline and natural setting, and the images that inspire residents and visitors everyday and connect them to this place.
- The ground plane; a graceful means for moving from place to place, for pausing, for socializing, and for conducting business.
- A comprehensive program of sustainability that goes beyond the basic underpinnings of land use and transportation, and includes supporting systems, such as water and power.
- A transportation system that supports and reinforces sustainable growth and the District's livability, one that ensures sufficient and appropriate capacity, infrastructure, and resources.

The Transit Center District Plan has five fundamental Core Goals:

- Build on the General Plan's Urban Design Element and Downtown Plan, establishing controls, guidelines, and standards to advance existing policies of livability, as well as those that protect the unique qualities of place.
- Capitalize on major transit investment with appropriate land use in the downtown core, with an eye toward long-term growth considerations
- Create a framework for a network of public streets and open spaces that support the transit system, and provides a wide variety of public amenities and a world-class pedestrian experience.
- Generate financial support for the Transbay Transit Center project, district infrastructure, and other public improvements.
- Ensure that the Transit Center District is an example of comprehensive environmental sustainability in all regards.

Plan policies and proposals are also guided by the following Sustainability Goals:

- Support (and where possible exceed) existing city environmental, sustainability and climate change objectives.
- Require and enable low impact, high performance development within the Transit Center development area.
- Pursue the coordination and planning for district-level sustainability programs and objectives.

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for the Transit Center District Plan was led by the San Francisco Planning Department with its two key partners—the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and the Transbay Joint Powers Authority. Other public agencies played key roles in reviewing and formulating aspects of the Plan, including the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

In preparation of the Plan, the Planning Department held four public workshops:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Subject</u> |
|--------------------|--|
| July 25, 2007 | An introduction to the planning effort and key objectives. |
| April 30, 2008 | Initial analysis and concepts related to land use, urban form (building heights), historic resources, and the public realm. |
| Sept 17, 2008 | Issues pertaining to the “quality of place” of the District, including urban form (building design), open space, and historic resources, as well as conceptual initiatives for pursuing a comprehensive sustainability program for the District. |
| May 26, 2009 | Conceptual funding program, as well as notable refinements to aspects of the Plan. |

In addition, workshops and regular updates on the planning process were conducted with the Redevelopment Agency’s Transbay Redevelopment Project Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). These sessions primarily reiterated the content of the larger public workshops.

The TJPA, supported by Prop K Sales Tax revenue administered by the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, provided consultant funding for this planning effort, as well as assisted in funding the Plan’s environmental review.

PLAN OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

THE DOWNTOWN PLAN – A STARTING POINT

In 1985, the City adopted the landmark Downtown Plan, which sought to shape the downtown by shifting growth to desired locations. The plan sought to expand the job core, then concentrated north of Market Street, to south of Market Street, especially around the Transbay Terminal. The Terminal area was designated as desirable for growth for a number of reasons. First, the expansion of downtown south of Market Street would better center job growth on the major local and regional transit infrastructure along the Market Street corridor. Second, re-directing growth potential would protect important, valued downtown historic buildings from demolition. As an incentive, the Downtown Plan permitted development rights to be transferred from these buildings to the Transbay district.



Downtown San Francisco, with the existing Transbay Terminal in the foreground (Source: *Transbay Redevelopment Project Area Design for Development*)

The Downtown Plan also emphasized the tangible and intangible qualities essential to keeping San Francisco a special place. The plan made broad, but well articulated, gestures to preserve the best of the past, shape new buildings at an appropriate scale, and provide for a range of public amenities. Additionally, the plan included measures to ensure that the necessary support structure paralleled new development, through requirements and fees for open space, affordable housing, and transit, as well as a system to meter and monitor growth over time.

THE NEED FOR A PLAN NOW

It has been 25 years since the adoption of the Downtown Plan and the time has come to revisit its policies and identify those that may need adjusting or strengthening. Downtown as currently envisioned by the Downtown Plan is at a point where it is largely built out, and the areas for growth are diminishing and limited. Furthermore,

when the Downtown Plan was adopted, certain major pieces of infrastructure and facilities were in place or envisioned. Now, key changes have occurred and new investments are planned.

After being damaged by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the Embarcadero Freeway was torn down and the city was reconnected to its waterfront with a beautiful promenade, roadway and light rail line. This change enabled the downtown to grow southward, linking downtown to a future high-density residential neighborhood. The creation of this neighborhood was codified by the Rincon Hill Plan and the Transbay Redevelopment Plan, both adopted in 2005. Together, these plans guide the creation of a new residential neighborhood centered on Folsom Street, with a mixture of high, mid, and low-rise buildings. The high-rise elements add a new component to the skyline, creating a southern punctuation to the downtown.

During the Transbay and Rincon Hill planning processes, planners and decision-makers recognized the need to think anew about the downtown core. The Redevelopment Plan notes that the area north of the former freeway parcels along Folsom Street should be regarded as part of downtown and addressed in that context. This portion of the Redevelopment Area has been designated “Zone 2,” with jurisdiction for planning and permitting delegated back to the Planning Department.

By far, the most significant project planned for the District is the new Transbay Transit Center (see “Transbay Transit Center Project” at the end of this chapter). To be built by the Transbay Joint Powers Authority, with construction slated to commence in 2010, this facility will replace the obsolete terminal with a 21st Century multi-modal transit facility meeting contemporary standards and future transit needs. The Transit Center will not only have expanded bus facilities, but will include an underground rail station to serve as the San Francisco terminus for Caltrain and California High Speed Rail.

While the idea for improving the Transbay Terminal has existed for a number of years, this potential for building transit capacity and new public space transformation was not envisioned in 1985 when the Downtown Plan was adopted. Realizing the Transit Center and other changes demand a new, fresh look at the land use, urban form, public space, and circulation policies and assumptions for the area. Moreover, while the Transit Center project is moving ahead, additional funding is still needed for the rail portion of the project.

DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO IN THE CONTEXT OF REGIONAL GROWTH

The future of the Transit Center District requires consideration of its place within the context of the larger city and the region as a whole. The growth and development patterns associated with the Transit District can advance larger regional sustainability goals.

One of the defining global issues of the 21st century is environmental sustainability. Patterns of human settlement, particularly land use and transportation, are a major component of sustainable development, as much as the ways we generate our energy, grow and consume our food, and produce and consume the products that fill our lives. The inefficient patterns of population growth spreading outward from urban centers in the past 60 years (i.e. “sprawl”) have produced immeasurable dilemmas for the Bay Area, the bioregion, the state, and beyond. As a result, the region is faced with diminishing recreational space, animal habitat, and farmland; increasing levels of congestion, air and water pollution; and increasing greenhouse gases, which lead to climate change effects, such as rising sea levels, erratic and disruptive weather patterns, and decreasing habitability of our local waters and lands for indigenous fish, land animals, and plants.

The Bay Area is now intensifying efforts to grapple with the question of sustainability, particularly steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions without stifling growth. With the passage of AB 32 (which mandates statewide reductions in greenhouse gas emissions) and SB 375 (which requires regions to adopt growth management land use plans that result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions) in the California state legislature, and similar action on climate change likely at the federal level, there is increasing momentum to encourage transit-oriented development within every jurisdiction in the region and state.

Every urban center in the region is obligated to reassess its plans and potential changes within this context. Working with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) allocates targets for jobs and housing to every jurisdiction, based on regional growth projections for the next 25 years. In order to meet the targets of AB 32 and SB 375, ABAG has substantially increased growth allocations to all urban centers and transit-served locations in the region—particularly San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose. Downtown San Francisco has existing infrastructure in place that makes it a model of successful transit-oriented, low-impact growth. Adding development capacity to the downtown is a prudent step toward furthering the goal of reducing the State and region’s development footprint.

Many of these issues of controlled growth were understood in 1985, and reflected in the Downtown Plan. The core premise of the Downtown Plan was that a compact, walkable, and transit-oriented downtown is the key precondition for the successful and sustainable growth of the city and the region. The Transit Center District Plan furthers these principles and builds on them consistent with current conditions and context.

BROADER ISSUES AND THE PLACE OF THE TCDP

There are broader, long-term issues of citywide significance touched on in this Plan, but which are outside of its immediate scope. They relate to long-range patterns of jobs, transportation, and housing. Where and how San Francisco prepares itself for the future is an essential dialogue the city must undertake, particularly as this Transit Center District Plan completes the current vision for this area of downtown.



Transbay Redevelopment Plan (Source: Transbay Redevelopment Project Area Design for Development)

RELATED PLANS AND PROJECTS

The following is a summary of past and current reports, plans, projects that are relevant to future development in the Transit Center District.

EIR for the Transit Center District Plan and Transit Tower

The Planning Department is preparing a programmatic environmental impact report (EIR) to evaluate the physical environmental effects of the proposed Transit Center District Plan project. This document will contain an analysis of the cumulative environmental impact of the Plan through the year 2030, as well as the project specific effects of the proposed Transit Tower.

In addition to the new policies and controls proposed by this Plan, the EIR will analyze a Developer Proposed Scenario, which consists of a program level analysis reflecting several applications submitted to the Planning Department by private project sponsors of individual buildings, some proposed at heights and envelopes that exceed the limits proposed in this draft Plan. Lastly, the EIR will also evaluate a No Project Alternative, which will entail a continuation of existing zoning controls and policies within the Plan Area, along with one or more reduced intensity project alternatives that could potentially reduce or avoid any significant environmental impacts associated with the proposed Plan.

San Francisco General Plan

Comprised of citywide objectives and policies, the General Plan serves to guide public actions and decisions regarding the city's development. The Plan contains ten topical Elements, of which the Urban Design, Transportation, and Recreation and Open Space elements are the most relevant to this planning effort. The Plan also contains several area plans for specific neighborhoods of the

city. The Transit Center District Plan focuses on a subarea of the Downtown Plan, an area plan adopted in 1985.

As described earlier, the Downtown Plan contains policies intended to shape the growth of the downtown in ways that ensure a high quality and functional place, while enabling and directing growth to desired locations. The core premise of the Downtown Plan is to create a compact, walkable district that is highly transit-oriented. The Plan seeks to expand the job core, beyond the concentration north of Market Street to areas around the Transbay Terminal, south of Market Street.

This draft Plan builds on the existing policies in the General Plan, and in some cases suggests updates or changes to existing policies. As is typical of all area plans, adoption of this Plan will ultimately include a series of amendments necessary to incorporate the policies of this Plan into the General Plan.

San Francisco Planning Code and Zoning Maps

Part of the city's Municipal Code, the Planning Code is the city's regulatory zoning ordinance. It establishes specific standards for land use, buildings, and related issues of their performance (e.g. height, development intensity, parking, etc.), as well as procedures and criteria for public hearings and review, and approval of permits. The Zoning Maps apply Planning Code rules to specific properties and areas of the city. This Draft Plan contains many recommendations that, if adopted, will necessitate modifications to the Planning Code and Zoning Maps. They would include amendments to rules regarding building height and bulk, design standards, Floor Area Ratio (i.e. density), land use, historic buildings, parking, and fees, among others.

Transbay Redevelopment Plan

The Transit Center District Plan area overlaps with the Transbay Redevelopment Project Area, adopted in 2005. The Transbay Redevelopment Plan establishes goals and objectives for the Transbay Redevelopment Project Area, which is approximately 40 acres and roughly bounded by Folsom Street on the south, Mission Street on the north, Main Street on the east, and Second Street on the west. The purpose of the Redevelopment Plan is to alleviate conditions of blight in the Redevelopment Area, and foster the redevelopment of key properties in the area, including the Terminal itself and the former Embarcadero Freeway parcels. Ownership of these parcels, once used for portions of the demolished freeway and its ramps, will be transferred from the State to the City and finally to the Redevelopment Agency. As required by the State, as well as the Redevelopment Plan, proceeds from the sale and development of these properties (including a portion of future tax increment funds) has been pledged to the TJPA to help pay the cost of the reconstruction of the Transbay Terminal.

Following a planning process in 2003 and 2004, the Design for Development document and subsequent Development Controls and Design Guidelines were completed and adopted. These documents laid out a comprehensive vision for the Redevelopment Area, including transforming the parcels along Folsom Street and between Main and Beale streets into a new high-density downtown residential neighborhood, with new public open spaces and streetscape improvements. This new neighborhood (which comprises Zone 1 of the Project Area - see below) will include approximately 2,700 new housing units, at least 35 percent of which will be dedicated as affordable housing as mandated by State law. In addition, there will be ground floor retail along Folsom Street, a new park, and about 600,000 square feet of office space (on Howard Street). The Planning Department worked closely with the Redevelopment Agency throughout the planning process, coordinating plans for Rincon Hill to create one seamless residential

neighborhood of over 15,000 residents with supporting businesses and public amenities. Adopted in 2005, the Rincon Hill Plan area is immediately adjacent to the Redevelopment Area on the south side of Folsom Street.

The Transbay Redevelopment Area is divided into two zones:

- **Zone 1** consists primarily of the former freeway public parcels along Folsom Street and between Main and Beale streets. The Redevelopment Agency maintains permitting and development jurisdiction in Zone 1 and projects that require Redevelopment Agency action (such as funding) in Zone 2. The Development Controls and Design Guidelines, which set out land use and design regulations, pertain almost exclusively to Zone 1, with few controls pertaining to Zone 2. The Agency will issue Requests for Proposals for the various parcels as they become available (as some are necessary for temporary use while the Transit Center project construction is underway).
- **Zone 2** includes of the remainder of the Redevelopment Area, which consists mostly of private parcels, but also the Transbay Terminal itself, as well as a few properties that will be transferred to the TJPA and the Redevelopment Agency. Through an Interagency Delegation Agreement, the Redevelopment Agency delegated jurisdiction for zoning and permitting of these sites to the Planning Department, with the Planning Code governing development, except for projects that require Redevelopment Agency action. After completion of the Design for Development, the Planning Department, as intended from the outset, initiated a planning and re-zoning effort (i.e. the Transit Center District Plan) that encompasses all of Zone 2.

The Transit Center District Plan does not change or affect the development controls or open space components of Zone 1. This Plan, however, does contain policies related to circulation and the streetscape for the entire area, including Zone 1, consistent with the

Transbay Redevelopment Project Area Streetscape and Open Space Concept Plan. The Environmental Impact Report now underway will analyze these policies as part of the Plan's public realm proposals.

Because the Transit Center District Plan involves proposals for policy, zoning, and infrastructure changes in the Redevelopment Area, the planning process has included extensive review and consultation with the Agency's Transbay Citizens Advisory Committee, in addition to coordination with the Agency per the delegation agreement.

Mayor's Interagency Transbay Working Group Report

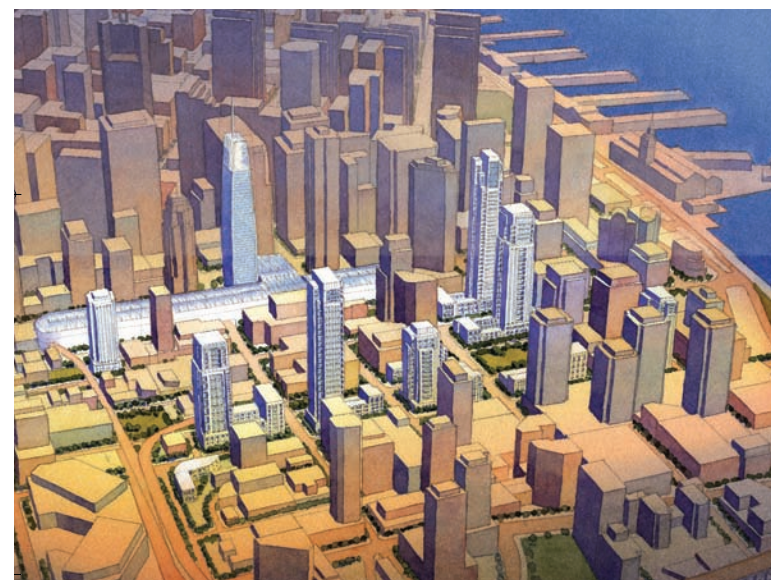
During 2006, an Interagency Working Group was charged with recommending a strategy to complete the Transit Center project as envisioned, including both the terminal and rail components. A secondary goal was to build group consensus, which included key stakeholders—the Planning Department, the Office of the City Administrator, the Mayor's Office, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), the San Francisco Redevelopment

Agency (SFRA) and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA), with extensive assistance from the staff and consultants of the TJPA. The group made several key recommendations intended to reduce the overall cost of the Transit Center project and to increase available revenues. In order to expedite the development process, the report suggested a three-pronged approach: capture additional value through intensified development around the terminal, reduce project costs through effective value management, and explore additional opportunities for securing needed funding.

The group also recommended rethinking the skyline previously envisioned in the 1985 San Francisco Downtown Plan, and amending current regulations to reflect the new expanded downtown core, centered on the Transbay Transit Center. More specifically, the final report recommended creating a special overlay zoning district around the Transbay Transit Center to permit a limited number of tall buildings, including two on public parcels, and allowances for additional development in exchange for financial contributions to the Transit Center Project.



Transbay Redevelopment Area land use zones (Source: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)



Rendering showing the vision for the Transbay Redevelopment Area, focused on Zone 1 (Source: Transbay Redevelopment Project Area Design for Development)

TRANSBAY TRANSIT CENTER PROJECT

THE TRANSBAY TERMINAL

Designed by San Francisco architect, Timothy Pflueger, the Transbay Terminal was built in 1939 as a port of entry and departure for commuter trains traveling on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. At the time, the lower deck of the Bay Bridge was not only used for automobile travel, but also hosted two rail tracks on the south side. In its heyday at the end of World War II, the terminal's rail system was transporting 26 million passengers annually. In 1958, the train tracks were taken off the Bay Bridge, and by 1959, the inter-modal Transbay Terminal was converted into the bus-only facility that stands today.

Long outdated, the existing Terminal does not meet current seismic safety standards, nor does it serve the needs of future transit growth. Furthermore, the massive structure, along with its ramps, creates

uninviting and blighting physical impacts, particularly where it crosses Fremont, First, and Beale streets. The need to modernize the Transbay Terminal provides not only an opportunity to improve transit service to San Francisco's employment core, but also to revitalize the surrounding neighborhood.

THE TRANSIT CENTER PROJECT

Now, more than 40 years later, the Transbay Transit Center Project is poised to reconnect the region and its transit systems with a new multi-modal Transit Center. In 2001, the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) was created to guide the planning and construction of the Transit Center Project. The TJPA Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from the City and County of San Francisco, including the Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA), the Office of the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors; the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit); and the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board-Caltrain (which is composed of the City and County of San Francisco, the San Mateo County Transit District, and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority).

The Transbay Transit Center Project consists of two primary components:

- Replacing the Transbay Terminal with a new, contemporary Transit Center. Occupying generally the same footprint of the existing terminal, the new Transit Center will feature facilities for all the major regional bus transit providers, including AC Transit, Muni, Golden Gate Transit and SamTrans, and a train station for Caltrain and California High Speed Rail. As opposed to the existing Transbay Terminal, the new Transit Center will provide an exceptional and convenient experience for transit passengers, and will include grand public spaces that will enhance the entire downtown.
- Extending rail 1.3 miles underground from the existing terminus at 4th/King Streets to the new Transit Center. The new Transit Center will be the terminus not just for Caltrain but also for the future California High Speed Rail system, connecting Southern California to downtown San Francisco in less than 3 hours. The underground extension will run under Townsend and Second streets, and is currently planned to include a new underground station under Townsend Street adjacent to the existing station at 4th and King.

Additional components of the Transit Center program include new bus storage facilities beneath Interstate 80 between Second and Fourth streets, and new ramps connecting the Transit Center bus deck to the Bay Bridge and to the storage facility.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION

In late 2006, the TJPA launched an international Design and Development Competition to choose (1) a design team for the Transit Center, and (2) a development team for an adjacent tower



The existing Transbay Terminal is outdated and has a poor relationship to the street.

development. One of the intents of the Design and Development Competition was to provide for a complementary and synergistic design and function between both the Transit Center and Tower by utilizing the same design team. In 2007, the TJPA Board selected the team of Pelli Clark Pelli Architects as lead architect for the Transit Center and Hines as developer for the Tower (Note: Negotiations with Hines were still underway as of publication of this Draft). A notable feature of the Transit Center design proposed by Pelli Clark Pelli is a public open space on its 5.4 acre roof, which will act as the centerpiece of the District.

The Transit Center will be composed of six levels, four above grade and two below:

- The ground level will feature a Grand Hall between First and Fremont streets for central circulation and information, ground level retail (primarily along Natoma and Minna streets), and a bus plaza at its east end for Muni, Golden Gate Transit, and SamTrans buses.
- The mezzanine level will provide office and building management spaces, as well as extensions of the ground level retail spaces.
- The bus deck level is the main level for AC Transit buses that serve the Transbay corridor over the Bay Bridge. It connects directly to the Bay Bridge via dedicated elevated ramps.
- The park level is the roof of the facility and will feature a 5.4-acre public open space, containing both active and passive spaces, including eating and entertainment uses.
- The first level below grade is the train concourse level. It includes circulation space, waiting rooms, a bicycle station, a taxi boarding/dispatch area, ancillary retail, and support functions.
- The lowest level is the train level, with tracks and platforms.

The budget for the entire Transit Center project is approximately \$4.2 billion. The project is currently planned to be built in two phases, generally corresponding to the two major components (station and rail extension). The first phase will cost between \$1.2 and \$1.6 billion, depending on whether the below ground “train box” levels are constructed as part of Phase 1. To date, Phase 1 is fully funded and the TJPA is securing funding for Phase 2.

The Temporary Terminal, located on the block bounded by Howard, Main, Folsom, and Beale, will provide temporary bus facilities while the new Transit Center is constructed. Scheduled to be complete and operational in early 2010, the Temporary Terminal will allow demolition of the existing terminal to commence soon thereafter. The new Transit Center is expected to be complete and operational (for bus service) in 2014, and the downtown rail extension complete and operational in 2019.

Although designed to be complementary to the Transit Center, the Transit Tower is a separate project, which will be funded, built, and owned by a private entity on its own schedule. The TJPA will be selling or leasing the land for the Tower to the developer. This Plan, the Transit Center District Plan, will establish the allowable height, bulk and other controls for the Transit Tower, which is subject to the rezoning and policies adopted as part of this Plan. The Tower can be considered for approval by the City once this Plan and its accompanying rezoning are adopted.

For more information on the Transbay Transit Center Project, visit the TJPA's website at www.transbaycenter.org.



Pelli Clarke Pelli's winning proposal for the Transit Center (Source: Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects)



A cross section of the proposed Transit Center (Source: Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects)

An architectural rendering of a modern transit center. The structure features a large, white, geometric steel canopy with a glass roof. The ground level is a busy pedestrian plaza with a wooden deck, where many people are walking. In the background, a building with a sign that reads "TRANSBAY TRANSIT CENTER" is visible. The scene is bright and sunny, with trees and a clear sky.

“

With new high-density downtown residential neighborhoods planned and starting to grow on the southern edge of the downtown, Mission Street and the Transbay Transit Center are fast becoming the geographic heart and center of the downtown.

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01

LAND USE

The Land Use chapter outlines the evolving nature of land uses downtown and in the Transit Center District. It sets forth policies aimed at fulfilling a vision for the District as the city's grand center, a symbol of the region's vitality, with a dense mix of uses, public amenities, and a 24-hour character.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Since the adoption of the Downtown Plan in 1985, much of the area has been developed and multiple economic cycles have come and gone. Major growth has transformed portions of the downtown, particularly south of Market Street, expanding the downtown southward as directed by the Downtown Plan. In 1985, Mission Street was not regarded in any way as a prime downtown location; today, Mission Street is a premier address, an expansion of the city's Financial District. With new high-density downtown residential neighborhoods planned and starting to grow on the southern edge of the downtown, Mission Street and the Transbay Transit Center are fast

becoming the geographic heart and center of the downtown, which now stretches from Rincon Hill and the Bay Bridge on the south to the Transamerica Pyramid on the north. The few remaining potential development sites in downtown are primarily near the Transbay Transit Center. The Transit Center District Plan provides an opportunity to evaluate existing land use assumptions, policies, and controls relative to the potential growth of the downtown core. The following section provides background information on past studies regarding land use in the downtown, setting the stage and for future planning needs and goals.

A LOOK AT THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN

In order to consider whether adjustments to land use controls are warranted in the Transit Center District, downtown's major growth area, it is essential to take stock of the current and future state of the downtown as a whole. To understand these issues, the Planning Department engaged Seifel Consulting, Inc. to research and respond to the following questions regarding the downtown's capacity to absorb projected growth:¹

- What are the forecasts for regional, citywide, and downtown growth in the next 25 years?
- What is the capacity of the existing zoning of downtown?
- What role has the downtown historically played in absorbing citywide growth and what role could the downtown and Transit Center District have in absorbing future growth?
- What growth alternatives should be considered in order to achieve an optimum balance of uses and functions in the Transit Center District?

To bracket the range of future possibilities and realities, two growth projections were chosen for analysis: the "Baseline Scenario" and the "Smart Growth Scenario."

BASELINE SCENARIO: OVERVIEW

The Baseline scenario is more conservative and represents an average of projections from the companies Moody's and REMI, as well as tracks historical local patterns of growth. The scenario also focuses on various factors that might limit growth, such as the cost of doing business and living in San Francisco. These projections assume the City's existing zoning as a limit on future growth, though demand might exist for additional building space. Additionally, because this scenario looks at past experience to determine future trends,

no consideration is given to regional policy objectives or other factors that might shape growth patterns, such as climate change initiatives, changes in transportation investments and patterns, or economic and housing policy.

SMART GROWTH SCENARIO: OVERVIEW

The Smart Growth scenario mirrors the 2007 Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projections for regional growth.² This model is based on invigorated policy directives for the Bay Area, directing growth to urbanized areas with transit infrastructure in order to address issues of regional congestion, air quality, climate change, and other contemporary concerns. As such, this scenario projects a higher share of regional growth occurring in San Francisco compared to the Baseline scenario. In addition, this model does not assume existing zoning controls as a limit on future growth (considering that zoning can be changed).

In 1970, San Francisco was home to 27 percent of all jobs in the Bay Area. In 1990, that share declined to 19 percent, and today is approximately 16 percent. The Smart Growth scenario presumes San Francisco will maintain its present 16 percent share.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Based on an analysis of the likely development sites in the downtown (in an area broader than the current C-3 district, including portions of South of Market) under current zoning, the total building capacity is estimated at 28 million gross square feet. Office use, however, is not permitted today in much of this area. Consequently, there is a practical maximum capacity for 9.65 million square feet of office space under existing zoning in the downtown and adjacent South of Market areas (Capacity Scenario 2).³ That figure could be further reduced if housing is built more aggressively throughout the downtown and adjacent areas as currently permitted. Should that

occur, office capacity could drop as low as 4.8 million square feet (Capacity Scenario 3). Based on recent housing trends, the realistic office capacity is likely to be somewhere between 4.8 and 9.65 million square feet.

Under the Smart Growth scenario, the need is projected at 23.5 million square feet of space for office jobs through 2035 in the broader downtown area. Under the Baseline scenario the need through 2035 is projected at 9.8 million square feet.

The existing capacity of 4.8 to 9.65 million square feet represents about 6 to 12 years worth of downtown area office growth based on the Smart Growth projections, averaging 840,000 square feet of office space per year for the downtown (and 1.14 million square feet per year for the entire city). Under the baseline scenario, capacity would be absorbed in downtown and adjacent areas somewhere between 13 and 28 years. For comparison, the City entitled an average increase in its citywide office supply of about 935,000 square feet per year over the past 20 years.

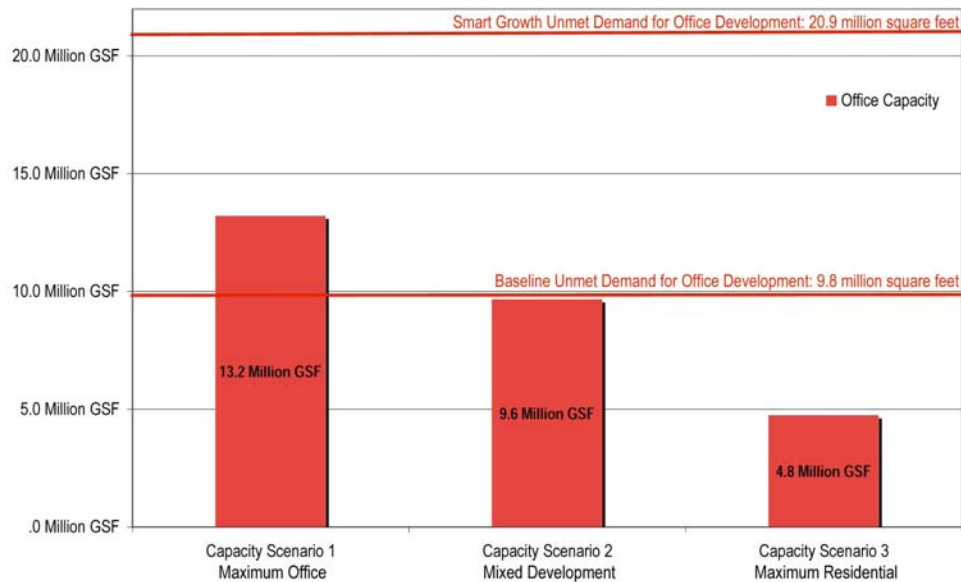
The current downtown capacity is slightly less than the total 2007–2035 office demand under the lower Baseline scenario. However, if San Francisco were to accommodate the amount of office job growth assigned to the city by ABAG, the downtown contains at most half of the necessary capacity.

¹ This report is available in full on the Planning website: <http://transitcenter.sfplanning.org>

² ABAG is in the process of finalizing its Projections 2009 forecast. As of May 2009, the draft 2009 ABAG projections for San Francisco growth by the year 2035 appear to be essentially identical to those from the 2007 Projections.

³ Capacity Scenario 1 assumes 100% of all space permitted for office is occupied as office with no other uses at all - retail, residential, hotel, etc. This is unrealistic but a useful benchmark. Capacity Scenario 2 assumes a more practical assumption of 75% office.

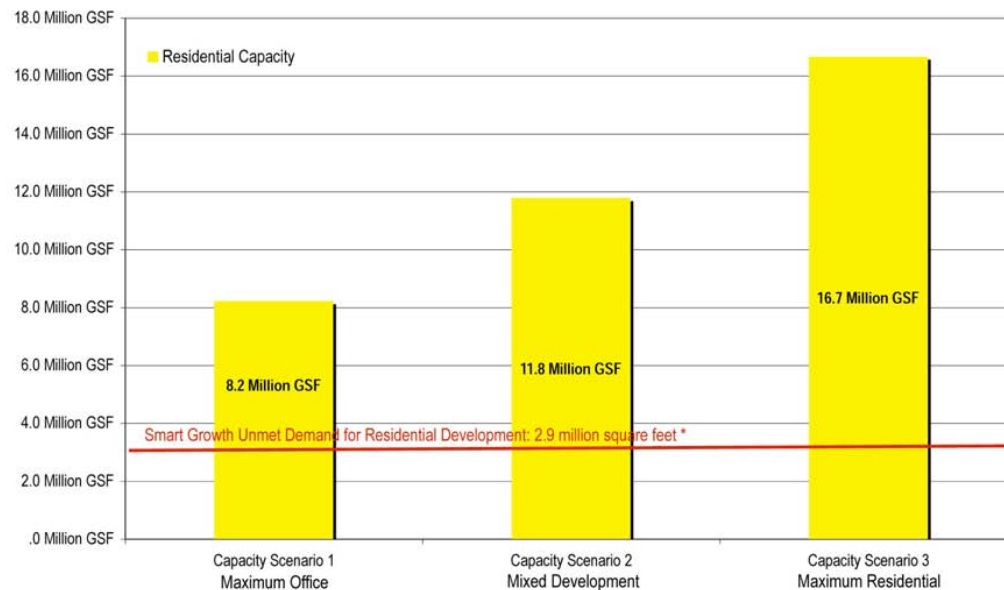
Office Development: Comparison of Unmet Office Demand by Capacity Scenario, 2007-2035 Downtown San Francisco



In sum, there is about half of the necessary development capacity under current zoning to accommodate downtown projected job growth for the next 25 years. Capacity under current zoning is also inadequate to meet the low growth, non-Smart Growth projections, particularly if housing continues to make substantial inroads on land available in the downtown core.

The housing capacity picture is much different. Housing, notably, is currently more widely permitted than employment uses. According to the Seifel analysis, there is sufficient housing already approved and planned in the downtown area to meet its needs through 2035 under the Baseline scenario. There is about four times as much additional capacity for housing under existing zoning to meet the Smart Growth demand even under the scenario that most aggressively sets aside space for commercial uses. Under current zoning, not enough office capacity exists (especially if more housing construction takes up office capacity), but plenty of housing capacity is available.

Residential Development: Comparison of Unmet Residential Demand by Capacity Scenario, 2007-2035 Downtown San Francisco



*Under the Baseline growth scenario, there is no unmet demand for residential development within the Downtown.

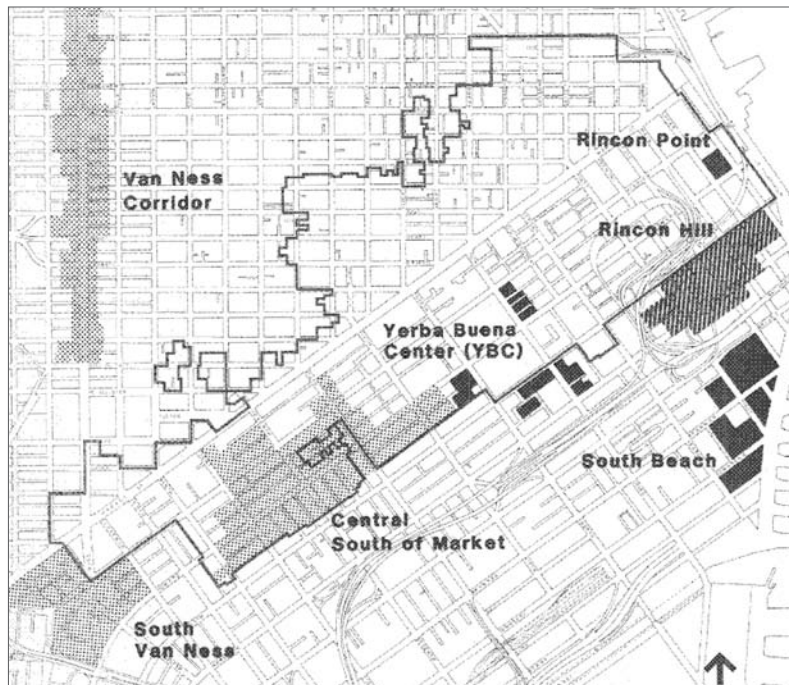
It is important to note that the ABAG Smart Growth scenario is part of a regional model that allocates to all Bay Area downtowns and urban areas a substantially greater share of growth than has occurred in recent years. The allocation for Oakland in this scenario also represents a very substantial amount of growth.

The charts on the left illustrate the office and housing capacity under the three capacity scenarios.

Source: Seifel Consulting Inc.

DOWNTOWN AS EMPLOYMENT CENTER

The downtown is the city’s primary job center, home to about half of the city’s jobs, including three-quarters of its office jobs. San Francisco land use policy has for many decades fostered this concentration of commerce and jobs. Downtown San Francisco is the hub of the region’s transit network, with all of the region’s major transit services converging here. It is also the epicenter of the city’s public transit network, with ready access to all neighborhoods of the city. By concentrating jobs and large buildings downtown, the city’s cherished residential and small-scale commercial districts are shielded from major amounts of commuters and associated impacts, as well as from the physical scale of major development needed to house large numbers of workers.



The Downtown Plan identified several areas for new housing near downtown.

HOUSING

The Downtown Plan envisioned a series of high-density residential areas ringing the area, enabling people to live within walking distance of the central business district. The integration of housing reduces the burden on the transit systems, and helps to enliven the central district throughout all hours and days of the week. The Downtown Plan identified several priority areas to plan and rezone as high-density residential areas. Since adoption of the Plan, the City has systematically adopted area plans and rezonings for each of these areas to realize these goals.

These area plans, in total, created capacity to build as many as 27,500 net new units of housing adjacent to the downtown as follows:

- Van Ness (3,500, adopted 1985)
- Rincon Hill (5,000, adopted 1985/2005)
- Transbay Redevelopment Area (3,000, adopted 2005)
- Market & Octavia (4,000, adopted 2008)
- Yerba Buena (2,500, adopted 1966)
- East SOMA (6,500, adopted 1990/2009)
- North of Market (3,000, adopted 1985)

The Downtown Plan also recognized that more jobs mean a need for affordable housing for workers, particularly service workers, so among other things, long commutes can be avoided. A mandatory Office Affordable Housing Production Program was created in 1985 to require developers of new office space to either provide affordable housing or pay into a housing fund (this program was subsequently revised and renamed the Jobs-

Housing Linkage Program). Since 1985, eighty-six development projects have contributed \$73,323,154 to the Jobs-Housing Linkage Fund. About 45 percent of these fees have been paid since 2003. This money has been used to help fund 15 affordable housing projects, totaling over 1,100 units.⁴ Over 90 percent of these units are rentals, and the majority restricted for households earning less than 80 percent of median income. Most of the units are located in the northeastern section of the city, within a short walk or transit trip to downtown.

Beyond the Downtown Plan requirements, a Citywide Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (Planning Code Section 315) obligates all newly constructed housing developments to include a component of affordable housing. In general, housing projects must offer 15 percent of all units at below market prices or 20 percent of the total if these affordable units are built off-site within one mile of the project location. Housing developers can also pay an in-lieu fee to the City to build affordable housing. In some portions of downtown, additional measures have been taken to increase affordability. The Transbay Redevelopment Plan, which plans to produce about 2,700 units on publicly-owned land along Folsom Street, requires 35 percent of its units to be affordable (as mandated by a special State law), or approximately 1,000 units. The Market & Octavia Plan added an additional affordable housing fee on housing projects depending on the scale of new development.

DOWNTOWN GROWTH IN THE TRANSIT CENTER DISTRICT

Maintaining a compact, walkable central business district, one that can be walked from end to end in about 20 minutes, is a core premise of the Downtown Plan. Compactness, particularly in relation to

⁴ As the Jobs-Housing Fees are mixed with other funds available to the City and used to leverage a larger pool of available funding (e.g. federal sources), it is not possible to specifically attribute a particular project or number of units to this fee.

public transit, was recognized as one of the district's chief assets. The Downtown Plan envisioned the area just south of Market Street around the Transbay Terminal not just as the primary growth area of the downtown, but as its hub.

A quarter of a century ago, during the preparation of the Downtown Plan, few downtown functions existed south of Market Street. The city was experiencing a major demand for office space and unless new policies were enacted, growth would continue to displace older important buildings in the business core north of Market. The Downtown Plan proposed and the City adopted new Planning Code provisions that landmarked dozens of important buildings and shifted office development to a special district with the city's tallest height limits (at 550 feet) around the Transbay Terminal. Zoning was also structured to enable unused development rights from designated historic buildings throughout the downtown to be transferred to this district.

In recent years, development has occurred in the Transit Center District, and the goals and controls enacted in the Downtown Plan are being realized. The Transit Center District Plan is intended to build on the goals and principles of the Downtown Plan, and to continue to realize development potential and public investment in the Transit Center District.

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO

How people commute to work has dramatic implications for the region's overall sustainability. More driving leads to more greenhouse gas emissions, lower air and water quality, more congestion on regional roads, and negative impacts on social equity and access to jobs (as jobs located away from public transportation are difficult to reach for lower income and transit-dependent people). Compared to other locations in the region, downtown San Francisco has far and

away the highest share of workers commuting by means other than auto. Over 75 percent of all workers in the core part of the Financial District use transit to get to work, with only 17 percent driving or carpooling. Once a job is located outside of downtown, even within San Francisco, the percentage of transit users drops by half and the auto use rises equivalently. In downtown Oakland area, transit use is lower still. Outside of these major downtowns, the percentage of workers that do not drive to work is miniscule. Increasing the development capacity in the Transit Center District, as opposed to any other locality in the region (or city), will go further to support both local and regional goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce other environmental impacts without major additional regional transit investment beyond those already planned.

While concentrating both jobs and housing (and other uses) near major transit centers reduces auto travel, research has consistently shown a notably stronger correlation between auto travel and the proximity of jobs to transit than housing to transit.⁵ That is, workers, in determining whether to take transit or drive to work, are more sensitive to distance from major transit on the job end of the commute trip than on the home end. Research has also shown the threshold for job proximity to transit is not more than ½-mile from regional transit, whereas for housing it is one mile or more. Moreover, the tendency to use transit for commuting drops 70 percent more for every 1,000 feet a workplace is from transit than for the same relationship between home and transit. There are a number of potential factors that research has suggested are influencing this phenomenon, including:

- The willingness of commuters, particularly suburban commuters, to take transit, bicycle, park-and-ride, or get dropped off at a rail station that involves no further transit mode transfers (e.g. to a local bus).

- Practical considerations of being able to use park-and-ride, drop-off, and bicycles to access transit to and from home, whereas on the non-home end arranging and coordinating these access modes are considerably more difficult or impractical.
- Psychological consideration of being willing to walk longer distances in one's home neighborhood to access transit than on the work end.
- The concentration of jobs and supporting services (e.g. retail) in high-density, transit-served centers enables workers to eat lunch, run errands, and engage in social activities (i.e. "chain trips") during and immediately after the workday without autos.
- The concentration of jobs in high-density centers facilitates ride-sharing, both due to sheer number and variety of workers and workplaces with closely proximate destinations, and particularly in a condition like the Transbay and North Bay corridors, where bridges are tolled in only one direction and good regional transit offers rides in the reverse directions.

These factors suggest that to maximize regional transit use and achieve the lowest overall auto travel, land immediately proximate to major regional transit (e.g. rail stations like BART or Caltrain) should be oriented more toward high-density jobs, with areas ringing these cores oriented more to high-density housing. Both areas should be mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented with a rich variety of supporting services (such as retail and community facilities), in order to create a vibrant and active district for residents, employees, and visitors. Most importantly, this research helps to confirm the land use mix envisioned in the Plan Area.

⁵ Research literature summarized in "Land Use Impacts on Transport," Littman, November 2008, Victoria Transport Policy Institute.

OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following objectives and policies are intended to achieve the vision set out for the Transit Center District as a high-density, vibrant employment center, with building heights, densities, FAR, and an engaging public realm appropriate to its place in the city.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

MAINTAIN DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO AS THE REGION'S PREMIER LOCATION FOR TRANSIT-ORIENTED JOB GROWTH WITHIN THE BAY AREA.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

REINFORCE THE ROLE OF DOWNTOWN WITHIN THE CITY AS ITS MAJOR JOB CENTER BY PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE CENTRAL DISTRICT'S REMAINING CAPACITY, PRINCIPALLY FOR EMPLOYMENT GROWTH.

OBJECTIVE 1.3

CONTINUE TO FOSTER A MIX OF LAND USES TO REINFORCE THE 24-HOUR CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

Policy 1.1

Increase the overall capacity of the Transit Center District for additional growth.

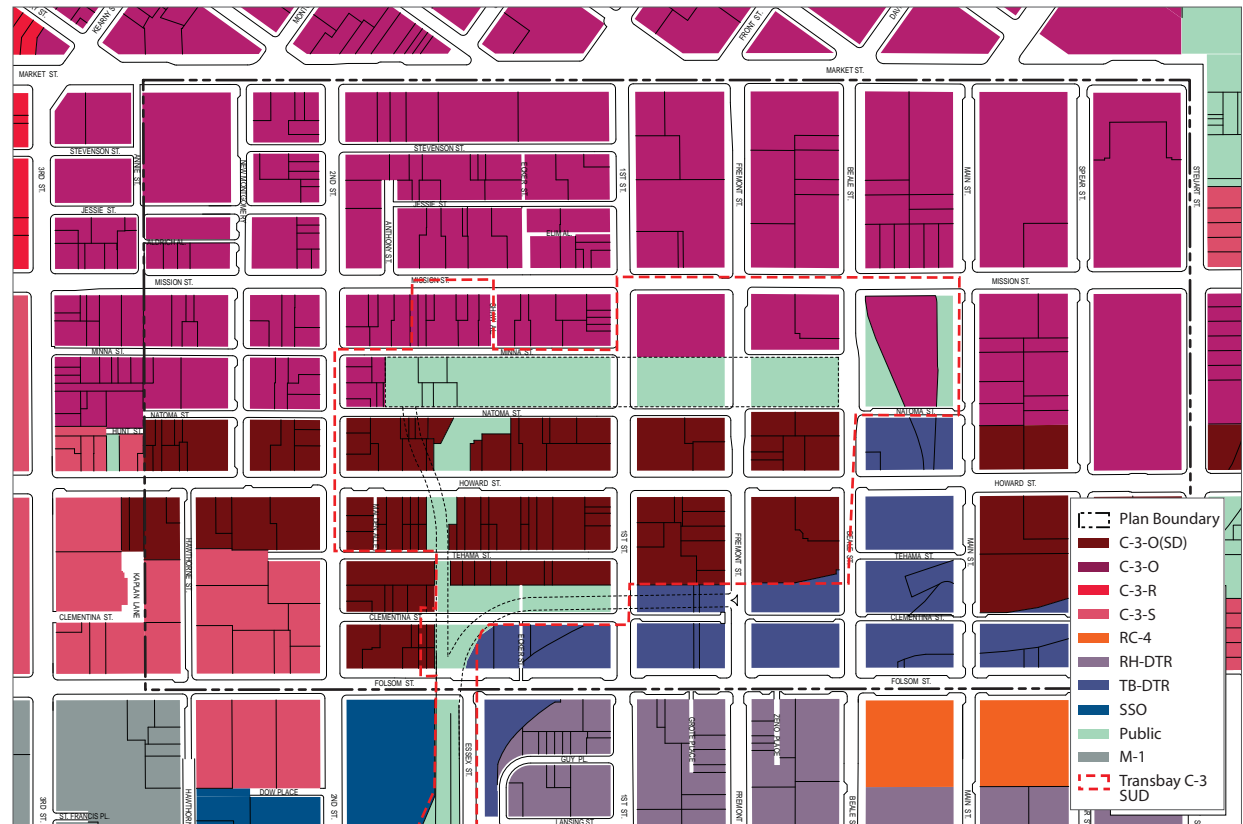
Proposed Control:

Rezone the entire Plan Area to C-3-0 (SD) and eliminate the maximum 18:1 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limit on development in this zone.

Currently, a portion of the Plan area is zoned C-3-0 (Downtown Office) and a portion C-3-0 (SD) (Downtown Office Special District). All of the C-3-0 (SD) area in the city is within the Plan Area.

For the core of the downtown business district where building heights are the tallest, overall development density is controlled primarily through FAR, and secondly through height and bulk limitations. For areas with the tallest height limits, the maximum physical envelope allowed or desired are often not attainable without acquiring and combining multiple contiguous parcels, which is often not possible or desirable. This condition leads to buildings that are not fully maximized in development intensity in the core area where it is most appropriate. There is currently a maximum cap of 18:1 FAR in the C-3-0 and C-3-0 (SD) districts. Elimination of the upper FAR

limit will enable buildings to achieve the densities and heights envisioned in the Plan, with some reaching an FAR of over 30:1. As a result of lifting the FAR cap, controls for the physical envelope of the buildings will regulate the development density of the District. This step, however, will require even more thought on physical design quality and building envelope to ensure the maintenance of a livable and attractive downtown. New guidelines for design quality and building scale that build on existing controls and design guidelines are included in the Urban Form chapter of this Plan.



Existing Zoning

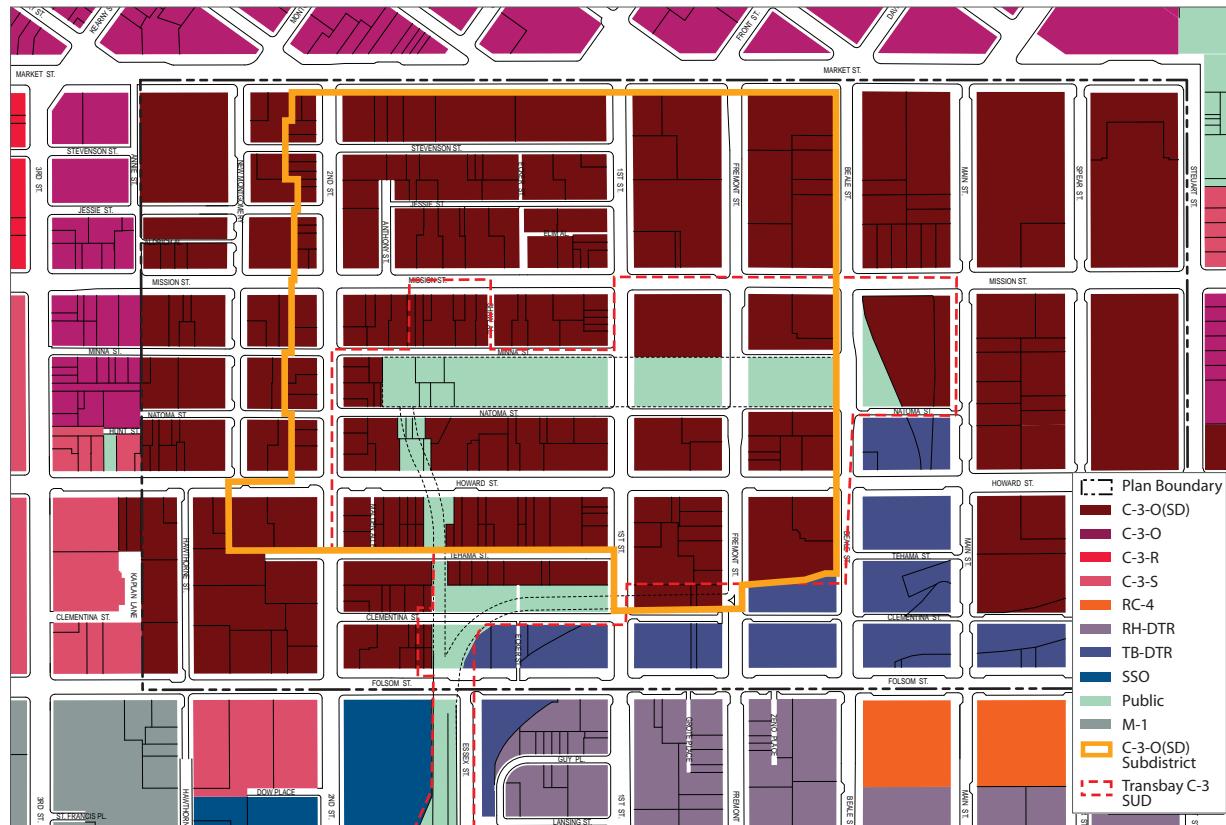
Policy 1.2
Revise height and bulk limits in the Plan Area consistent with other Plan objectives and considerations.

Proposed Control:
 Adopt the height and bulk maps as proposed.

While acknowledging the Plan’s premise that the overall development capacity of the District should be increased, height and bulk limits must be also shaped by considerations for urban form, key public views, street level livability, shadows on key public spaces, wind impacts, historic resources, and other factors. Height and bulk limits are discussed in more detail in the Urban Form section of the Plan.

Policy 1.3
Reserve the bulk of remaining space in the core Transit Center District for job growth, by limiting the amount of non-commercial uses on major opportunity sites.

Proposed Control:
 On development sites larger than 15,000 square feet within a proscribed sub-area of the C-3-0 (SD) district, new construction greater than 6:1 FAR would be required to have at least three square feet of commercial space for every one square foot of residential, hotel, or cultural space.



Proposed Zoning with C-3-0 (SD) Subdistrict



In view of the limited number of sizable development sites in the District, which represent the bulk of the remaining office capacity in the downtown core, it is essential for major development sites to include a sizable commercial component and not wholly developed with non-commercial uses. At least a few recently constructed large residential projects occupy some of the few major development sites remaining in the downtown core; however, they do not contain any commercial space, thus substantially reducing the capacity of the downtown for future job growth.

Preserving office and job growth capacity is a major consideration, but so too is ensuring a mix of uses to help the area achieve a more 24-hour character. A mix of uses is generally desirable for very large projects, such as those with square footage greater than 500,000 gross square feet. Additionally, the Plan recognizes that small lots are often not large enough to be developed with efficient office buildings, and some very large buildings contemplated in the Plan (i.e. taller than 600 feet) may be too large from a risk and market absorption standpoint to be devoted to a single use.

Policy 1.4
Prevent long-term under-building in the area by requiring minimum building intensities for new development on major sites.

Proposed Control:

On development sites larger than 15,000 square feet, establish a minimum FAR for new development of 9:1.

Major existing and planned investments in regional and local transit infrastructure and a limited capacity for added development make it unwise to permit new development to substantially under-build any of the few remaining major development sites in downtown. Moreover, under-building yields substantially lower revenues than necessary to help fund the Transit Center, affordable housing, streetscape improvements, and other area infrastructure. Though zoned for some of the greatest FARs (18:1) and heights (400-550 feet) in the city, several sites at the core of the downtown have been entitled and constructed recently at much smaller scales—structures of ten stories or less with FARs under 7:1. These buildings can be considered largely successful from many standpoints—for their owners, workers and for the immediate urban landscape. These buildings also typify a building prototype (i.e. 8–10 stories with large, open floorplans) suited for the job and business types that will fuel a portion of further job growth in San Francisco. However, to site buildings of modest scale on the few handful of downtown sites adjacent to regional transit that are considered appropriate for taller and denser buildings is probably not the best long-term land use or transportation decision.

The Plan would result in the following land use program:

| | <i>Net Additional Space</i> | <i>Increment over Existing Zoning</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Office Space | 5.82 million gsf | + 2.54 million gsf |
| Housing Units | 1,350 | +235 |
| Hotel Rooms | 1,370 | +425 |
| Retail Space | 85,000 gsf | -- |
| Total Space | 9.2 million gsf | +3.52 million gsf |

Policy 1.5
Consider the complexity and size of projects in establishing the duration for entitlements for large development projects.

Many development projects in the Plan Area are, by their very nature, large and complex. In the best of circumstances, it can take projects a year or two to finalize construction financing, complete the necessary drawings and documents, and complete final reviews with the necessary City agencies prior to actually commencing construction. Further, the fluctuations of local and wider economic conditions can slow down the completion of an approved project despite the best efforts of project sponsors to construct approved and desirable projects. Because of the size and complexity of many of the large projects in the Plan Area, these factors are magnified to necessitate longer lead times to reasonably realize these projects. Currently, planning entitlements are typically valid for three years (but some for as little as 18 months) prior to mandatory discretionary hearings to consider extensions. The City should evaluate all of the pertinent entitlement durations that may affect a project and consider adopting a uniform longer time-frame for entitlement validity, such as five years, prior required extensions for the large projects in the Plan Area.

OBJECTIVE 1.4

ENSURE THE DISTRICT MAINTAINS AREAS THAT CONTAIN CONCENTRATIONS OF GROUND-LEVEL PUBLIC-SERVING RETAIL AND CONVENIENCE USES FOR WORKERS AND VISITORS.

OBJECTIVE 1.5

ACTIVATE ALLEYS AND MID-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS WITH ACTIVE USES IN ADJACENT BUILDINGS TO MAKE THESE SPACES ATTRACTIVE AND ENJOYABLE.

Policy 1.6

Designate certain select street frontages as active retail areas and limit non-retail commercial uses, such as office lobbies, real estate offices, brokerages, and medical offices, from dominating the street level spaces.

Establishing a vibrant public realm is a critical element of achieving the goals of the Transit District, such as supporting an active employment center, encouraging transit use, and creating a walkable and pedestrian-friendly street environment.

Proposed Controls:

Active retail uses are required along the following frontages:

- 2nd Street between Market and Folsom streets.
- Natoma between 2nd Street and half way between 2nd and 1st streets.
- Ecker Street and the continuation of Ecker Street between Market and Mission streets.

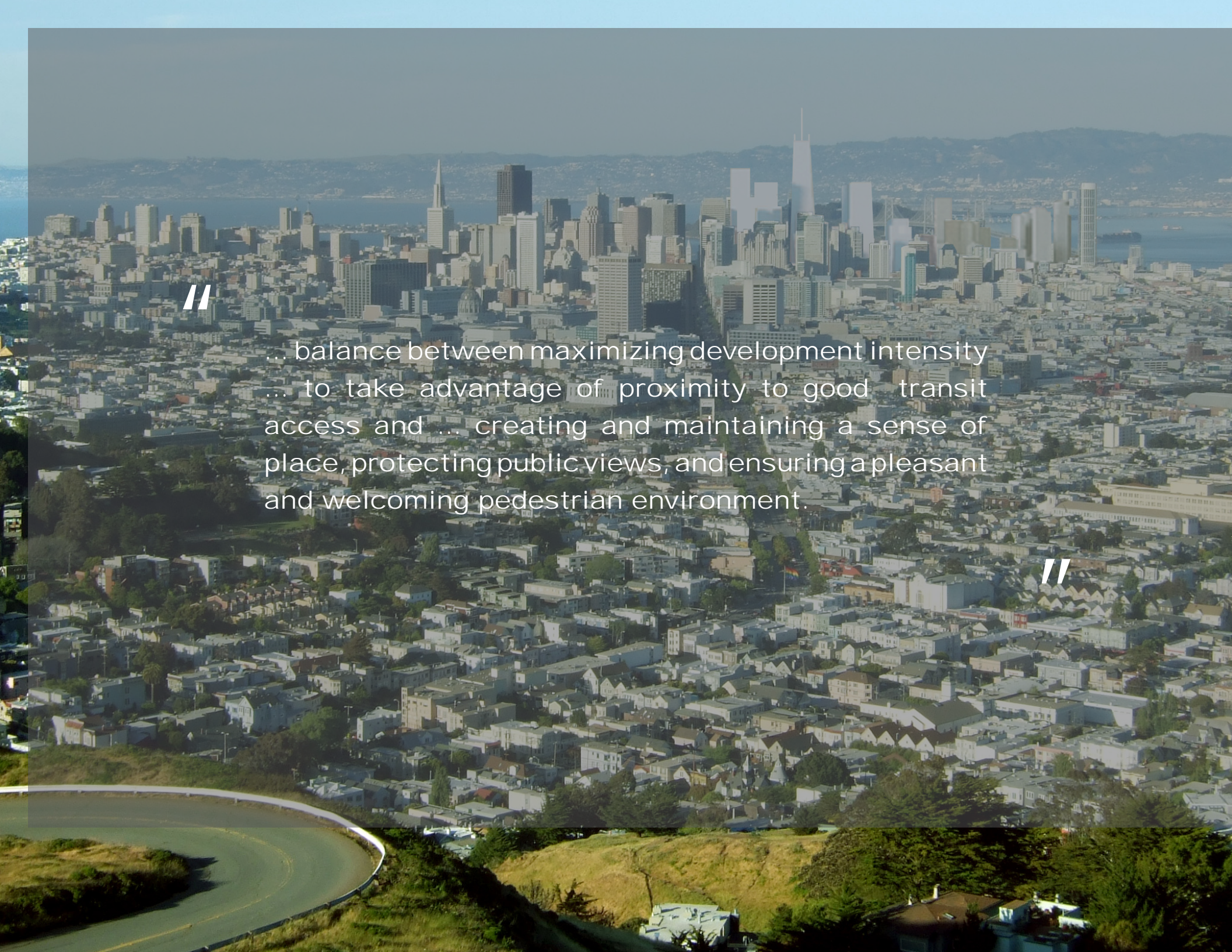
Active Retail Controls:

Banks/credit unions/financial service, insurance, travel agencies, offices, and gyms/health clubs are not permitted on the first floor along the frontages listed above. Building lobbies should be located on alternative street frontages, if available, to those listed above.

Buildings fronting on non-service pedestrian alleys (Ecker, Elim, Malden, Oscar) should be lined at the ground level with active uses—lobbies, retail, public open space.



Required Ground Floor Active Retail



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... balance between maximizing development intensity
... to take advantage of proximity to good transit
access and ... creating and maintaining a sense of
place, protecting public views, and ensuring a pleasant
and welcoming pedestrian environment.

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02

URBAN FORM

Urban form relates to the physical character of an area and the relationship of people and the landscape to the built environment. In the Transit Center District Plan Area, urban form is especially important as the intensity and height of buildings planned for the area greatly affects the character and quality of the city, and our experience of it at two levels: at both the cityscape level and at the ground level. Because of this, urban form within the Plan Area is considered at several scales, including building heights and their effect on the skyline and views, tower design, streetwall design, and the experience at the pedestrian level.

This chapter addresses the balance between maximizing development intensity in the Plan area to take advantage of proximity to good transit access and ensuring that the core objectives of urban form and livability are achieved—creating and maintaining a sense of place, protecting public views, and ensuring a pleasant and welcoming pedestrian environment.

The City adopted the Urban Design Element of the General Plan in 1972 and the Downtown Plan in 1985. These plans set out the policies that have achieved the characteristics of downtown San Francisco we enjoy today: a compact, human-scaled, walkable and dynamic urban center and a dramatic concentrated skyline set against the natural backdrop of the city's hills. This chapter builds on the core principles of city form established in these two plans. It presents key objectives and policies for directing new development in a manner that enhances the overall cityscape and builds upon established and planned transit assets downtown.

BUILDING HEIGHT & SKYLINE

San Francisco is renowned for its physical beauty and unique sense of place. These qualities are defined by buildings and streets laid upon hills and valleys, the San Francisco Bay and Pacific Ocean, and signature landmarks poised at picturesque locations. This stunning assemblage—the rise and fall of hills, the backdrop of a downtown cityscape against the water and hills across the Bay, the iconic pairing of the Bay Bridge with the skyline—are enjoyed by residents and visitors viewing the city from its hills, streets, public spaces, and surrounding vantages. The city's urban form at this scale is an essential characteristic of San Francisco's identity. The city's urban form:

- Orients us and provides a sense of direction;
- Imprints in our minds the physical relationship of one place to another, through features of topography, landscape, access, activity, and the built environment;
- Distinguishes one area from another; and
- Grounds us, providing reference points and reminding us of where we are.

When changes to the cityscape are considered, the goal is to build on and reinforce existing patterns and qualities of place that provide the city with its unique identity and character. The natural topography of the city is augmented by the man-made topography of its skyline, such as the concentrations of large buildings within downtown. Changes to the skyline, such as significant changes in allowable building heights, must be considered as if reshaping major elements of the city's natural topography of hills and valleys, for this is the scale of change to the visual landscape that they represent. The undifferentiated spread of tall buildings without appropriate transitions, or without deference to the larger patterns, iconic and irreplaceable relationships, or to key views of defining elements of

the area's landscape, can diminish and obscure the city's coherence and the collective connection of people to their surroundings.

The critical factors in the urban form at a larger scale are building height (and bulk) and the placement and orientation of tall buildings. While a building design may be gracious, well articulated, and artistic in its own right, its placement, scale and orientation relative to the overall cityscape is equally, if not more, important. A building design and scale that may be appropriate in one specific location may not be appropriate if sited even one block away.

In addition to affecting the quality of place at the cityscape level, the size and placement of buildings significantly influence the quality of the city at the ground level. One specific effect of building height and location at ground level is sunlight access on streets and public spaces. San Franciscans have long expressed and continue to reinforce the importance of maintaining sunlight on streets and public spaces. As the Downtown Plan states, "As a forest becomes denser, it becomes more difficult to find a sunlit meadow. Similarly, in San Francisco's downtown, sunshine and wind protection, which are essential to the personal comfort of open space users, become of prime importance in the planning for downtown open space." Countless academic studies—many of them about San Francisco—have pointed to sunlight as key to attracting people to public spaces in San Francisco and to activating them. Sunlight provides the comfort and brightness needed to get people to use public space in a city known for its cool, foggy climate year-round, including (particularly) summer.

This is not to say that all potential shading of all public spaces should be avoided at all costs. What is of most concern is the shading of heavily-used open spaces during key usage times of the day and in key locations. The urban form proposals of this Plan, particularly building height, are tailored where possible with an eye to this key ingredient of livability (i.e. without compromising the core Plan objectives for land use and the larger urban form).

The following objectives and policies address building height and skyline within the Plan area, with attention focused on creating a high quality urban form, at both the cityscape scale and on the ground.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

MAXIMIZE BUILDING ENVELOPE AND DENSITY IN THE PLAN AREA WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF URBAN FORM AND LIVABILITY OBJECTIVES OF THE SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL PLAN.

OBJECTIVE 2.2

CREATE AN ELEGANT DOWNTOWN SKYLINE, BUILDING ON EXISTING POLICY TO CRAFT A DISTINCT DOWNTOWN "HILL" FORM, WITH ITS APEX AT THE TRANSIT CENTER, AND TAPERING IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

OBJECTIVE 2.3

FORM THE DOWNTOWN SKYLINE TO EMPHASIZE THE TRANSIT CENTER AS THE CENTER OF DOWNTOWN, REINFORCING THE PRIMACY OF PUBLIC TRANSIT IN ORGANIZING THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT PATTERN, AND RECOGNIZING THE LOCATION'S IMPORTANCE IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL ACCESSIBILITY, ACTIVITY, AND DENSITY.

OBJECTIVE 2.4

PROVIDE DISTINCT TRANSITIONS TO ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS AND TO TOPOGRAPHIC AND MAN-MADE FEATURES OF THE CITYSCAPE TO ENSURE THE SKYLINE ENHANCES, AND DOES NOT DETRACT FROM, IMPORTANT PUBLIC VIEWS THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND REGION.

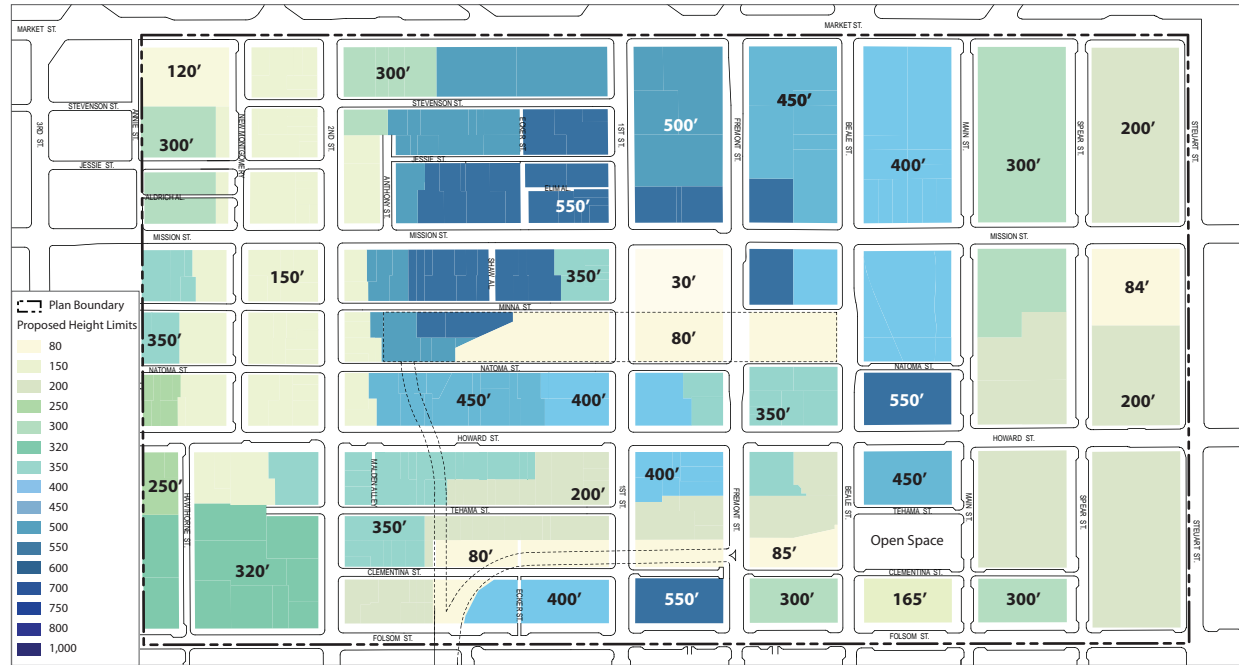
OBJECTIVE 2.5

BALANCE CONSIDERATION OF SHADOW IMPACTS ON KEY PUBLIC OPEN SPACES WITH OTHER MAJOR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN, AND IF POSSIBLE, AVOID SHADING KEY PUBLIC SPACES DURING PRIME USAGE TIMES.

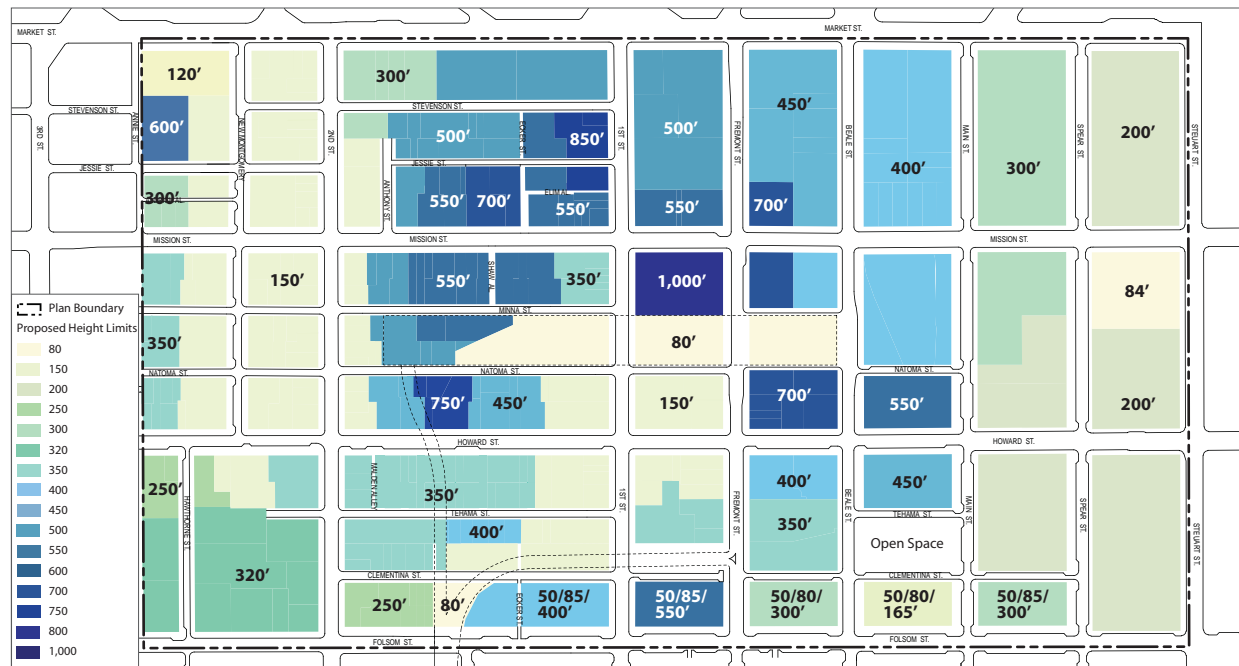
Policy 2.1
Establish the Transit Tower as the “crown” of the downtown core—its tallest and most prominent building—at an enclosed height of 1,000 feet.

As the geographic epicenter of downtown, as well as the front door of the Transbay Transit Center, the Transit Tower should be the tallest building on the city’s skyline. The Tower represents the City’s commitment to focusing growth around a sustainable transportation hub, as well as the apex of the downtown skyline. Additionally, the sheer prominence of this building will be a substantial benefit to the Transit Center itself, as 100 percent of the Transbay Terminal revenue from the sale or lease of the publicly-owned land for the Transit Tower development will be used for the funding of the Transit Center program.

Based on visual simulations of urban form alternatives, a Transit Tower height of 1,000 to 1,200 feet (to the tip of the building’s tallest element) is appropriate and desirable. However, shadow analysis indicates that at a height above 1,000 feet, the Transit Tower would have a more substantial impact on the main seating and gathering areas in the Embarcadero Plazas at lunchtime during the winter months. (See the sidebar titled “Sunlight on Public Spaces” for more discussion). Building elements (e.g. mechanical penthouses) above that height should be set back considerably from the building’s façade or limited in bulk and enclosure such that they would not cast additional significant shadows based on the sun angles at this time of year.



Existing Building Height Limits



Proposed Building Height Limits

Policy 2.2

Create a light, transparent sculptural element to terminate the Transit Tower to enhance skyline expression without casting significant shadows. This vertical element may extend above the 1,000 foot height limit.

To ensure an elegant and unique sculptural termination to the top of the Transit Tower, an un-enclosed sculptural element that is consistent with the building's architecture and is set in a way that addresses shadow concerns is strongly encouraged.

Policy 2.3

Create a balanced skyline by permitting a limited number of tall buildings to rise above the dense cluster that forms the downtown core, stepping down from the Transit Tower in significant height increments.

In order to create a skyline in all directions to enhance the downtown's topographic "hill" form with graceful transitions in all directions, a small number of buildings should rise above a height of 600 feet—the downtown's current maximum height limit—but at heights lower than the Transit Tower site. The number of these buildings greater than 600 feet in height should be limited and

carefully sited to maintain sky visibility between them from key public vantage points and to prevent these buildings from visually merging into a single wide mass of great height.

One building of up to 850 feet in height is desirable between Market and Mission Streets, just west of First Street, sufficiently distanced from the Transit Tower. As shown in the proposed height map, an area on the west side of First Street, north of Elim Alley, is proposed for a height limit of 850 feet. Should a building taller than 700 feet not be built in this zone within a sufficient amount of time, such as ten years, or otherwise reasonably judged unlikely to come to fruition, the City should consider reclassifying the 700-foot zone on



Proposed skyline view from Dolores Park (buildings in blue reflect proposed zoning under the Plan).

the north side of Mission Street just west of Ecker Street to enable a building up to 850 feet to be constructed at that site.

Height transitions of at least 150 feet (e.g. 1000 to 850, 850 to 700, 700 to 550) are essential between major height tiers in order to create graceful and distinct transitions between buildings of such scale in this compact area. A more significant transition, however, is necessary on the southern portion of the District, where prevailing building heights in the districts immediately adjacent are lower. In this area, height limits are proposed to more quickly transition to 350 feet and lower.



Proposed skyline view from Twin Peaks (buildings in blue reflect proposed zoning under the Plan).

Policy 2.4

Transition heights downward from Mission Street to Folsom Street and maintain a lower “saddle” to clearly distinguish the downtown form from the Rincon Hill form and to maintain views between the city’s central hills and the Bay Bridge.

Policy 2.5

Transition heights down to adjacent areas, with particularly attention on the transitions to the southwest and west in the lower scale South of Market areas and to the waterfront to the east.

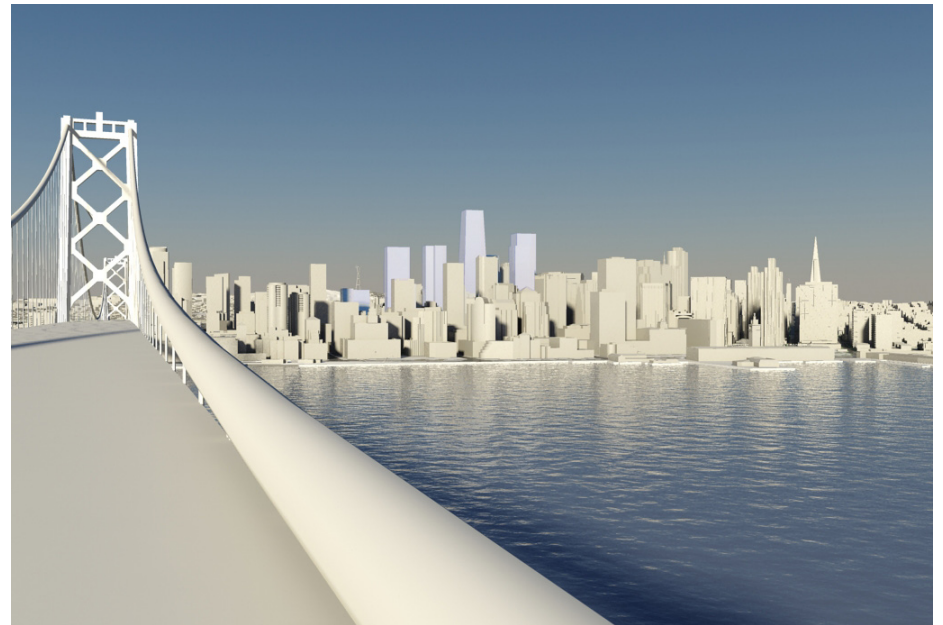
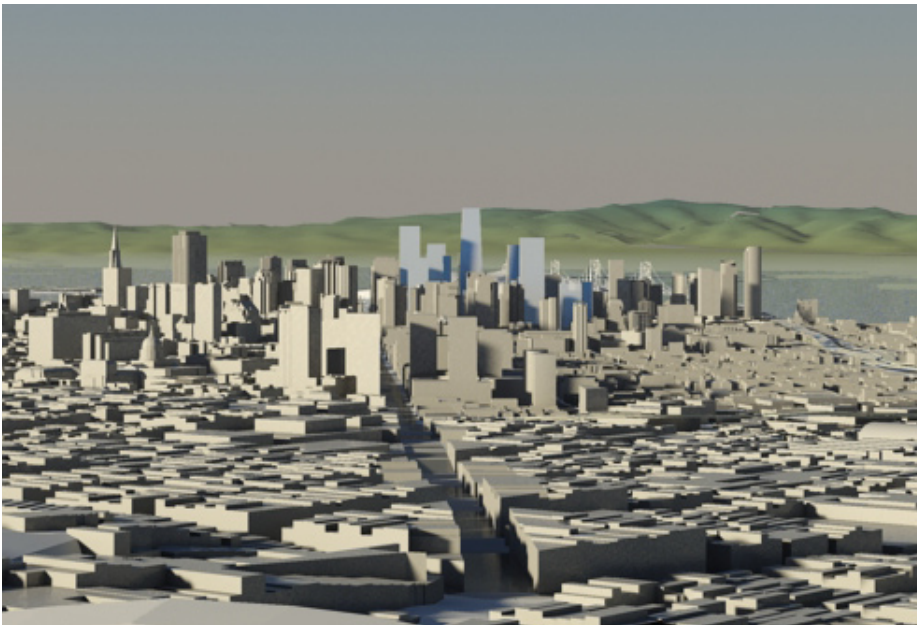
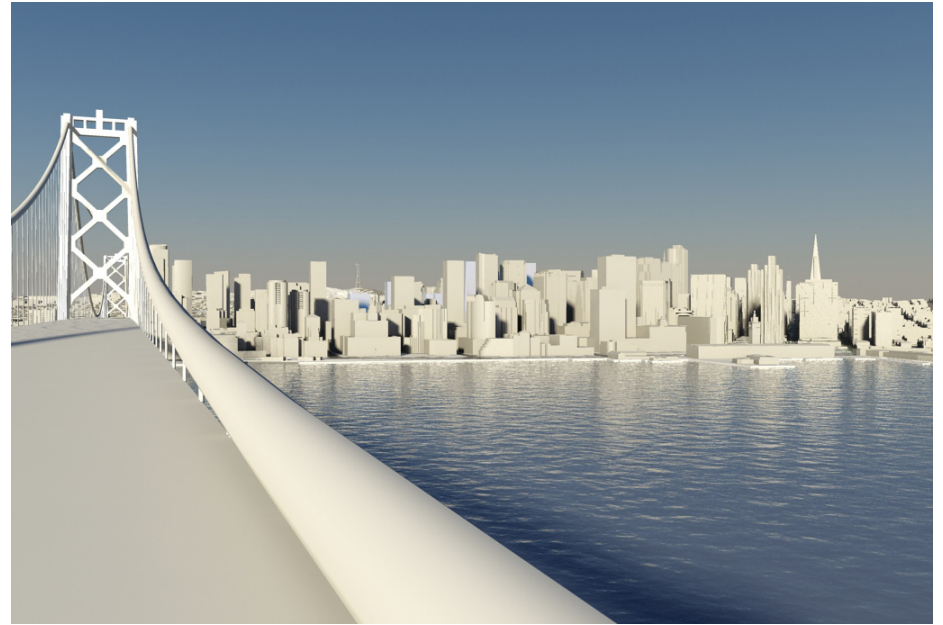
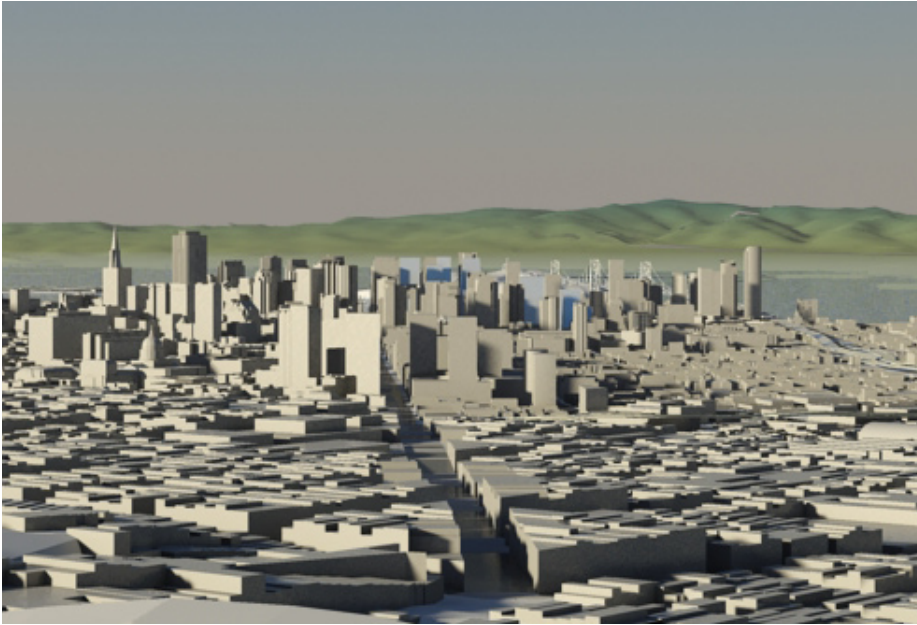
The intent of the urban form changes introduced by the Rincon Hill Plan was to separate the Hill’s form from the downtown skyline. For all of the reasons discussed earlier in this section, maintaining a sense of place and orientation by distinguishing neighborhoods and districts on the skyline is important. The building heights of Rincon Hill and areas to the north were crafted to maintain a lower point, or “saddle” in the skyline between Howard Street and the north side of Folsom Street. This lower stretch on the skyline between the downtown core and Rincon Hill also provides important east-west views from the hills in the center of the city (e.g. Corona Heights, Twin Peaks, Upper Market) to the East Bay hills, the Bay Bridge, the Bay, and vice versa. This section of the skyline should achieve a height no taller than 400 feet. Equally important to stepping down buildings in the north-south direction, structures should also transition downward to adjacent lower scale neighborhoods and to the waterfront. Building heights should taper down to 250 feet and lower along the Second Street corridor to the southwest.

Policy 2.6

Establish a minimum height requirement for the Transit Tower site, as well as other adjacent sites zoned for a height limit of 750 feet or greater.

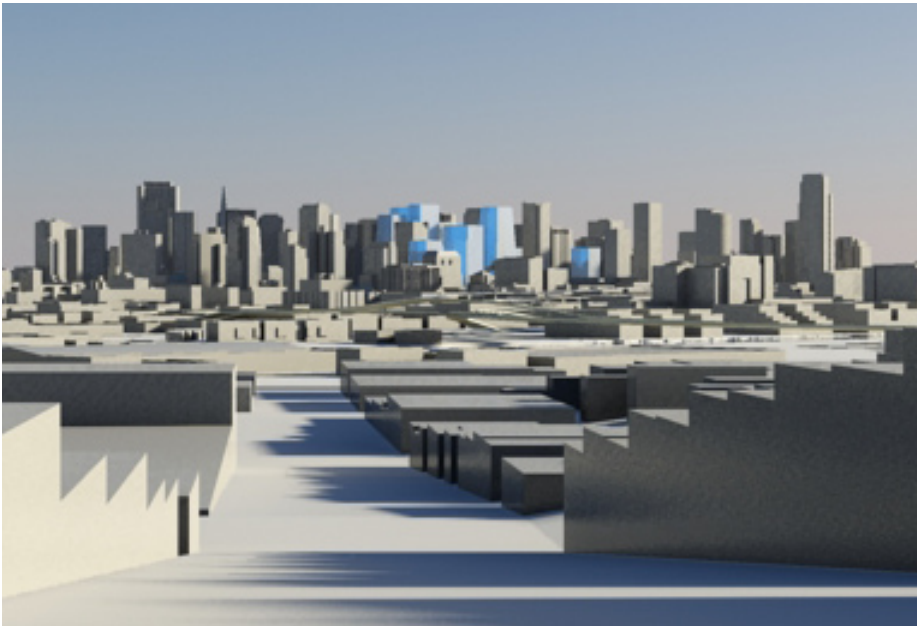
The ultimate height of the occupied portion of the building proposed for the Transit Tower (and other buildings) will be affected largely by the market. To achieve the urban form goals of the Plan, it is critical that this building be the crown of the skyline. If, for whatever reason, the Transit Tower is proposed for an occupied height lower than the maximum height allowed under this Plan, the building should include an architectural feature that extends the effective height of the building in some form to a height of at least 950 feet.

3D VISUALIZATIONS *New buildings, shown in blue, reflect existing (top) and proposed (bottom) zoning.*

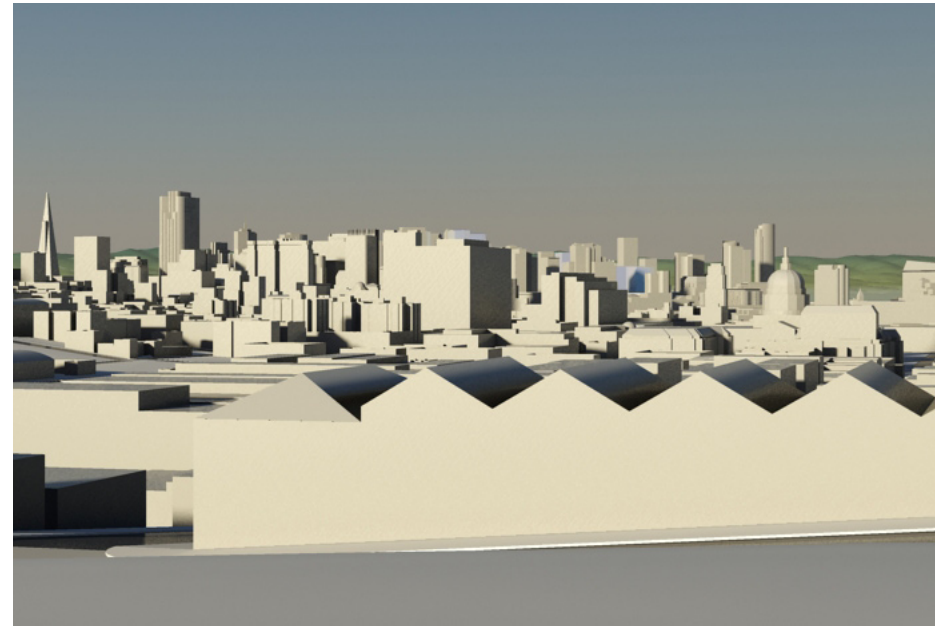


View from Twin Peaks

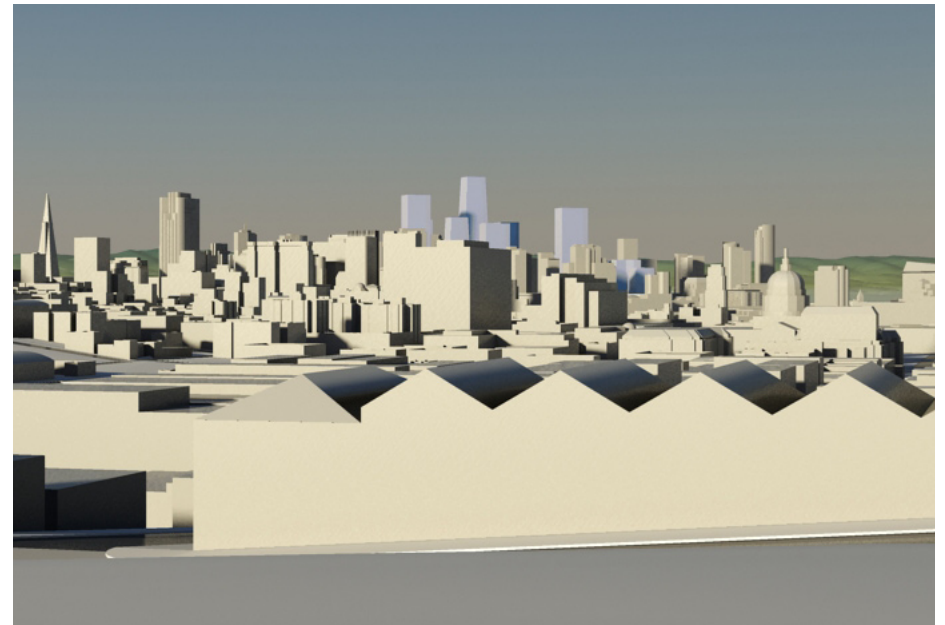
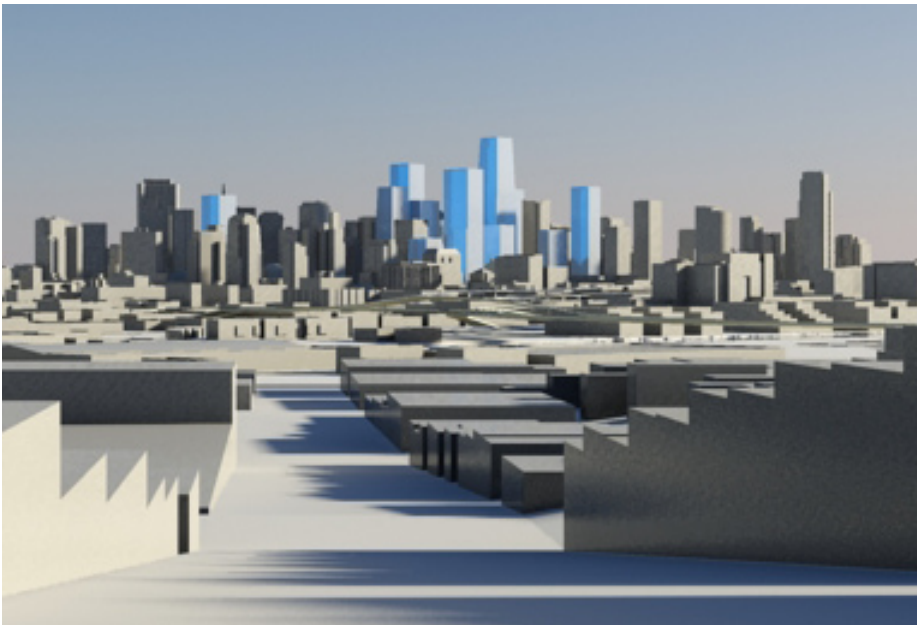
View from the Bay Bridge



View from Potrero Hill



View from Alamo Square



SUNLIGHT ON PUBLIC SPACES

As part of this Plan's analysis regarding building heights, a qualitative assessment was conducted of the potential for new buildings in the Plan Area to add shading to downtown open spaces.

In general, existing downtown open spaces owned by the Recreation and Parks Department could potentially be affected by new buildings at the heights envisioned in the District, but because of the parks' distance from the core of the District, additional shadowing would occur during limited times of the year when shadows are long, mostly during the first half of the day. During these times, the potential for additional shading is limited since shadows generated at these great distances are moving swiftly and shortening as the sun rises. The following are some of the findings regarding specific public spaces:

- *Embarcadero Plazas:* The Embarcadero Plazas, particularly Justin Herman Plaza, are very heavily used open spaces. They provide open and sunny spaces for the downtown population to enjoy during lunchtime and special events. As a result, the adopted qualitative standards for these spaces recommend avoiding new shading during the mid-day period and also during the winter. During December and January, the tallest buildings in the Plan area have the potential to shade the heavily used sitting areas along the eastern and northern portions of the plaza, where the only sun is available in the plaza during these months, between noon and 3pm. However, at a height up to 1,000 feet, the Transit Tower would mostly avoid casting shadows on these few sunny seating areas, only clipping the edges.
- *St. Mary's and Portsmouth:* These plazas, used throughout the day, would both be affected roughly between 8:00 and 9:00 am for a few months in spring and fall—by the tallest of

the potential buildings in the District (the Transit Tower and buildings just to the northwest along Mission and 1st Streets). To meaningfully reduce potential shadows, however, these buildings would require substantial reductions in scale from the heights now proposed.

- *Union Square:* This famous plaza is heavily used by workers, shoppers, and visitors alike. It is a very sunny space most of the year from mid-morning through mid-afternoon. Its most intensive use is mid-day. The tallest buildings in the District (those proposed above 700 feet in height) could potentially add some shading to the edges of the square primarily before 8:00am during the summer. Above a height of 400 feet, a tower on the Palace Hotel site would add shade to the square between 8:00 and 9:00 am during the summer. At a building height above 600 feet, greater shading of the café seating area on the eastern half of the square would result.



People congregate in sunny parts of Justin Herman Plaza and avoid sitting in or spending time in shaded parts.

Some adjustments to the Plan's building height proposals were made expressly to reduce shadow impacts to public spaces. While the intent is to minimize shadows, the Plan proposes to do so without sacrificing other important objectives of the Plan, especially those regarding urban form and optimizing land use. Further, just as the potential for some shading from key buildings should not override the ability to achieve the Plan's core objectives, neither does a lack of major shading impacts from particular potential development sites justify height increases inconsistent with other major objectives, such as enhancing the coherence of the city's urban pattern and preservation of public views. No one objective is ignored or violated, but each is balanced to achieve the optimum benefit of all essential Plan objectives.

To address shadow impacts further, as listed in the Funding chapter, the Plan proposes to set aside funds to improve the potentially affected open spaces, primarily St. Mary's and Portsmouth Squares. These spaces have existing significant need for improvements to

enhance their usefulness to users. While not a direct mitigation for shading, funded improvements could go a long way toward increasing the usable area of these plazas, providing additional amenities, and improving deficiencies.

It is important to note that additional detailed shadow analysis, including quantitative assessment, will be necessary for each individual project and will enable further refinements as specific building designs are proposed and brought through the entitlement process.

Finally, as described in the Public Realm chapter, the Plan's proposals and the Transit Center itself (to which the Plan proposes to dedicate significant money), would provide for or financially support the creation of several new open spaces of notable size, increasing recreational opportunities and options for downtown workers and residents to find a sunny patch of open space.



BUILDING DESIGN: TOWER ZONE

The Transit Center District will be home to several of the tallest buildings in San Francisco. Because these buildings affect the street environment, access to sun and sky, and the skyline, the massing and design of towers is critical to achieving the overall urban form goals for the Plan area. With this in mind, the following objectives and policies address the massing and scale of tall buildings within the District.

OBJECTIVE 2.6

PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY AND SUFFICIENT ALLOWANCE FOR THE STRUCTURAL CORE OF TALL BUILDINGS (TALLER THAN 600 FEET), WHILE ENSURING THAT THE BUILDINGS MAINTAIN ELEGANT AND SLENDER PROPORTIONS AND PROFILE.

OBJECTIVE 2.7

ENSURE ARTICULATION AND REDUCTION TO THE MASS OF THE UPPER PORTIONS AND TOPS OF TOWERS IN ORDER TO CREATE VISUAL INTEREST IN THE SKYLINE AND HELP MAINTAIN VIEWS.

OBJECTIVE 2.8

MAINTAIN SEPARATION BETWEEN TALL BUILDINGS TO PERMIT AIR AND LIGHT TO REACH THE STREET, AS WELL AS TO HELP REDUCE 'URBAN CANYON' EFFECTS.

Policy 2.7

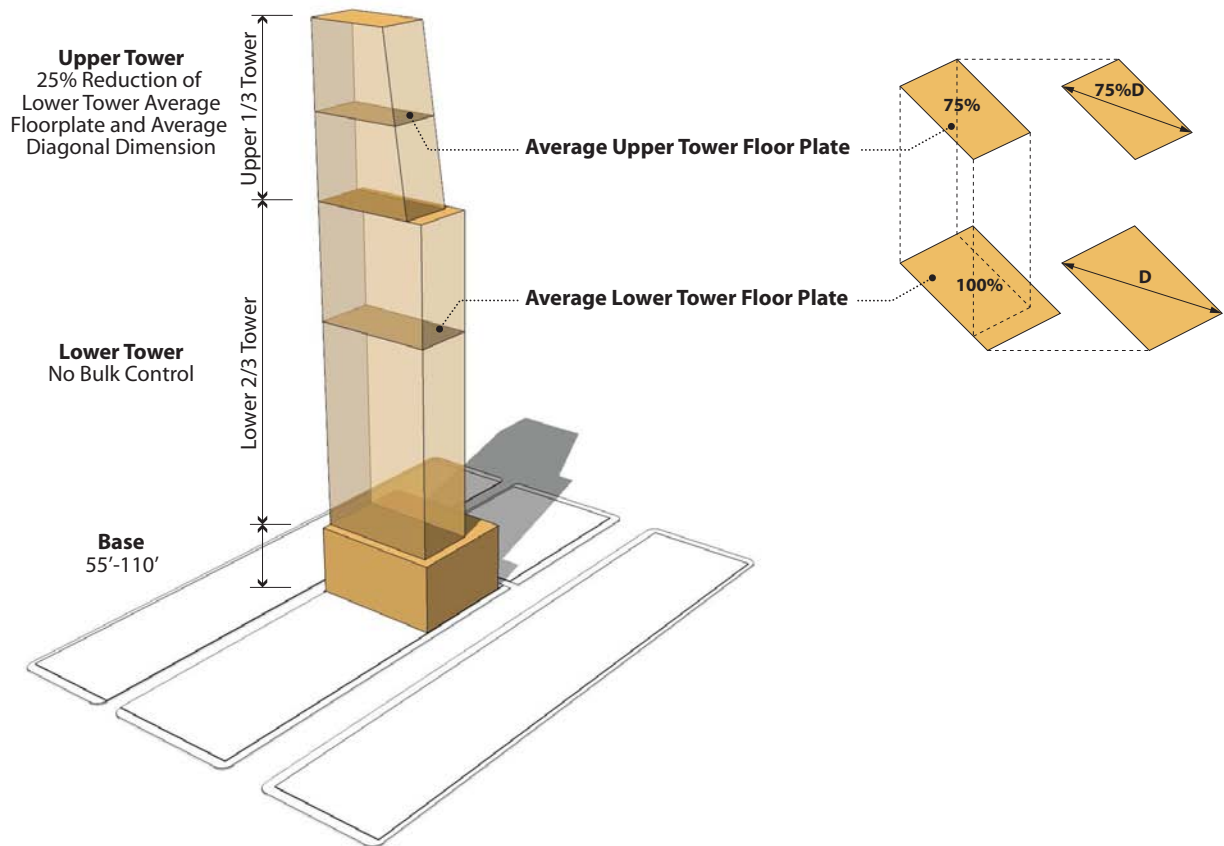
Do not limit the floorplate or dimensions of the lower tower for buildings taller than 550 feet.

Policy 2.8

Require a minimum 25 percent reduction in the average floorplate and average diagonal dimension for the upper tower as related to the lower tower.

For the purposes of this Plan, towers are divided vertically into two main components: the Lower Tower (generally defined as the lower 2/3 of the tower) and Upper Tower (the upper 1/3 of the tower). For buildings taller than 550 feet, no bulk controls are proposed for the Lower Tower. The opportunity sites within the Plan Area

are generally small and constrained, thus limiting floorplate sizes available for buildings in this District, making it unnecessary to establish a floorplate limit. However, adherence to tower separation rules is critical and exceptions to them must be limited to the instances outlined below. Since tenants today often desire flexible floorplates at lower levels, this policy will help to accommodate contemporary building needs, as well as to encourage potential employers to locate in the Transit District. To reduce bulk at the highest levels, a 25 percent floorplate reduction is required for the Upper Tower portion of tall buildings.



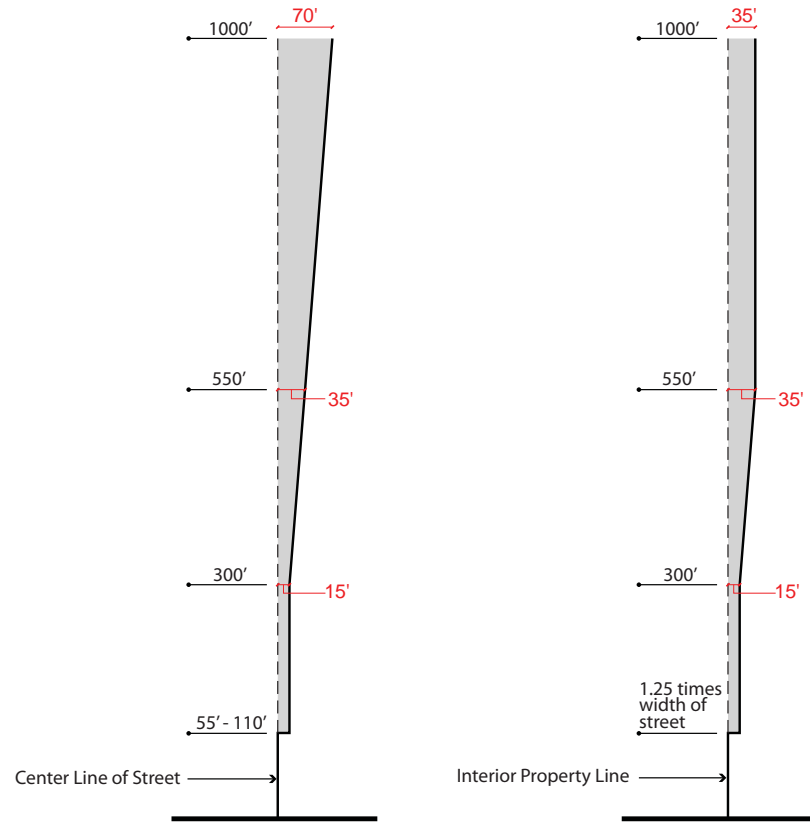
Policy 2.9

Maintain current tower separation rules for buildings up to 550 feet in height, extend these requirements for buildings taller than 550 feet, and define limited exceptions to these requirements to account for unique circumstances.

Proposed changes include:

- Maintain the 35-foot setback from interior property lines for buildings taller than 550 feet.
- For buildings taller than 550 feet in height, extend the currently required setback plane that increases with height from the center line of a major street (e.g. Mission St.), resulting in a setback of 70 feet for a building height of 1,000'.
- Apply tower separation rules to proposals for multiple towers on the same property, not just between adjacent properties. Require such buildings to meet standards for setbacks from interior property lines.
- Permit partial or full waiver of the interior property line setback requirement for buildings immediately adjacent to the Transit Center, for portions of buildings where the height limit of the adjacent site is lower, and on sites where the adjacent lot has a historic building whose development rights have been transferred.

These tower separation requirements are critical to controlling and moderating the concentration of large buildings, and to ensuring visual access to the sky, views and sunlight, particularly at ground level.

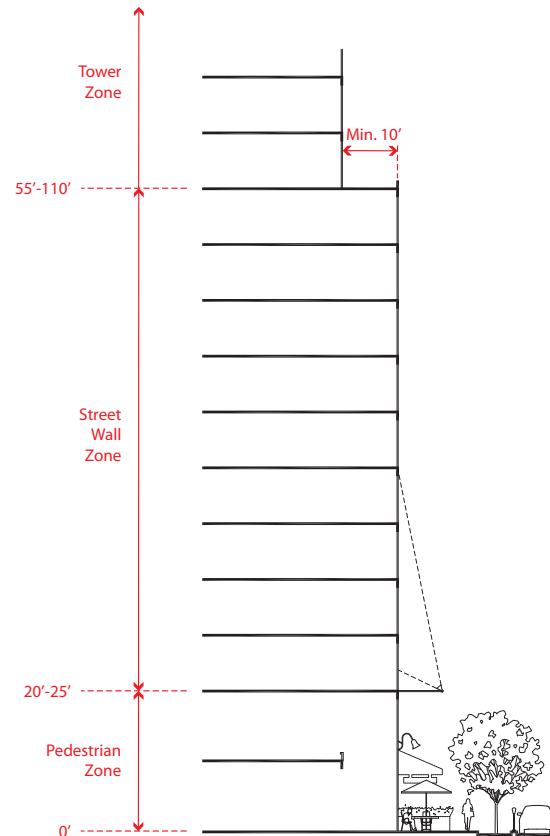


Proposed Tower Separations

BUILDING DESIGN: STREETWALL & PEDESTRIAN ZONE

The character of a district is largely defined by the scale of the roadway, sidewalks, and adjoining building frontages. Collectively, these shape the pedestrian experience by creating a sense of enclosure, often called an “urban room.” The Transit District will contain many of the city’s tallest buildings and buildout of the District will entail replacement of many smaller buildings that now provide a humane scale. Without moderation and articulation of the lower portions of tall buildings, the result could lack pedestrian references that create a comfortable experience at the ground level. Therefore, it is particularly critical that buildings be designed in a thoughtful manner, taking into consideration the street scale and pedestrian interest in the massing of tall buildings, not simply be designed as architectural gestures of the skyline. In addition, the ground floors must foster a lively and attractive pedestrian experience. In guiding building design in the Plan Area, the following policies address two main building zones:

- *Streetwall Zone.* The height of the streetwall, generally its relation to the street width, is a defining characteristic of a neighborhood’s scale. Within the Transit Center District, the streetwall is defined as that part of the building above the pedestrian zone and extending to a height of 55 to 110 feet (depending on the context).
- *Pedestrian Zone.* Pedestrians are most aware of the first two to three stories at the ground, or what is within their immediate view. These policies focus on the character of the street and how buildings meet the ground. The pedestrian zone is defined as the first 20–25 feet of a building.



The scale and articulation of the streetwall along Mission Street create a comfortable pedestrian experience.

STREETWALL ZONE

OBJECTIVE 2.9

PROVIDE BUILDING ARTICULATION ABOVE A BUILDING BASE TO MAINTAIN OR CREATE A DISTINCTIVE STREETWALL COMPATIBLE WITH THE STREET’S WIDTH AND CHARACTER.

OBJECTIVE 2.10

MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE CHARACTER-DEFINING BUILDING SCALE IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT.

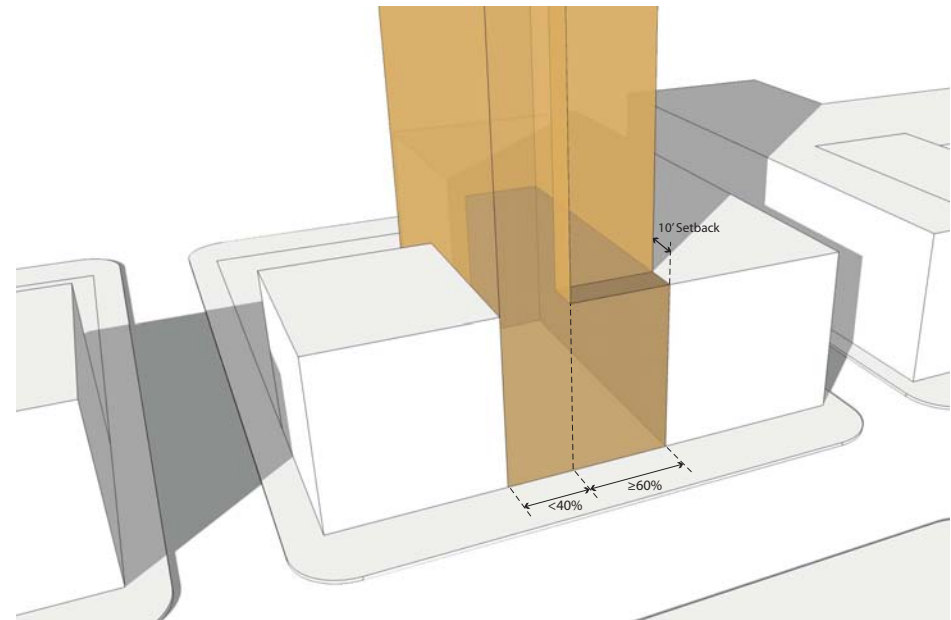
Policy 2.10

Ensure that buildings taller than 150 feet in height establish a distinct base element to define the street realm at a comfortable height of not more than 1.25 times the width of the street.

- Such a base element must be discernible from the tower form by any combination of upper level setbacks, projections, or other building features or articulations.
- Provide combined horizontal relief of at least 10 feet for at least 60 percent of the development lot width at the streetwall.
- Recesses of the base or changes of material alone are not sufficient streetwall defining treatments.

Buildings with sheer facades rising up straight from the ground without a horizontal break at the streetwall height create a vertiginous and inhuman scale, particularly when grouped without intervening lower scale buildings. Unlike the Financial District area north of Market Street where numerous historic buildings of moderate scale remain interspersed between taller buildings, the core parts of the Transit Center District (such as along Mission Street) where likely development sites exist have only a few significant

older buildings of modest scale (i.e. 50 to 100 feet in height). The Downtown Plan contains a policy to require a horizontal element (e.g. a belt course) on the façade in a manner that suggests a human-scaled building base, but this architectural feature alone is insufficient. Towers that incorporate upper story setbacks to define a distinctive base element help to create a comfortable pedestrian environment, one that is more scaled to the human perspective at the street level. For the Transit Center District, a streetwall height of 55 to 110 feet defines a comfortable “urban room,” based on a prevailing street width of 82.5 feet. Where project sites are large enough to incorporate multiple buildings along the street face, including both tall towers and lower scale buildings of 150 feet in height or less, the towers themselves may not necessarily need to feature setbacks. However, where projects consist of a single tall building at the street face, such towers must meet the articulation requirements described above.

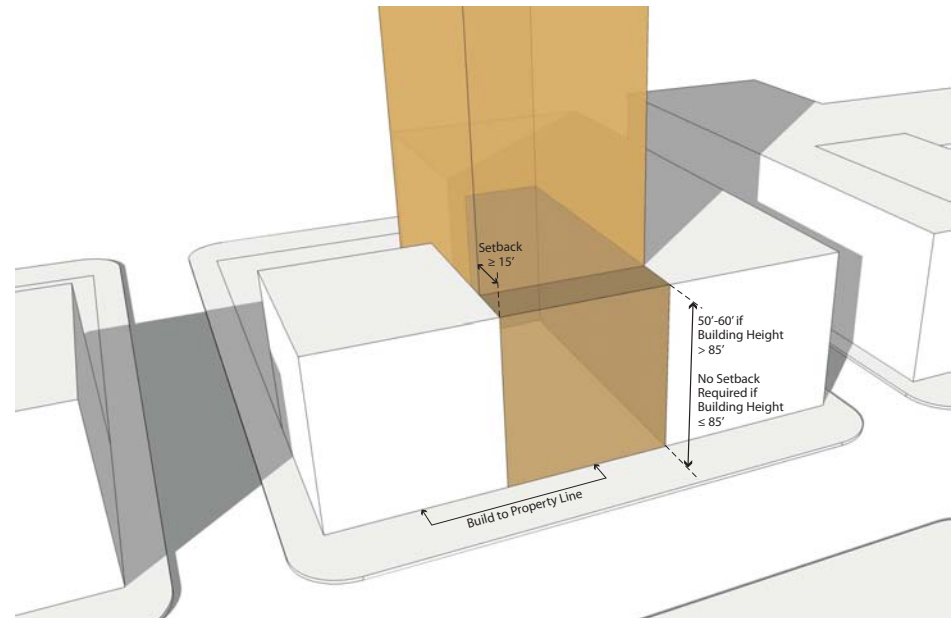


Streetwall guidelines for buildings taller than 150 feet.

Policy 2.11

All buildings within the 2nd/New Montgomery Conservation District should meet the following design guidelines:

- **Buildings should be built out to the sidewalk-abutting property line consistent with the historic buildings.**
- **Buildings taller than 85 feet should maintain a streetwall height of 50 to 85 feet, above which there must be a setback of at least 15 feet. This policy does not apply along New Montgomery, where the height limit is 150' feet and buildings may rise to their full height of 150 feet at the property line.**



Streetwall guidelines for buildings within the 2nd/New Montgomery Conservation District.

Policy 2.12

Where construction of the downtown rail extension must unavoidably demolish buildings, reduce impacts on the District's character by facilitating appropriate re-use of these parcels.

The underground downtown rail extension is planned under Second Street curving eastward into the basement of the Transit Center. While the Second Street construction can be executed within the right-of-way with a tunnel-boring machine, the necessary curvature alignment and widening of the tracks into the Transit Center necessitate the full or partial acquisition by the TJPA of several private parcels at both the northeast and southeast corners of Second and Howard streets, including the demolition of several buildings. It is important to ensure a positive re-use of these sites so that the district is not left with awkward or minimally-usable parcels. Because of the unique situations caused by the train's alignment affecting both sides of Howard Street, the Plan proposes the following distinct responses:

- *Northeast Corner:* The extent of the below-grade alignment and complexity of the track and station infrastructure challenges the feasibility of significant development at this corner. As a result, the best possible use of these parcels is the creation of a new public open space that facilitates pedestrian flow to the Transit Center and provides both a needed additional ground level open space and an opportunity for a major public vertical access to the rooftop Transit Center park. The design of the plaza should also incorporate architectural elements at the street edge that connect the plaza to the fabric of the historic district. The Public Realm chapter provides more detail on this concept.
- *Southeast Corner:* The eastern edge of the underground track alignment slices diagonally across the three parcels north of Tehama Street and west of Malden Alley, with little possibility

of constructing a building with foundations or columns immediately above the tracks. The remaining developable portion of the parcels east of the tracks totals approximately 9,000 square feet, though in a somewhat awkward wedge configuration. Given the potential for a plaza at the more appropriate northeast corner of this intersection adjacent to the Transit Center, a new building should be encouraged on this site to maintain the physical continuity of the historic district along Second and Howard streets.

To make a new building more feasible given the shape and size of the site that remains after the TJPA's right-of-way needs are met, the City should consider vacating Malden alley in order to permit a merger with the affected properties along Second Street. The General Plan includes policies (Urban Design Element Policies 2.8–2.10) discouraging the vacation of public-rights-of-way except under unique and extraordinary circumstances in which the demonstrable public benefit of a proposed project requiring the vacation substantially outweighs the loss in public value (both current and potential) of maintaining the right-of-way in public ownership.

In this unique circumstance, vacating Malden would aid in the positive transition of this block in light of the rail alignment. Consequently, at an appropriate point following completion of arrangements with the TJPA to secure the necessary property for the rail alignment and submittal of a building proposal, vacation of Malden should be considered consistent with the General Plan vacation policies along with demolition of the subject buildings along Second Street.

Though it may not possible to construct building foundations above the rail tunnel on this site, a new building here should strive to create a prominent corner presence at Second and Howard. One way to achieve this might be to cantilever a

portion of the lower floors of the building toward the corner. Consistency with the character of the historic district and notable buildings at this location presents another matter that needs to be favorably resolved. A new structure, for example, could successfully incorporate and build above a portion of the historic buildings immediately to the east. To be favorably considered, such an arrangement must feature sufficient setbacks and be accomplished in a way that maintains the appearance of these significant buildings as complete or independent structures.



A plaza is proposed for the northeast corner of Second and Howard streets, where the underground rail extension curves eastward into the Transit Center.

OBJECTIVE 2.11
PURSUE BUILDING SETBACKS TO AUGMENT A SIDEWALK WIDENING PROGRAM ON STREET FRONTAGES WHERE SIGNIFICANT CONTIGUOUS STRETCHES OF PARCELS ARE LIKELY TO BE REDEVELOPED.

In some areas within the Transit Center District, the program for widening sidewalks can be augmented by requiring building setbacks. Such treatment, however, is only appropriate where there are contiguous stretches of anticipated new development, such as those listed and in those situations where the result would not create a “sawtooth” pattern of building frontages at the sidewalk. When utilized, building setbacks must be designed as a seamless extension of the sidewalk:

- At sidewalk grade, designed as an extension of the sidewalk.
- Completely free of all columns or other building elements
- Be open at all times for pedestrian circulation

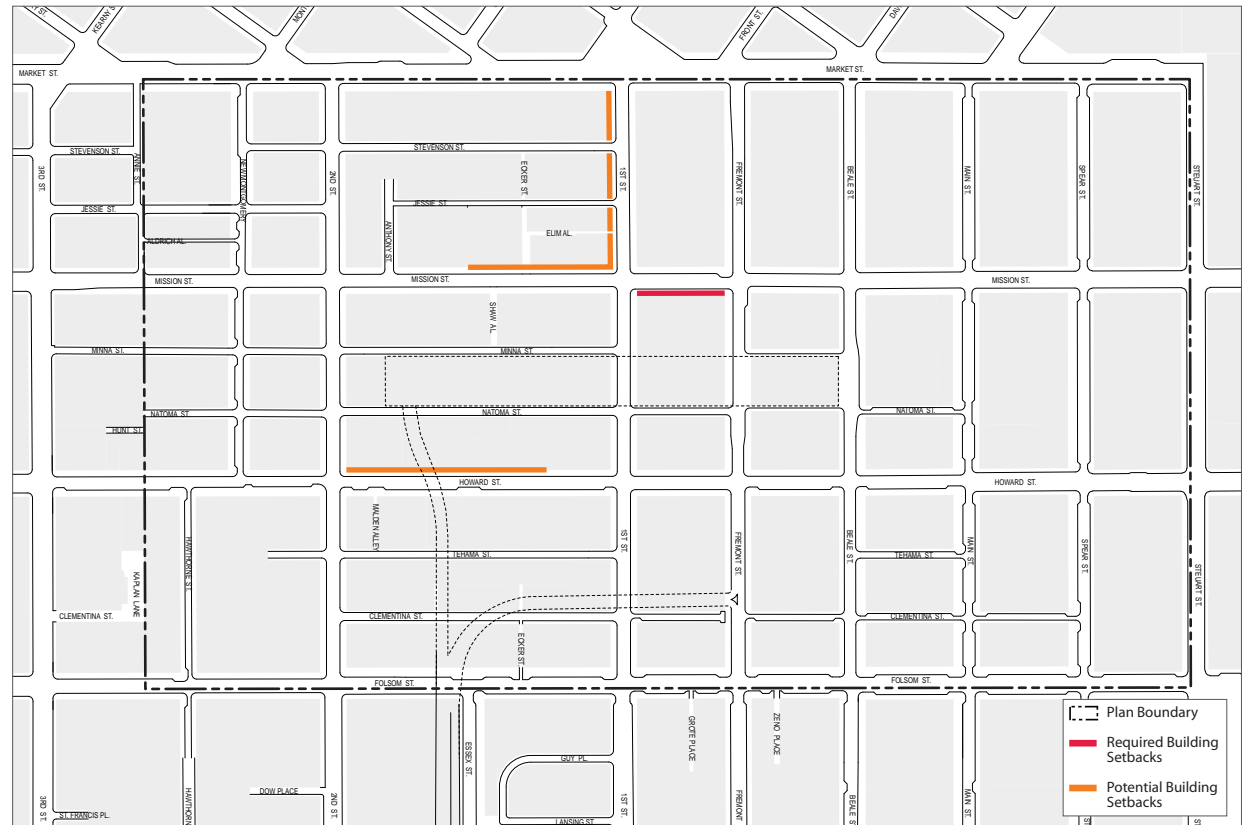
Policy 2.13
As appropriate on a case-by-case basis, require new buildings located at major street corners (outside of the Conservation District) in the Plan Area to modestly chamfer the corner of the building at the ground level (if the building is otherwise built out to the property line) in order to provide additional pedestrian space at busy corners.

Policy 2.14
Require a building setback of ten feet on the following frontage:

- South side of Mission Street between First and Fremont streets (Transit Tower)

Policy 2.15
Consider requiring a building setback of up to ten feet on the following frontages if development proceeds such that a desirable pattern of buildings would result:

- North side of Mission Street between First and Second streets
- North side of Howard Street between First and Second streets
- West side of First Street between Market and Mission streets



Required and potential building setbacks

PEDESTRIAN ZONE

Buildings in the Transit Center District should be designed at where they meet the ground, in such a way that reinforces the human scale. Ground floor uses and building features such as entries, building materials, canopies and awnings, display windows, and lighting, all contribute to conditions ideal for attracting pedestrian activity. To that end, the following policies apply to the pedestrian zone of all buildings within the District.

OBJECTIVE 2.12

ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT IS PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED, FOSTERING A VITAL AND ACTIVE STREET LIFE.

OBJECTIVE 2.13

ENACT URBAN DESIGN CONTROLS TO ENSURE THAT THE GROUND-LEVEL INTERFACE OF BUILDINGS IS ACTIVE AND ENGAGING FOR PEDESTRIANS, IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING ADEQUATE SUPPORTING RETAIL AND PUBLIC SERVICES FOR THE DISTRICT.

OBJECTIVE 2.14

ENCOURAGE TALL AND SPACIOUS GROUND FLOOR SPACES.

OBJECTIVE 2.15

ENCOURAGE ARTICULATION OF THE BUILDING FAÇADE TO HELP DEFINE THE PEDESTRIAN REALM.

OBJECTIVE 2.16

MINIMIZE AND PROHIBIT BLANK WALLS AND ACCESS TO OFF-STREET PARKING AND LOADING AT THE GROUND FLOOR ON PRIMARY STREETS TO HELP PRESERVE A SAFE AND ACTIVE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT.

Policy 2.16

Establish a pedestrian zone below a building height of 20 to 25 feet through the use of façade treatments, such as building projections, changes in materials, setbacks, or other such architectural articulation.

Combined with upper level setbacks to define the streetwall, emphasizing the ground floor of a building can help create a more interesting and comfortable streetscape and pedestrian environment.

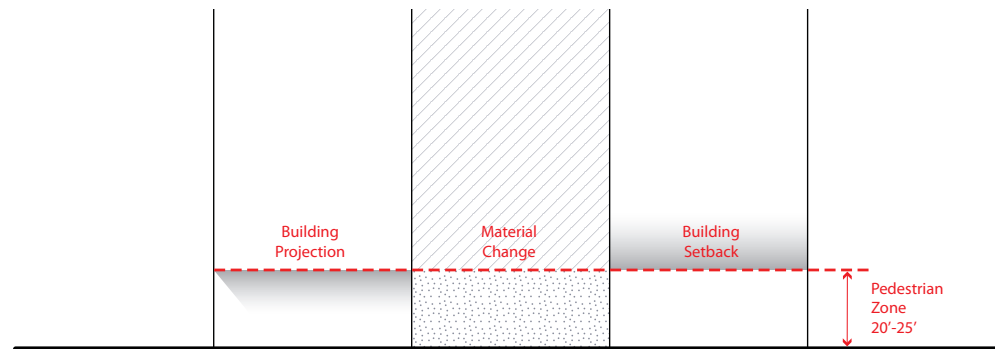
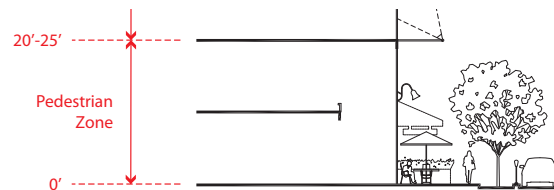
Policy 2.17

Require major entrances, corners of buildings, and street corners to be clearly articulated within the building's streetwall.

Policy 2.18

Allow overhead horizontal projections of a decorative character to be deeper than one foot at all levels of a building on major streets.

Section 136 of the Planning Code currently permits horizontal projections deeper than one foot at the roof-level only, which is not meaningful when the building roof level is hundreds of feet above street level. This Code section should be modified to permit such projections at lower levels for tall buildings (not lower than 20 feet above sidewalk grade) to help define both the streetwall and the pedestrian zone.



Building articulation, such as setbacks and material changes, can help define the pedestrian zone (see Policy 2.16).

Policy 2.19

Limit the street frontage of lobbies to 40 feet in width or 25 percent of the street frontage of the building, whichever is larger, and require the remaining frontage to be occupied with public-oriented uses, including commercial uses and public open space.

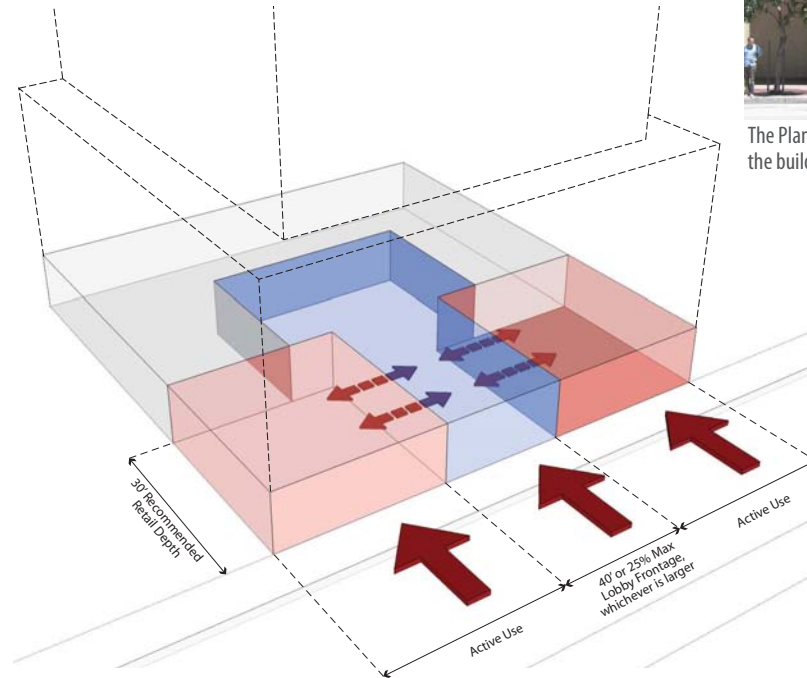
Expansive lobby frontages do not activate the street or contribute to an engaging pedestrian experience and can negatively dampen and discourage the life and character of the district. Frontages where lobbies are minimized in width (but prominent) at the street face can be lined with active spaces, such as commercial uses and public space, creating an engaging pedestrian experience. Other cities, such as New York City, have adopted almost identical controls out of similar concerns.

Policy 2.20

Discourage the use of arcades along street frontages, particularly in lieu of setting buildings back. If provided, arcades must meet the following design guidelines:

- **Arcade must be at least 20 feet in height as measured from sidewalk grade to bottom of finished ceiling.**
- **Arcade must feature a continuous clear width (as measured from inside-face of exterior column to closest point of ground floor facade) of not less than twice the finished width of the column, but not less than 8 feet.**
- **Columns must not be spaced closer than 4 times the finished width of the columns.**
- **Outdoor seating or displays may not reduce clear walking width in the arcade to less than 8 feet at any point.**

Arcades are generally not an appropriate design solution within the Transit Center District, as they can deaden the sidewalk environment



A building's lobby is limited to 40 feet in width or 25% of the building's street frontage, whichever is larger.



The Plan discourages expansive lobbies that take up the majority of the building's frontage and do little to activate the street.



A building that has most of its frontage dedicated to active uses, rather than its lobby, greatly adds to the pedestrian realm.



Arcades and inactive ground floor uses that require opaque window treatments do little to contribute to an active street life.

by separating a building's ground floor from the street by a wall of columns. Additionally, as development sites are generally not contiguous along an entire block and are interspersed with existing buildings, arcades remain as truncated non-continuous paths of travel and so are generally avoided by pedestrians whose destinations are other than the immediate building. In addition, San Francisco's cool, temperate climate often results in empty, little-used arcades in Downtown which, because they are carved out of the building face at the ground level, do not receive direct sunlight. In climates that are warmer or wetter than San Francisco's, arcades can be a more practical and valuable addition to the urban environment.

Policy 2.21

Require transparency of ground-level facades (containing non-residential uses) that face public spaces.

Guidelines for ground floors include:

- **At least sixty percent of the portion of the façade between 3 and 12 feet above grade shall be comprised of clear, non-reflective windows that allow views of indoor space.**
- **The use of louvers should be minimized. No mechanical louvers or grates for venting or air intake are permitted below 25 feet from grade, and no louvers may face a major street.**

Opaque window treatments and the placement of mechanical building features (even if camouflaged) on the façade within the pedestrian zone effectively act as blank walls that have a deadening presence along the street. By encouraging maximum ground floor transparency, this policy aims to increase the liveliness of the pedestrian realm.

Policy 2.22

Limit the width of the individual commercial frontages on 2nd Street to 75 feet to maintain a dense diversity of active uses.

Second Street is the retail center of the District, characterized by many small shops and services lining the sidewalks. This pattern enables people to find a wide variety of stores and services meeting their needs and to stroll along the sidewalks browsing for restaurants and services that fit their needs. This diversity of small uses ensures a lively and vibrant district. It is important to ensure the continuance of this pattern. Ground floor spaces must be articulated into storefronts with multiple entryways. Larger floor plate uses should be wrapped by other commercial spaces such that no more than 75 linear feet of one street frontage is occupied by a single commercial space. All façades should have multiple entrances and be highly transparent.

Policy 2.23

Eliminate the Floor Area Ratio penalty for tall floors.

Section 102.11 of the Planning Code currently requires creating and counting "phantom floors" in square footage calculations when average floor-to-floor height exceeds 15 feet. This discourages tall ground floor spaces that add variety and grandeur to a streetscape.

Policy 2.24

Prohibit access to off-street parking and loading on key street frontages. Whenever possible, all loading areas should be accessed from alleys.

Maintaining the continuity of the pedestrian environment is paramount in this busy district, as is ensuring efficient movement of transit. In order to promote active street frontages and prevent vehicular conflict with sidewalk activity and transit movement, access to off-street parking and loading should be prohibited or restricted on key streets. Please see Policy 3.8 in the Public Realm chapter for more detail.

BUILDING DESIGN: MATERIALS

The smart use of building materials can contribute greatly to the livability and sustainability of a place. The Downtown Plan addresses this notion by stressing the importance of using consistent building materials to create a visually interesting and harmonious building pattern. This Plan builds on this by encouraging the treatment of wall surfaces, such as with plants and light coloring, to further the District's urban design and sustainability goals.

OBJECTIVE 2.17

PROMOTE A HIGH LEVEL OF QUALITY OF DESIGN AND EXECUTION, AND ENHANCE THE DESIGN AND MATERIAL QUALITY OF THE NEIGHBORING ARCHITECTURE.

Policy 2.25

Assure that new buildings contribute to the visual unity of the city.

For the most part, buildings in San Francisco are light in tone and harmonize to form an elegant and unified cityscape. The overall effect, particularly under certain light conditions, is that of a white city laid over the hills, contrasted against the darker colors of the Bay and the vegetated open spaces and hilltops. To maintain continuity with this existing pattern, dark and disharmonious colors or building materials should be avoided. Large buildings should be light in color. Highly reflective and mirrored glass should never be used, and tinted colored glass, should be used sparingly and should not dominate large façades.

Policy 2.26

Maximize daylight on streets and open spaces and reduce heat-island effect, by using materials with high light reflectance, without producing glare.

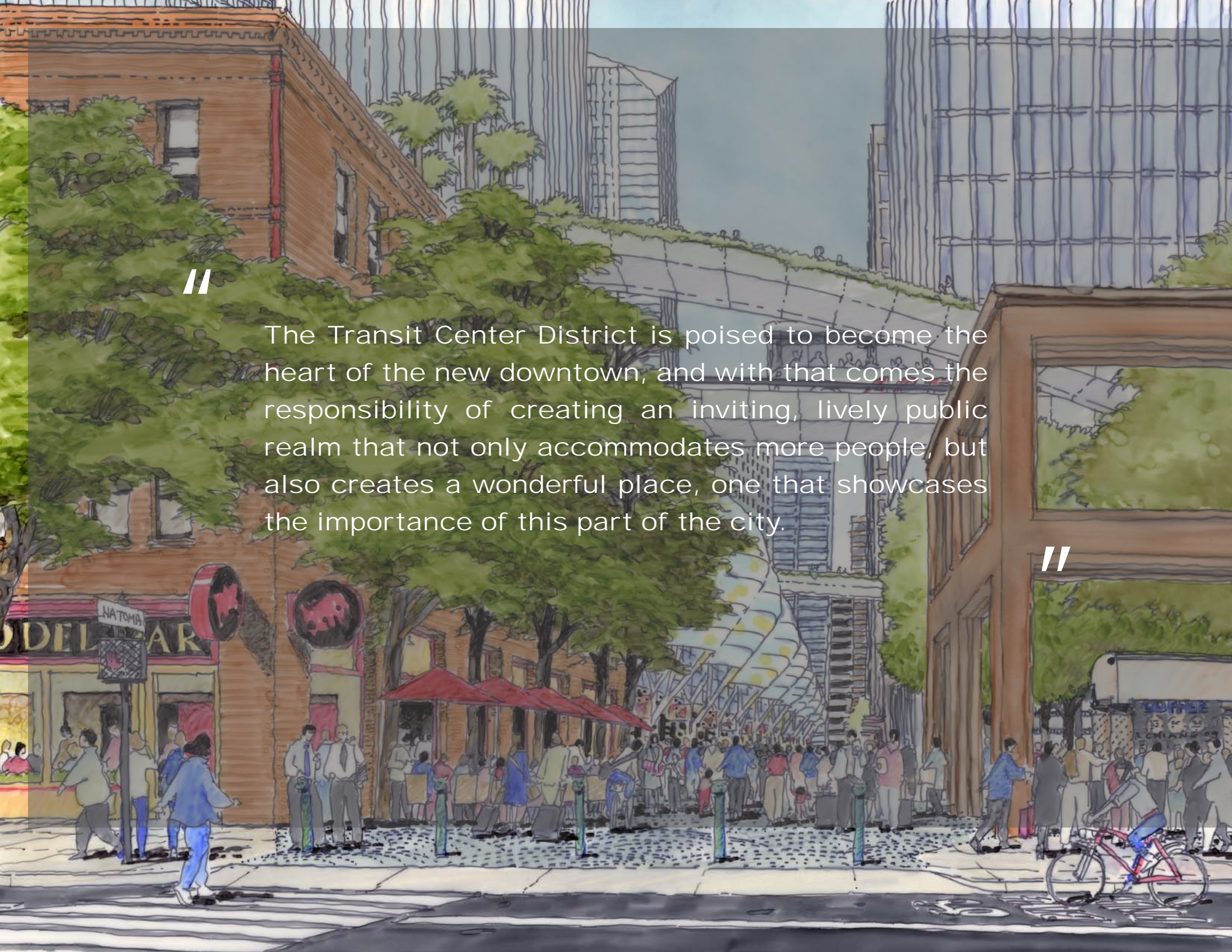
Policy 2.27

Encourage the use of green, or "living," walls as part of a building design in order to reduce solar heat gain as well as to add interest and lushness to the pedestrian realm.

In urban areas, such as downtown San Francisco, green walls offer an opportunity to add landscaping to a neighborhood where vertical space is more plentiful than horizontal space. Either free-standing or incorporated as part of a building, a green wall, also referred to as a living wall or bio-wall, can have a positive impact on both building design, as well as on the pedestrian realm. By having an insulating effect, green walls reduce overall building temperatures, helping to reduce energy consumption. In addition, green walls help with stormwater management, assist in greatly reducing heat island effect in urban environments, and reduce air pollution by acting as bio-filters.



Living walls offer an opportunity to reduce solar gain while adding landscaping to urban areas. *Patrick Blanc's innovative vertical gardens, Athenaeum hotel, London (top) and Musée du quai Branly, Paris (bottom).*



“

The Transit Center District is poised to become the heart of the new downtown, and with that comes the responsibility of creating an inviting, lively public realm that not only accommodates more people, but also creates a wonderful place, one that showcases the importance of this part of the city.

”

03

PUBLIC REALM

The public realm is the shared space of a city—its streets, alleys, sidewalks, parks, and plazas. It is through these spaces that we experience a city, whether it is walking to work, shopping, or having lunch in a sunny plaza. A high quality public realm is fundamental in our perception of what makes a place special. Sufficient sidewalk widths and open spaces, along with streetscape elements, such as lighting, street furniture, and plantings, all play a big role in the character, comfort, and identity of place.

A great public realm is an essential element of a great city. Recognizing this, cities around the world are reclaiming their streets as public space. New York City has been leading the way in the United States in transforming its major thoroughfares and intersections into pedestrian-oriented spaces by converting auto lanes and parking into gracious wide pedestrian promenades and plazas, even closing major streets, like Broadway in Times Square, to traffic. Chicago has made tremendous strides to humanize its downtown area by expanding sidewalks and creating generous landscaping and pedestrian amenities. Copenhagen has made continuous

incremental changes over the years, gradually removing almost all on-street parking in the central city and closing many streets to auto traffic. These street modifications have turned that city into one of the world's greatest pedestrian environments. Building on Copenhagen's already walkable street grid, city planners have created a network of wonderful spaces comprised of pedestrian-only and pedestrian-priority streets and public squares. London, as a result of the transformation introduced with its congestion charging program to reduce traffic in the central city, has also been reclaiming roadway space for social gathering spaces, pedestrian space, and other improvements like transit and bicycle facilities.

San Francisco's Transit Center District is poised to become the heart of the new downtown, and with that comes the responsibility of creating an inviting, lively public realm that not only accommodates more people, but also creates a wonderful place, one that showcases the importance of this part of the city. To reach this goal, the Plan Area, which today is rather bleak and dominated by heavy traffic, will need to be significantly transformed. Most of the streets are designed for



The existing street environment within the District is dominated by heavy traffic, and a lack of landscaping and pedestrian amenities. *Howard between 1st and 2nd streets (top) and Mission at Ecker (below).*

cars traveling to and from the Bay Bridge and regional highways, and as a result, the street environment is unattractive, with long blocks, few pedestrian amenities, and poor sidewalk conditions. In addition, open space in the area is comprised of small, dispersed, privately-managed spaces on individual sites. While there are a handful of major parks nearby, such as Yerba Buena Gardens and Rincon Park, the Plan area itself lacks any significant public open space.

Within the next 10 to 20 years, the Transit Center District will see exponential increases in pedestrian volumes, making it one of the busiest areas, if not the busiest, in downtown. Two separate factors will substantially contribute to the increased pedestrian volume—land use intensification and the Transbay Transit Center itself. Adding nine million square feet of building space to these concentrated blocks will result in a density greater than that of the Financial District to the north. Furthermore, the Transit Center will attract great volumes of train and bus users throughout the day, particularly during peak hours. The downtown extension of Caltrain and the future California High Speed Rail, each running multiple trains per hour in the peak, and with capacities approaching or exceeding 1,000 passengers per train, will add thousands of people to sidewalks, corners, and crosswalks, in a downtown neighborhood already experiencing new development and growth.

To fulfill the vision of an unsurpassed pedestrian-friendly place that supports the circulation and social needs of the District, the Plan proposes substantial changes in the design and allocation of the limited right-of-way space. These necessary changes include widening sidewalks (which can largely be achieved only by shifting allocation of roadway space from autos), adding mid-block crossings at key locations, and enhancing alleys as pedestrian spaces.

Augmenting the system of public ways, well-designed parks and plazas of sufficient size and distribution are essential to the function and livability of the downtown. These spaces provide room for socializing, eating lunch, taking quiet breaks from one’s day, providing facilities for recreational and cultural diversion, supporting the needs of local residents, and performing ecological functions. Above all, such spaces encourage locals and visitors alike to spend time downtown, activating the area throughout the day and year. As population and densities within the District increase, open space becomes an essential neighborhood amenity and a counterbalance in the built environment. The proposed 5.4-acre rooftop Transit Center Park will be a crucial component in meeting downtown’s open space needs. Additional open space amenities will be needed to augment this space and weave it into the neighborhood. To begin addressing this, the Plan proposes a new public plaza on the northeast corner of Howard and Second Streets. Besides providing additional street-level public space, the plaza will act as an important visual and physical connector to the Transit Center and the Transit Center Park.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Several past planning efforts have already laid the foundation for making many of the changes proposed in the Transit Center District Plan. These policy documents are summarized below.

THE DOWNTOWN STREETScape PLAN, 1995

The Downtown Streetscape Plan implements Objective 22 of the Downtown Area Plan, which calls for the creation of a Downtown Pedestrian Network. The Transit Center District falls within the South of Market subarea; the primary goals of the subarea are to improve pedestrian safety and create a more walkable pedestrian network. Mission Street is identified as a Special Street, becoming the focal point of the subarea, with transit and pedestrian amenities and activities.

The Downtown Streetscape Plan also emphasizes the importance of Second Street, as well as key alleyways (Minna, Natoma, and Ecker); these ideas are reaffirmed in this Plan. The Streetscape Plan calls for a series of garden walkways—green paths with trees, sitting areas, and lighting—along Minna Street (connecting the Transbay Terminal to the Yerba Buena Center), with another along the Terminal’s ramps between First and Second streets.

TRANSBAY REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA STREETScape AND OPEN SPACE CONCEPT PLAN, 2006

The Streetscape and Open Space Concept Plan was developed and adopted by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in November 2006, following adoption of the Transbay Redevelopment Plan. The Concept Plan lays out a comprehensive set of standards and specifications for new public streets, alleys, rights-of-way, sidewalks, parks, and other public improvements in the Redevelopment Area.

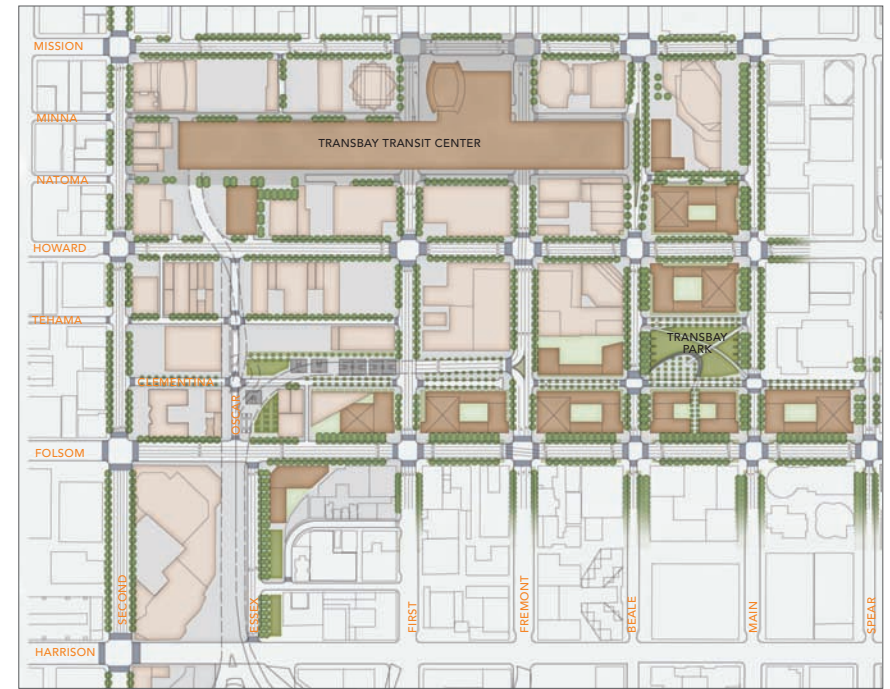
These concepts were also coordinated with the adopted street and circulation components of the Rincon Hill Plan on the south side of Folsom Street.

While fairly detailed, the Streetscape and Open Space Concept Plan calls for further analysis and consideration of many aspects of the streets, including sidewalk, lane, and directionality considerations on Folsom, Main, and other streets. Additionally, the focus of the Concept Plan is to improve the area south of Howard Street, immediately adjacent to the new residential blocks (i.e. Zone 1). The Concept Plan’s intention was not to substantially evaluate, at least in a robust way, the northern portions of the Redevelopment Plan area (i.e. Zone 2), particularly around the Transit Center, or to tackle the broader issues addressed by this Plan.

The Transit Center District Plan builds on the Transbay Redevelopment Plan’s Streetscape and Open Space Concept Plan. Because new information and new thinking have evolved over the past three years since the formation of the Concept Plan, some minor modifications are recommended as part of this Plan. All modifications, however, maintain the vision, intent, and primary recommendations of that document.

RINCON HILL STREETScape MASTER PLAN, DRAFT, FEBRUARY 2007

The Draft Rincon Hill Streetscape Master Plan implements the streetscape and circulation policies adopted in the Rincon Hill Area Plan. In general, this Streetscape Plan contains designs and streetscape standards similar to the Transbay Streetscape and Open Space Concept Plan, as these two plans were created together to form a seamless neighborhood on both sides of Folsom Street. The Transit Center District Plan extends many of the key design features of the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan throughout the District Plan Area. These include continuing the “Living Streets” character of Spear, Main, and Beale Streets to Market Street, as well as widening narrow sidewalks on several streets, particularly Fremont and First streets.



Transbay Streetscape and Open Space Illustrative Concept Plan (Source: Transbay Redevelopment Area Street & Open Space Concept Plan)



The Better Streets Plan recognizes the importance of the city's streets as not only a means of transportation, but as an important public space.

BETTER STREETS PLAN

The Draft Better Streets Plan has created a proposed set of standards, guidelines, and implementation strategies to govern how the City designs, builds, and maintains its pedestrian environment. The Plan seeks to balance the needs of all street users, with a particular focus on the pedestrian environment and how streets can be used as public space. The Plan reflects the philosophy that the pedestrian environment is about much more than just transportation (“getting from Point A to Point B”) and that streets serve a multitude of social, recreational, and ecological needs that must be considered when deciding on the most appropriate design.

The vision for the Draft Better Streets Plan is as follows:

- The Better Streets Plan will result in a street system designed to promote human needs for the use and enjoyment of public streets. It will prioritize the needs of walking, bicycling, transit, and the use of streets as public spaces for social interaction and community life, following San Francisco’s General Plan, Transit-First Policy, and Better Streets Policy.
- The Better Streets Plan will result in streets where people walk and spend time out of choice—not just necessity—because streets are memorable, engaging, safe, accessible, healthy, attractive, fun, and convenient.
- The Better Streets Plan will result in a green network that enhances the city’s long-term ecological functioning and people’s connection to the natural environment.
- Finally, the Better Streets Plan will result in improved street-based social opportunities, community life, access, and mobility for all San Franciscans, regardless of cultural identity, income group, neighborhood identity, or mobility level.

The Draft Better Streets Plan is currently undergoing environmental review and is tentatively scheduled for adoption in early 2010.

PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT AND CIRCULATION

Aside from outlining a public realm and circulation system to support the Plan's proposed intensified land use program, another key objective is to create a public realm that complements the major regional transportation infrastructure and service changes coming to the area. The District's centerpiece, the Transit Center, will be a symbol of a new neighborhood that prioritizes transit and pedestrians. Along with an increase in development, this world-class multi-modal station will generate an unprecedented amount of pedestrian activity in the Plan Area.

To create a public realm worthy of a great city, as well as accommodate the increased number of pedestrians and transit users, the balance of space must shift more toward people on the street. To do this, the Plan envisions widened sidewalks with significant amenities and enhanced landscaping, and an overall cohesive streetscape design for the District. Unavoidably, this step involves certain tradeoffs between pedestrian improvements and space for automobiles. Wider sidewalk widths can feasibly be provided only through expanding the sidewalk into the roadway, removing on-street parking or traffic lanes, and to a lesser extent by narrowing traffic lanes. Giving priority to pedestrians and the Transit Center District's place in the city means difficult choices in view of space limitations in the rights-of-way. The only other alternative is to require setbacks for all new buildings; however, such a policy would result in an entirely uneven and inconsistent sidewalk space since the relatively few likely building sites are dispersed and many buildings will remain in place. As a result, requiring building setbacks in this context is not a viable strategy for creating the consistent sidewalk widths and streetscape infrastructure envisioned as necessary for the District.

OBJECTIVE 3.1
MAKE WALKING A SAFE, PLEASANT, AND CONVENIENT MEANS OF MOVING ABOUT THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT.

OBJECTIVE 3.2
CREATE A HIGH-QUALITY PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT IN THE DISTRICT CONSISTENT WITH THE VISION FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF A WORLD-CLASS CITY.

OBJECTIVE 3.3
GRACIOUSLY ACCOMMODATE INCREASES IN PEDESTRIAN VOLUMES IN THE DISTRICT.

OBJECTIVE 3.4
EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF STREETS AND SIDEWALKS AS THE LARGEST COMPONENT OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE IN THE TRANSIT CENTER DISTRICT.

Policy 3.1
Create and implement a district streetscape plan to ensure consistent corridor-length streetscape treatments.

Policy 3.2
Widen sidewalks to improve the pedestrian environment by providing space for necessary infrastructure, amenities and streetscape improvements.

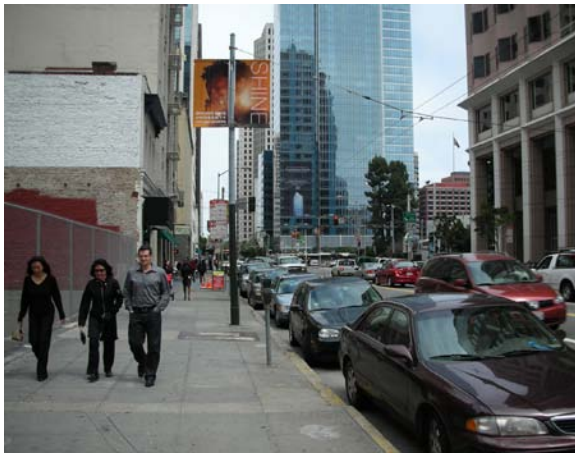
A consistent program of landscaping is essential in creating a well-appointed downtown area. The streets in the District, particularly key streets such as Mission Street, are generally barren of necessary streetscape infrastructure, including trees, landscaping, benches, pedestrian lighting, bicycle racks, waste receptacles, news racks, kiosks, vendors, and other elements. Additionally, transit shelters and stops create serious pinch points that congest sidewalks. A consistent curb zone of at least six feet in addition to space allocated



As part of a new initiative to increase the quality and amount of public space in New York City, city officials have introduced several new plazas. Along Broadway, traffic lanes have been replaced with a bike lane between the sidewalk and new plaza seating. (Source: www.livablestreets.com)



By prioritizing pedestrian movement, Copenhagen has become one of the world's greatest walkable cities. *Nyhavn Harbor, Copenhagen.*



Widened sidewalks, increased landscaping, and new mid-block crossings will help Mission Street become more pedestrian friendly, as shown in the illustration on the opposite page.

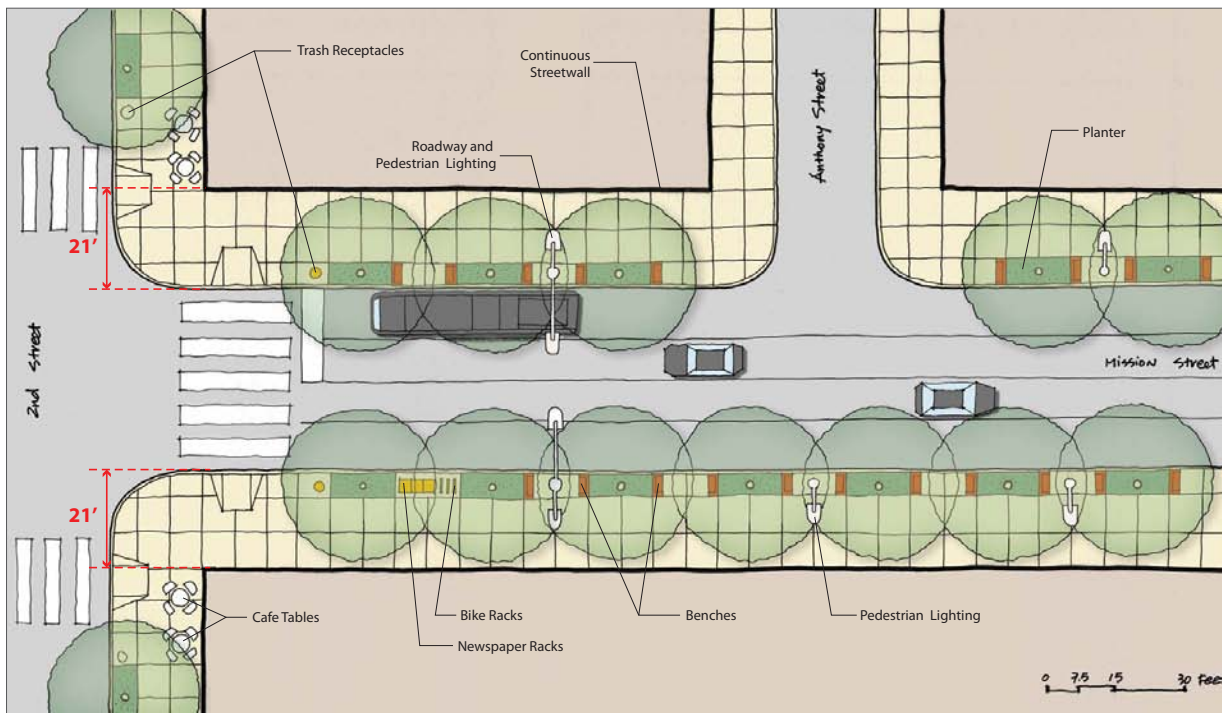
for circulation is necessary on all streets to accommodate these elements. Additional space is also necessary for improved curbside transit stops that meet minimum contemporary standards for passenger amenity but do not impinge on sidewalk circulation (as current bus shelters do). In addition to enhancing the quality of life for pedestrians, workers, residents, and visitors, green infrastructure creates necessary ecological features aimed at issues of stormwater flow and retention, air quality, urban heat islands, habitat, and other aspects.

Policy 3.3

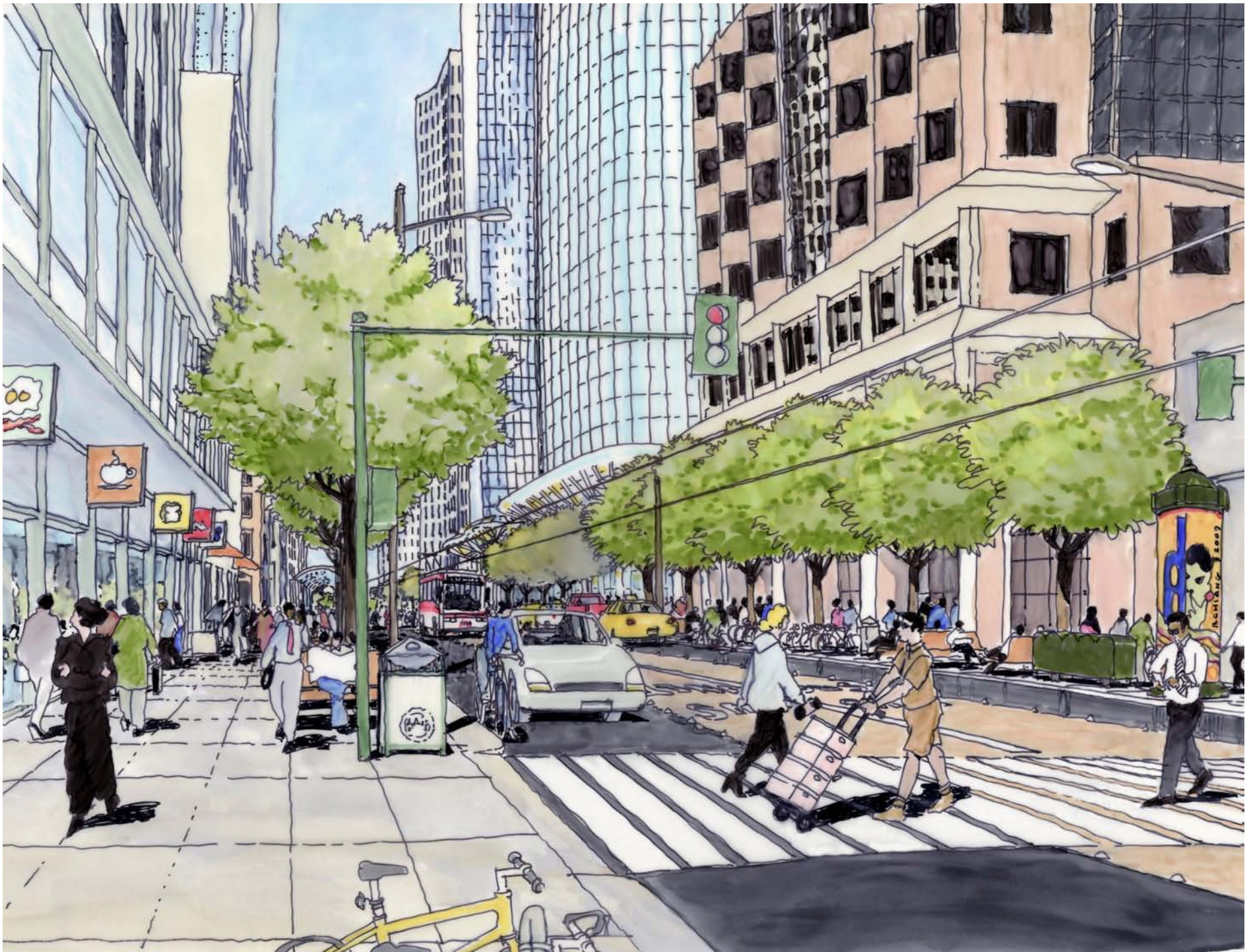
Facilitate pedestrian circulation by providing sidewalk widths that meet the needs of projected pedestrian volumes and provide a comfortable and safe walking environment.

Without substantial sidewalk widening throughout the district, pedestrian conditions would further degrade and result in uncomfortable or even unsafe conditions, particularly at street corners. Sidewalk and corner crowding can cause uncomfortable or unpleasant walking conditions: an inability to walk at a preferable speed to fit one’s needs (either leisurely or hurriedly), to walk abreast with companions, to stop and chat or look in shop windows, to avoid physical contact with other people, or to pass others. Added sidewalk widths throughout the District will accommodate anticipated pedestrian traffic, allow for a coordinated program of streetscape amenities and improvements, as well as provide areas for sidewalk cafes and retail displays. The minimum width necessary throughout the district to accommodate pedestrian circulation is 15 feet, exclusive of space for sidewalk amenities and infrastructure (e.g. transit shelters, trees, landscaping, benches, kiosks).

As described in preceding policies, sidewalks in the district need to be wide enough to allow for comfortable circulation and for streetscape infrastructure. The typical sidewalk in the district therefore should be at least 21 feet in width.



The minimum sidewalk width in the District should be no less than 21 feet to allow for street furniture, such as lighting, bus stops, and benches.



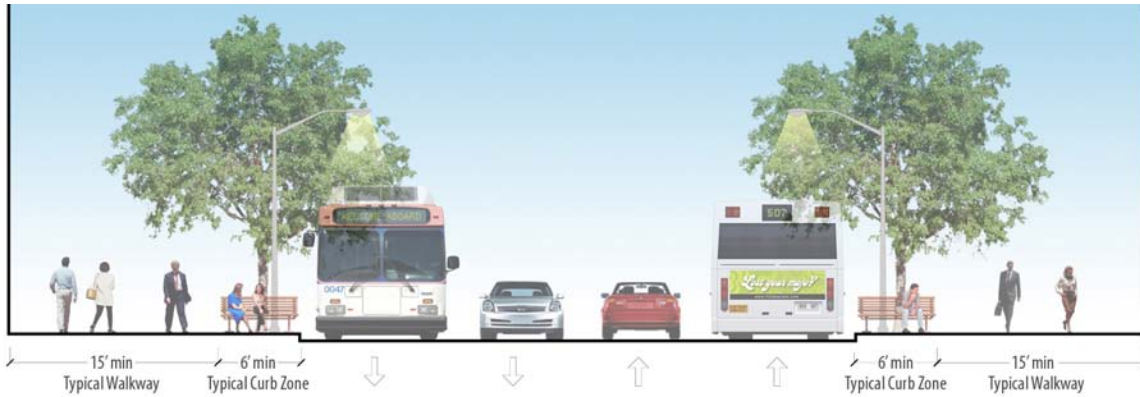
Many of the District's sidewalks are proposed to be widened in order to allow for increased pedestrian amenities, while creating a safe and comfortable walking environment. In addition, new signalized mid-block crossings will help shorten the District's long blocks. Rendering shows Mission between 1st and 2nd streets.



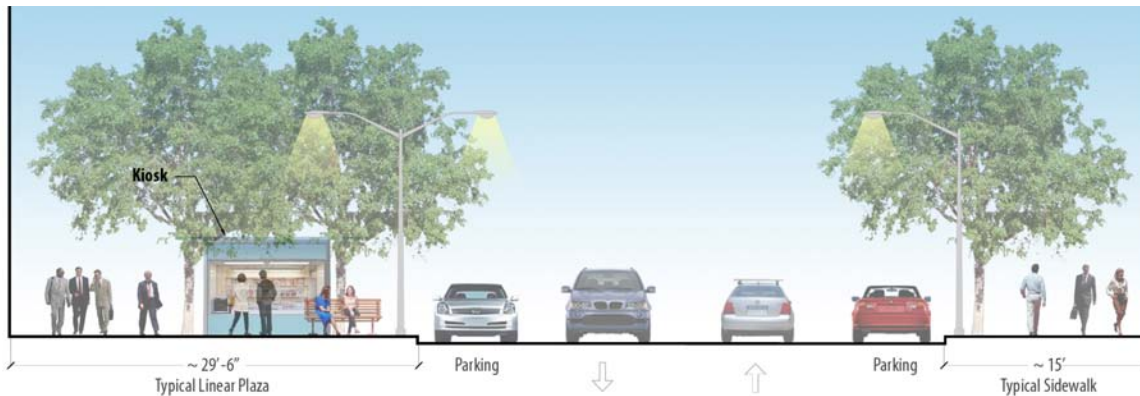
Sufficient sidewalk width is necessary to allow for pedestrian amenities, such as bus shelters, without impinging on circulation. *Michigan Avenue, Chicago.*



Wide sidewalks provide space for landscaping, bicycle parking, restaurant seating and other amenities. *Michigan Avenue, Chicago.*



Typical Street



Typical Living Street

Policy 3.4

Continue the Living Streets treatment to create linear plazas along Beale, Main, and Spear streets.

The “Living Streets” concept established in the Rincon Hill Plan and Transbay Redevelopment Plan should be extended into and through the Transit Center District area as originally envisioned in those plans. The design strategy of Living Streets reduces the number of traffic lanes, generally to two travel lanes plus parking, in order to significantly widen the pedestrian space on one side of the street (to approximately 30 feet in width), effectively creating a linear open space with significant amenities. As part of the Transit Center District Plan, this streetscape treatment on Beale, Main, and Spear Streets is extended north of Folsom to Market Street, creating significant green linkages from Market Street south past the Transbay Park in Zone 1 and through the new residential neighborhoods.

As the neighborhood character changes from Bryant Street to Market Streets, however, so shall the character of the Living Streets. South of Howard, pocket parks, seating areas, and community gardens in the linear open space complement adjacent residential uses. From Howard to Market Streets, the design emphasis of Beale, Main, and Spear Streets will focus more on hardscape elements and active uses (e.g. kiosks, bicycle sharing pods, café seating). By creating a linear open space stretching from Bryant Street to Market Street, the Living Streets weave two neighborhoods together, while creating an open space amenity in a very dense part of the city.

Policy 3.5

Create additional pedestrian capacity and shorten pedestrian crossing distances by narrowing roadways and creating corner curb bulb-outs.

Curb-to-curb distances on streets within the Transit Center District average between 50 and 60 feet, with multiple traffic lanes. For pedestrians, these wide streets can be unpleasant and potentially unsafe to cross. Widening sidewalks and removing travel or parking lanes on most of the District's streets would significantly shorten the distance pedestrians must cross. Where on-street parking would remain, the curb at intersections can be extended to further reduce crossing distances while providing more pedestrian queuing capacity and reducing vehicle turning speeds. On streets where sidewalks cannot be widened sufficiently, corner bulbouts can provide critical expansion of queuing capacity for pedestrians, as corners are the most congested and impacted pedestrian locations. Where there is on-street parking, corner sidewalk extensions also make pedestrians more visible to drivers. The design of bulb-outs must be consistent with the adopted standards in the Better Streets Plan.

Policy 3.6

Enhance pedestrian crossings with special treatments (e.g. paving, lighting, raised crossings) to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort, especially where bulb-outs cannot be installed.

In certain cases, specific bus movements make the installation of bulb-outs infeasible. In other cases, such as portions of First, Beale, and Main streets, on-street parking is subject to peak-hour parking restrictions in order to provide additional auto travel capacity. In these instances, special attention should be paid to the design of crosswalks to enhance their visibility and safety. Design strategies could include special paving treatments, highly visible crossing markings, flashing light fixtures, or illuminated signs.

Particularly at the ends of alleys where they meet major streets, raised crosswalks at sidewalk level should be created across the mouth of the alley. These features would emphasize to drivers that they are entering a special, slower zone in the alley and also heighten driver awareness of pedestrians at major streets as vehicles leave the alley.

Policy 3.7

Develop "quality of place" and "quality of service" indicators and benchmarks for the pedestrian realm in the district, and measure progress in achieving benchmarks on a regular basis.

Similar to the current practice of measuring the function of right-of-ways for vehicles, steps should be taken to measure the quality of streets as both walking corridors and social spaces for people. For pedestrians, a legitimate indicator system would go beyond the suitability of sidewalks, comfort, and safety to empirically measure the amount and quality of human and social life on the street. The only measurement currently used for pedestrians is a version of "Pedestrian Level of Service" that assesses crowding conditions. Yet it is only one measure of pedestrian quality. Factors that should be considered in assessing the quality of the public realm include characteristics of adjacent motor vehicle traffic, aesthetic quality of the environment, amount and prevalence of pedestrian amenities, continuity of active uses in adjacent buildings, distance between link choices, and a thorough accounting for the differing types of activities that people engage in (or don't engage in) on the street, such as chatting, sitting, window-shopping, reading, eating, and so forth. These measurements allow planners to identify problems, establish performance indicators, and highlight deficiencies, improvements, and results. The City needs to periodically monitor, qualitatively and quantitatively, the pedestrian environment to ensure that the policies and goals of the Plan are met.



Pedestrians often have to cross several lanes of traffic in the Plan Area. *First Street at Mission*



On streets where sidewalks cannot be widened, corner bulbouts can significantly reduce crossing distances.



Multiple curb cuts often cause conflicts between pedestrians and cars.
Howard at 3rd Street

OBJECTIVE 3.5
RESTRICT CURB CUTS ON KEY STREETS TO INCREASE
PEDESTRIAN COMFORT AND SAFETY, TO PROVIDE A
CONTINUOUS BUILDING EDGE OF GROUND FLOOR USES,
TO PROVIDE A CONTINUOUS SIDEWALK FOR STREETSCAPE
IMPROVEMENTS AND AMENITIES, AND TO ELIMINATE
CONFLICTS WITH TRANSIT.

Multiple curb cuts along a street can have several negative effects on the pedestrian experience. Not only do they create inactive sidewalks, they become a significant hazard for pedestrians, who

must maneuver around cross traffic. Curb cuts, moreover, remove valuable right-of-way space for trees, bicycle parking, and other pedestrian amenities. By limiting curb cuts on key streets, the Plan creates a safer and more attractive pedestrian environment for downtown users.

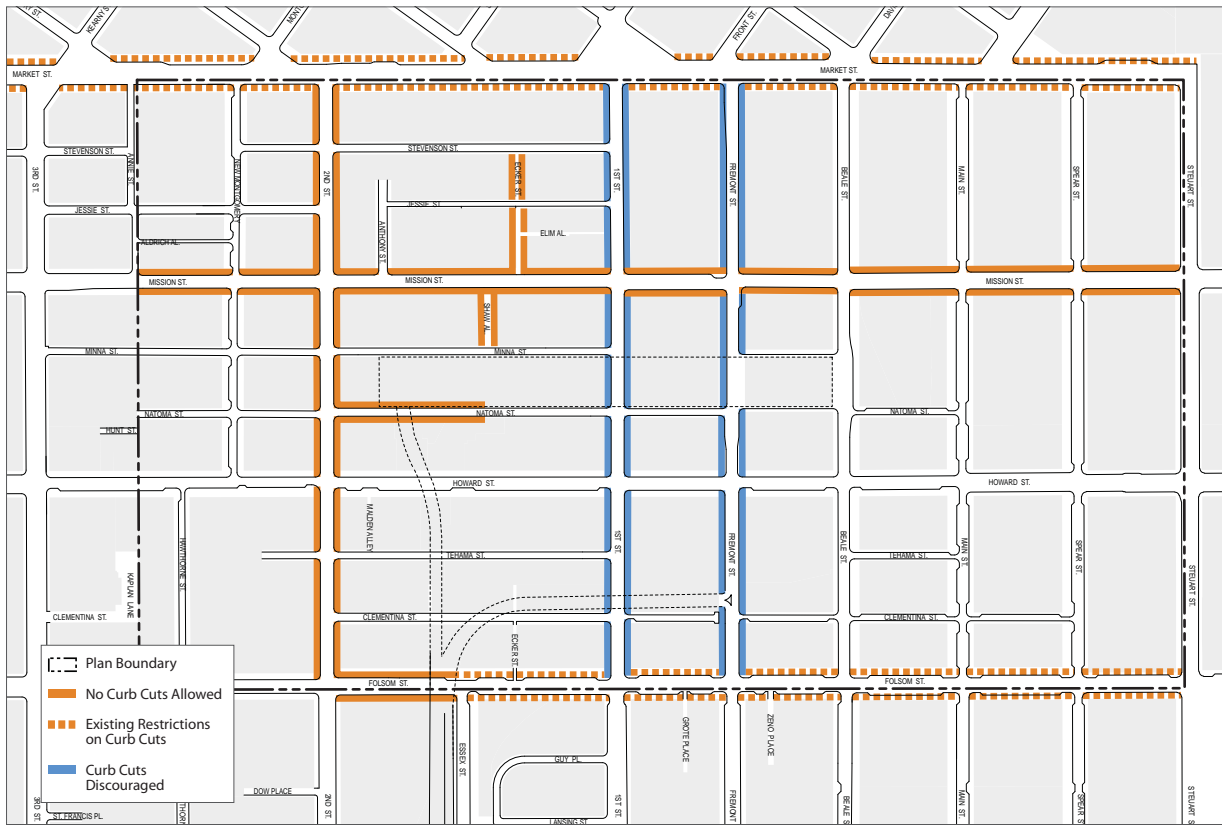
Policy 3.8

Designate Plan Area streets where no curb cuts are allowed or are discouraged. Where curb cuts are necessary, they should be limited in number and designed to avoid maneuvering on sidewalks or in street traffic. When crossing sidewalks, driveways should be only as wide as necessary to accomplish this function.

No curb cuts to access off-street parking and loading should be allowed on key streets designated as priority thoroughfares for pedestrians, transit and continuous ground-floor retail. These include Second and Mission streets, the main north-south and east-west connectors in the District, respectively. The Plan extends the Transbay Redevelopment Plan's and Rincon Hill's curb cut restrictions on Folsom from Essex to Second Street, further strengthening its key function as a neighborhood retail and pedestrian spine. New curb cuts are also restricted on several alleys—Ecker, Shaw, and Natoma—that currently function or are envisioned as active pedestrian passageways. While not prohibited, new curb cuts are strongly discouraged and would require discretionary approval (i.e. Conditional Use authorization) on First and Fremont Streets, particularly on blocks that have alley access.

Proposed Control:

Amend Section 155(r) to prohibit access to off-street parking and loading on Mission, Second, Ecker and portions of Folsom and Natoma Streets in the Plan area, and to permit such access on portions of First, Fremont, and Beale streets only with Conditional Use Authorization from the Planning Commission and approval by the SFMTA Board.



Proposed Curb Cut Restrictions

OBJECTIVE 3.6
ENHANCE THE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK WITH NEW LINKAGES TO PROVIDE DIRECT AND VARIED PATHWAYS, TO SHORTEN WALKING DISTANCES, AND TO RELIEVE CONGESTION AT MAJOR STREET CORNERS

OBJECTIVE 3.7
ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIANS ARRIVING AT OR LEAVING THE TRANSIT CENTER TO USE ALL ENTRANCES ALONG THE FULL LENGTH OF THE TRANSIT CENTER BY MAXIMIZING ACCESS VIA MID-BLOCK PASSAGEWAYS AND CROSSWALKS.

OBJECTIVE 3.8
ENSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT ENHANCES THE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK AND REDUCES THE SCALE OF LONG BLOCKS BY MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING PUBLIC ACCESS ALONG EXISTING ALLEYS AND CREATING NEW THROUGH-BLOCK PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS WHERE NONE EXIST.

OBJECTIVE 3.9
ENSURE THAT MID-BLOCK CROSSWALKS AND THROUGH-BLOCK PASSAGEWAYS ARE CONVENIENT, SAFE, AND INVITING.

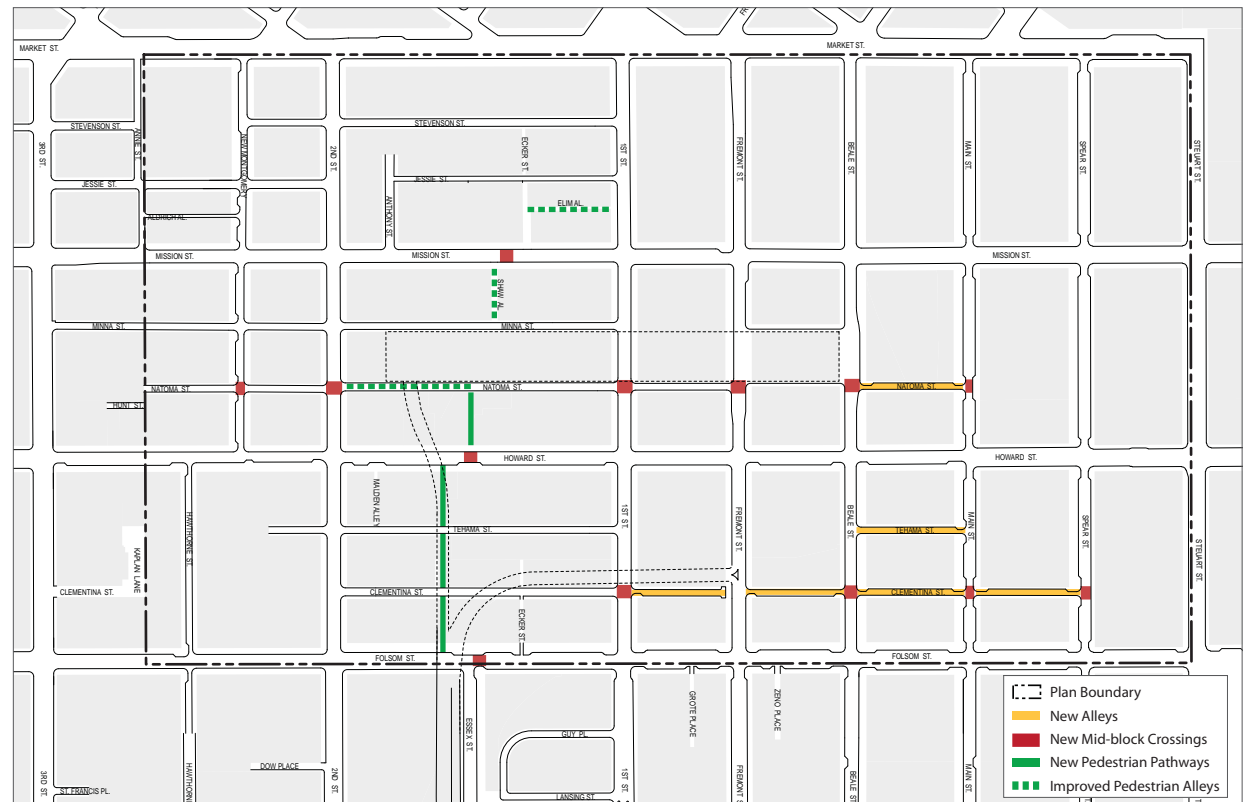
Many of the blocks in the Plan Area are very long, reducing the walkability of the district. The blocks between First and Second streets, in particular, are 850 feet long, necessitating a need for mid-block and through-block connections. The District’s alleyways are a character-defining element of the street fabric. They provide relief for pedestrian circulation, interest and diversity in the pedestrian network, and are critical for loading and parking access off of the main streets. Alleys additionally provide light and air in a dense district and create a more humane, fine scale of development. The Plan proposes to enhance this network by improving existing alleys, creating new mid-block pedestrian passages, as well as adding safe mid-block crossings. These improvements will help disperse



Proposed mid-block crossing on 2nd Street at Natoma



Proposed mid-block crossing on Mission Street near Ecker



Alleys and Mid-block Pathways



Mid-block pedestrian pathways can be designed as unique architectural features, while maintaining fluid public access. *BCE Place, Toronto (top, source: www.galinsky.com), Victoria Quarter, Leeds (bottom, source: flickr)*

pedestrians throughout the District, and allow access to the Transit Center at different points, thereby helping to relieve pedestrian congestion on key corners of major streets around the core of the district.

Policy 3.9

Create convenient pedestrian access by providing signalized mid-block crosswalks, especially on blocks longer than 300 feet.

New pedestrian mid-block crossings will be introduced to ease access between major activity centers, as well as to help shorten pedestrian walking distances within the District. North-south pedestrian movement should be enhanced through the creation of three new mid-block crossings between 1st and 2nd Streets—on Mission Street near Shaw Alley, on Howard Street at mid-block, and Folsom Street at Essex Street. Several new crossings should be created along Natoma Street—at New Montgomery, Second, First, Fremont, Beale, and Main Streets—to facilitate access to the Transit Center and to emphasize its importance as an east-west pedestrian corridor. Lastly, the Transbay Redevelopment Plan proposes extending Clementina Street east to Spear Street. Mid-block crossings should be created where Clementina Street crosses First, Beale, Main, and Spear Streets to facilitate pedestrian access to the Transbay Park and to emphasize this new corridor.

Policy 3.10

Prohibit the elimination of existing alleys within the District. Consider the benefits of shifting or re-configuring alley alignments if the proposal provides an equivalent or greater degree of public circulation.

For all of the reasons mentioned earlier, alleys are critical components of the pedestrian system and the character of the Plan area. Even the shortest and narrowest alleys, while seemingly insignificant

in the present, will become ever more necessary as the district density intensifies and the population increases. The City's General Plan (Urban Design Element Policies 2.8–2.10) acknowledges their importance and already generally prohibits the vacation of public rights-of-way except under unique and extraordinary circumstances in which the demonstrable public benefit of a proposed project requiring the vacation substantially outweighs the loss in public value (both current and potential) of maintaining the right-of-way in public ownership. However, based on other Plan policy and development goals for this District, it may be desirable to “shift” or build over certain narrow alleys, such as Elim Alley, for development purposes. In such cases, comparable publicly-accessible passageways must be created in order to preserve the District's pedestrian network. Elim Alley, for instance, is currently a dark and narrow passageway, flanked by five- and six-story buildings and narrowing to 6.5 feet in width (making it uniquely the narrowest public right-of-way in the City). Because future development on this block consistent with other Plan objectives may require parcel consolidation, an opportunity exists to improve the alley and make it more attractive.

Malden Alley, a narrow alley very close to the intersection of Second and Howard Streets, is a specific instance where eliminating an alley might be acceptable as a result of a major public project. In order to allow for a feasible development on adjacent parcels which will be partially encumbered by the underground rail extension, the vacation of Malden could be considered once the rail right-of-way is secured and a potential building is proposed. The Urban Form chapter has more discussion on this issue. In all of these cases, the General Plan explicitly requires the proposal of an actual development proposal for a public-right-of-way prior to consideration of vacation in order to weigh the specific merits of a particular development proposal against the loss of a public right-of-way.

Policy 3.11

Design new and improved through-block pedestrian passages to make them attractive and functional parts of the public pedestrian network.

All pedestrian/mid-block pathways must meet the following standards to ensure that pathways appear and function as attractive and active parts of the public pedestrian network:

- They must be at sidewalk grade.
- They need not be open to the sky, but must have clear space of at least 25 feet in height and 20 feet in width, be open to the public at all times (24 hours per day, 7 days per week), and be lined with lobbies or active uses.
- They must be open to the air at both ends, similar to an arcade or galleria, and must not require opening of doors to access.

Policy 3.12

Require a new public mid-block pedestrian pathway on Block 3721, connecting Howard and Natoma Streets between First and Second streets.

There are currently no north-south pedestrian connections from Howard to Natoma Streets on the long block between 1st and 2nd Streets. To facilitate pedestrian connections to the Transit Center from the south, a new public passageway is essential on Block 3721 as part of the development of the TJPA's "Parcel F." To minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts, this mid-block pathway should be located away from any major ramp or driveway accessing a vehicular facility below the Transit Center or off-street parking or loading facility for a building, but should be located close to the mid-block crosswalk planned for this block of Howard Street.

Policy 3.13

Close Shaw Alley permanently to vehicles and design it as a pedestrian-only open space for thru-connection to the Transit Center.

Shaw Alley is a key link in the pedestrian network feeding the Transit Center from Market Street because of its connection to Ecker Street to the north, as well as to a planned mid-block crossing on Mission Street. A major entrance to the Transit Center is planned at Shaw Alley, as well as a ground-level passage through the Transit Center. The approved project adjacent to Shaw at 535 Mission, as a condition of approval, is to improve the alley and seek at least temporary lunchtime vehicular street closure for use as a pedestrian passageway and café space. However, Shaw should be permanently closed to vehicles once the Transit Center is in operation.

Policy 3.14

Convert the western portion of Natoma Street between First and Second streets on the south side of the Transit Center to a primarily pedestrian-only street.

The western two-thirds of Natoma Street between First and Second streets will become a critical pedestrian space once the Transit Center is in operation. The ground floor of the Transit Center facing Natoma Street will feature continuous retail shops. The vision for Natoma Street is to create an active retail destination in the alley akin to Maiden Lane and other downtown destination alleys. This portion of Natoma Street will also be very heavily used by pedestrians to access the Transit Center as this will be the primary access point from the south and west; many people on foot are expected to come from the South of Market and Yerba Buena areas south of Howard Street and west of Second Street. It may be feasible and desirable to allow service vehicles and deliveries to access this portion of Natoma Street during the night and early morning hours before the peak transit and retail times. The eastern third of the street near First Street would remain open to vehicles as a two-way street to maintain access to parking and loading for existing buildings on the north side of Howard Street.



The Plan proposes to convert Shaw Alley into a pedestrian pathway.



Adjacent to the Transit Center, a portion of Natoma between 1st and 2nd streets will be a highly active pedestrian corridor.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Parks and plazas are vital to the area’s quality of life, helping to foster social interactions and providing places for rest and recharge. As the population and densities within the District increase, open space becomes an increasingly important neighborhood amenity. Not only is there a need to increase the amount of open space, but also the type of space. Different users—from office workers during lunch to special events to downtown residents walking with dogs or playing with their children—require unique open space facilities.

Currently, the primary open spaces in the area are dispersed, mostly small, publicly-accessible but privately-owned spaces constructed as part of buildings since 1985 as a result of zoning requirements adopted in the Downtown Plan. There are no moderate to large open spaces and none that are truly public and managed as public spaces. The nearest large-scale parks are several blocks to the east (Justin Herman Plaza and Rincon Park) and to the west (Yerba Buena Gardens).

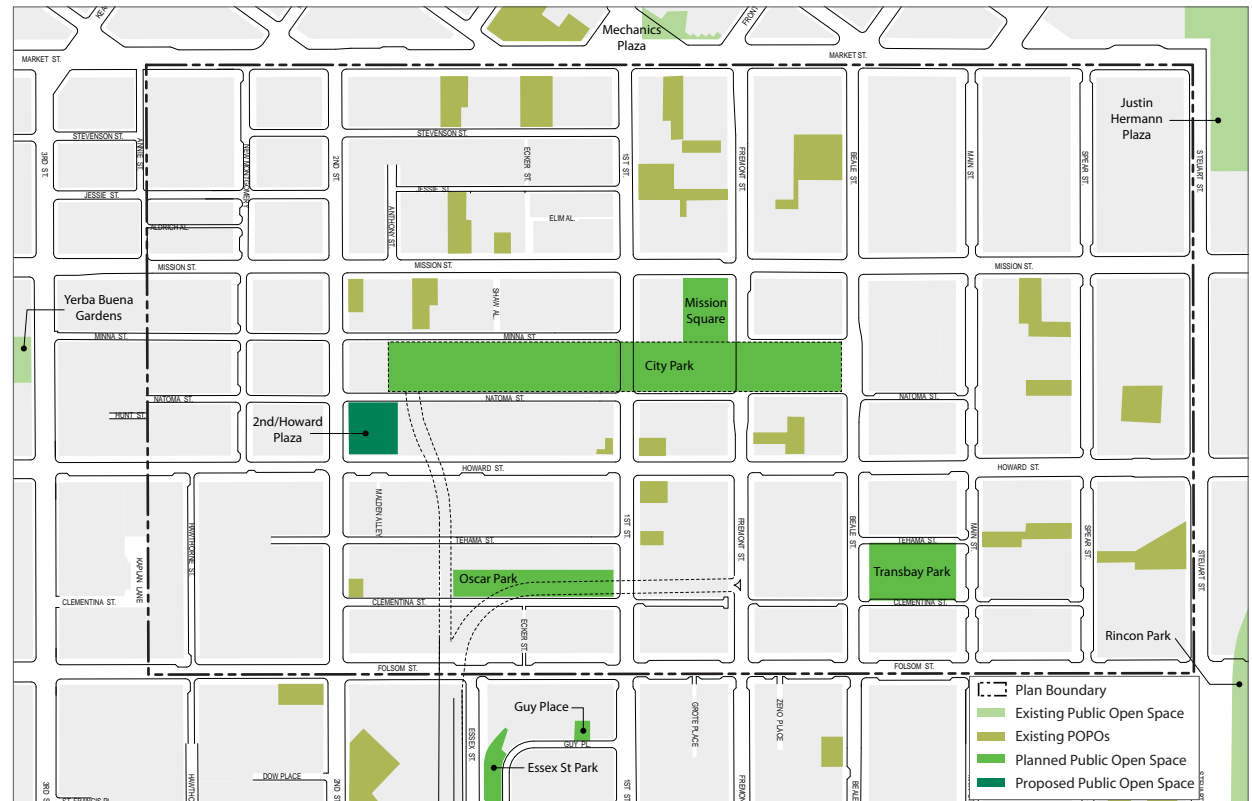
There are, however, a few new public open spaces of note currently planned within the Transit Center District as part of the Transit Center itself and as part of the redevelopment of public parcels in Zone 1 of the Transbay Redevelopment Area. At 5.4 acres, the park planned for the roof of the Transit Center, dubbed “City Park,” will be the District’s “Central Park.” As proposed, the park will be a self-sustaining ecosystem, allowing for a variety of both passive and active activities, educational experiences, special events, as well as habitat for local wildlife. Also part of the Transit Center development, Mission Square will serve as the grand entrance to the new station at the corner of Fremont and Mission Streets. The Square is designed to be a plaza underneath a tall, vaulted glass-and-steel canopy, that includes a funicular to lift visitors to the Transit Center Park above. On the block bounded Beale, Main, and new extensions of Tehama and Clementina Streets, the Redevelopment Agency will build a new



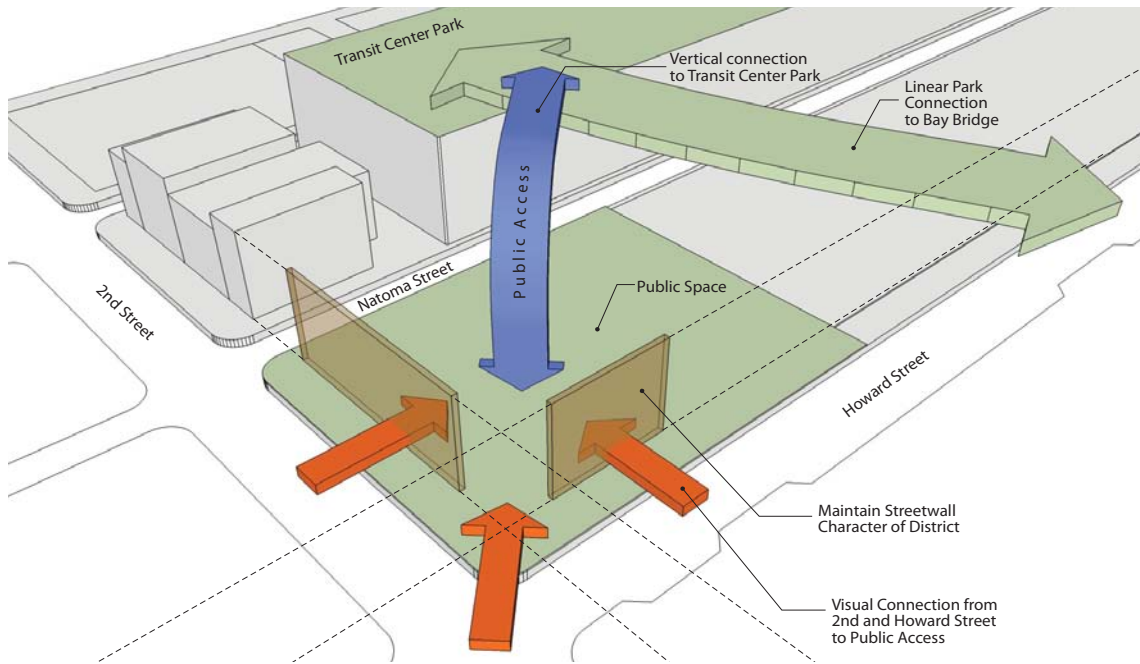
The Transit Center’s rooftop park is proposed to have space for a variety of activities, as well as provide habitat for local wildlife (Source: Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects)



Mission Square will become a grand entry plaza for the Transit Plaza (Source: Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects)



Open Space Network



The new public plaza on the corner of 2nd and Howard streets should incorporate architectural features that maintain a streetwall, as well as a vertical connection to the Transit Center Park.



MFO Park in Zurich, Switzerland is an example of an urban park that incorporates architectural elements similar to those desired at the 2nd and Howard street plaza
(Source: www.bauarchiv.de; www.stadt-zuerich.ch)



1.1-acre Transbay Park once the Transit Center is operational. There are other ideas under consideration that the areas below the bus ramps serving the Transbay Transit Center could be improved with recreational amenities, such as sport courts or dog runs, to serve the neighborhood.

To augment these spaces, this Plan proposes a new public plaza at the northeast corner of Howard and Second Streets. Measuring one half an acre, this plaza will connect the Transit Center Park with the public realm at street level and provide a southern gateway to the Transit Center.

OBJECTIVE 3.10

ENHANCE THE OPEN SPACE NETWORK IN THE AREA TO SERVE INCREASING NUMBERS OF WORKERS, RESIDENTS, AND VISITORS.

Policy 3.15

Create a new public plaza at the northeast corner of Second and Howard streets.

A number of parcels on the northeast corner of Second and Howard must be acquired by the TJPA to construct the Downtown Train Extension. These parcels have a severely limited development potential because the train tunnel's curvature and envelope below grade restricts the feasibility of construction above. As a result, the best possible use of the site is to create a new public space, designed to fit within the context of the historic district.

This open space has the capacity to be a major access point to the adjacent elevated Transit Center Park, as well as to provide a significant entry to the Transit Center itself. The central location of this space could accommodate a restaurant, retail or other uses, supported by both foot traffic from Second and Howard Streets, and transit and park users. Lastly, since train construction requires the

demolition of on-site historic buildings, portions of these buildings could be reused as part of the new plaza design.

The design of this space should incorporate the following features:

- Provide a direct visual and pedestrian connection through the site to the Transit Center building.
- Include a highly-visible, signature vertical connection to the Transit Center Park, possibly through a combination of elevators, escalators, ramps, or stairs.
- Maintain the streetwall of the Conservation District along Second and Howard streets through the use of vertical architectural features at the sidewalk edge.
- Incorporate retail, or other active uses to enliven the plaza.

**OBJECTIVE 3.11
ENHANCE ACCESS AND MAXIMIZE THE VISIBILITY OF THE TRANSIT CENTER’S FUTURE ROOFTOP PARK FROM THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS, ESPECIALLY NEIGHBORHOODS TO THE SOUTH.**

The Transit Center Park will be 70 feet above grade and will require several access points to maximize its visibility and active use. The Plan proposes a variety of means to connect to the park, including bridges from adjacent buildings. Other possible direct links to the park include a connection from the Howard and Second Plaza on the western end of the Transit Center, and a sky bridge from the eastern end.

**Policy 3.16
Encourage the rooftop Transit Center Park to remain open from sunrise to sunset, seven days a week.**

**Policy 3.17
Permit buildings to satisfy open space requirements through direct connections to the Transit Center Park.**

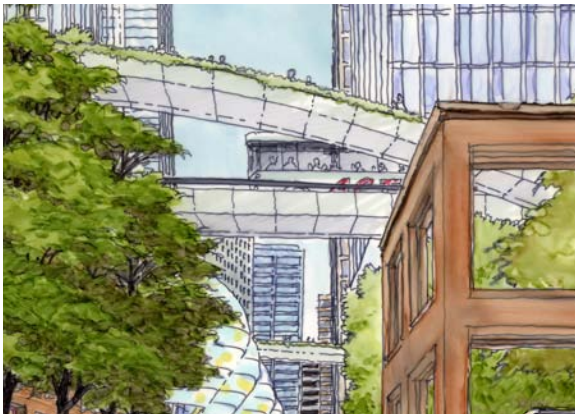
Existing General Plan policy is to significantly discourage or prohibit any building connections (i.e. footbridges) over rights-of-way. This strong policy exists in order to preserve view corridors down streets—both major and minor streets—as they are major public assets, wayfinding devices, and defining characteristics of San Francisco. Only under limited and unique circumstances of overriding public benefit, where impacts to views and the streets below are demonstrably minimal, are such bridges considered acceptable.

The alleys abutting the Transit Center—Minna and Natoma—generally do not continue eastward of 1st and Fremont Streets respectively, and bus ramps already cross Natoma between 1st and 2nd Streets. Connections to the Transit Center park from adjacent buildings fronting Minna and Natoma would therefore create minimal impact to view corridors and to the streets below, while providing significant public benefit in the form of public access and activation of the park.

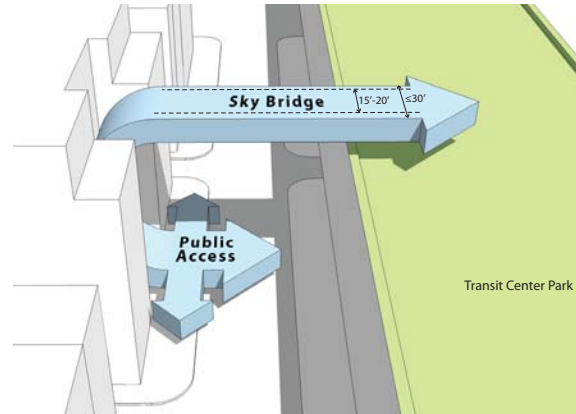
Buildings immediately along Minna and Natoma Streets opposite the Transit Center are encouraged to partially satisfy their Planning Code Section 138 publicly-accessible open space requirements by providing a direct pedestrian connection to the Transit Center Park. These connections, however, should be limited to select locations in order to minimize structures over alleyways. This Plan does not support such direct connections across the major streets in the District, as the value of direct connections to the Transit Center Park does not outweigh the value of protecting the visual axes of these streets.



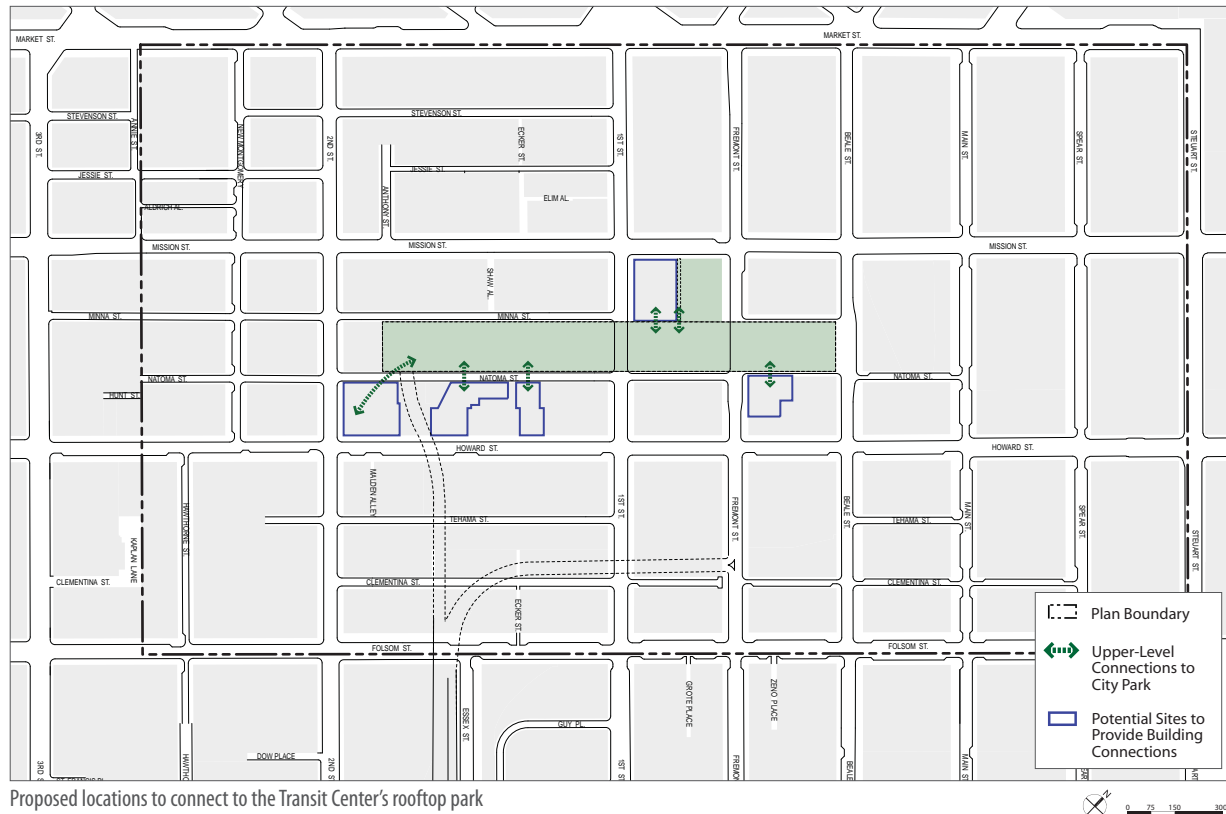
The Transit Center’s proposed rooftop park (Source: Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects)



Vertical connections to the Transit Center Park are desirable to increase the park's accessibility and visibility.



Sky bridges that connect to the Transit Center Park from neighboring buildings must be publicly accessible, and have a maximum width of 30 feet.



Proposed locations to connect to the Transit Center's rooftop park

To satisfy the intent of Section 138, these connections must meet minimum standards for public accessibility and functionality in the following manner:

- Be at the park level;
- Be publicly accessible and connected appropriately to vertical circulation;
- Minimize structure width if crossing over Natoma or Minna Streets;
- Meet other technical specifications at the direction of the TJPA;
- Be publicly accessible from sunrise to sunset, and at all times to residents if satisfying a residential open space requirement; and
- Provide clear signage from a public way, indicating public access to the Park.

Policy 3.18
Extend the Transit Center rooftop park along the new bus ramp, so that it connects to a future Bay Bridge bicycle and pedestrian pathway.

With a new Bay Bridge bicycle and pedestrian pathway currently underway to connect Oakland and Yerba Buena Island, the possibility of having a connection across the Bay to San Francisco is becoming closer to reality. If this is the case, the top deck of the Transit Center's new bus ramps could serve as a potential route for continuation of a Bay Bridge Multi-Use Path, terminating at the rooftop Transit Center Park. Besides increasing regional access to the Transit Center Park, it would provide an attractive "landmark" embarkation and arrival point in downtown for pedestrian trips on the Bay Bridge. (See also Moving About Policy 4.38)

PRIVATELY- OWNED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Section 138 of the Planning Code requires all new non-residential development projects to provide publicly-accessible space to meet growing needs for open space. Much of the existing open space now within the District is comprised of these privately-owned public open spaces, or “POPOS.” Many of these spaces are successful additions to the downtown open space network, but changing circumstances suggest that some changes to this approach in the Transit Center District would be beneficial:

- The proposed Plan makes possible very large and dense buildings, many on lots not much bigger than the footprints of the buildings themselves. It becomes physically impossible for some buildings to provide the Code required open space on-site.
- An over-production of plazas adjacent to every large building is beginning to erode the urban fabric. The public realm of the street, the “urban room,” should be framed by a consistent streetwall of buildings. It should occasionally be punctuated by open public spaces and public ways and not characterized by the pattern of alternating plazas and buildings.
- Many of these privately-owned public spaces face a difficult challenge to make them genuinely feel and function as “public,” thereby fulfilling the intent of the requirement. These spaces, many indoors or tucked behind, within, or on top of buildings, can be difficult to find, and their design and management limits their usefulness as true “public” spaces.

Modification to policies and regulations to offset these trends are outlined below. These policies and proposals are aimed at creating more flexibility in how private resources are used to meet open space requirements. It also seems clear that more attention to the

design and management of POPOS (i.e. more than just spaces for lunch) is warranted to evolve their usefulness and contribution to a growing and maturing downtown.

OBJECTIVE 3.12
ENSURE THAT PRIVATE OPEN SPACE BOTH ENHANCES THE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE NETWORK AND ACHIEVES THE PLAN’S OPEN SPACE GOALS.

OBJECTIVE 3.13
PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY AND ALTERNATIVES TO MEETING OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS THAT ACHIEVE THE DISTRICT’S OPEN SPACE VISION, AND THAT ENHANCE AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO PLANNED PUBLIC SPACE, PARTICULARLY THE TRANSIT CENTER PARK.

Policy 3.19
Permit payment of an in-lieu fee as an alternative to fulfilling Section 138 Open Space Requirements in C-3 Districts.

For the reasons discussed above, the Plan proposes to permit payment of an in-lieu fee to satisfy open space requirements on a case-by-case basis. These funds would be used for various public open space improvements, specifically the Second and Howard plaza and for additional public vertical connections to the Transit Center Park. The amount of the in-lieu fee will be commensurate with the equivalent costs of land, construction, and perpetual maintenance of such space in a downtown context. The in-lieu payment may be set in the range of \$500-750 per square foot of required open space.

Policy 3.20
Permit and encourage buildings to satisfy open space requirements through direct connections across Minna and Natoma Streets to the Transit Center Park.

Existing Open Space Requirements

The existing Planning Code requires on-site publicly-accessible open space for all non-residential uses.

| Use District | Ratio of Square Feet of Open Space to Gross Square Feet of Uses with Open Space Requirement |
|--------------|---|
| C-3-0 | 1:50 |
| C-3-0 (SD) | 1:50 |
| C-3-S | 1:50 |

Source: SF Planning Code, Section 138, Open Space Requirements In C-3 Districts



The Plan Area is home to several POPOS. Shown: 101 Second Street (top), 555 Mission Street (bottom)

OBJECTIVE 3.14

ENSURE THAT INDOOR OPEN SPACE FUNCTIONS AS PUBLIC SPACE INDEPENDENT OF THE BUILDING'S PRIMARY USES.

Policy 3.21

Design interior open spaces to have a distinct street presence separate from the building's primary building entrance and lobby functions.

Interior open spaces should adhere to the following design guidelines:

- The primary grade of the open space should not be above or below the sidewalk grade.
- The open space should be open to the general public between the hours of 6:00 am and 9:00 pm everyday. The open space area should have signs indicating that the public is welcome and the hours of closure, if applicable.
- One or more permanently enclosed retail spaces should adjoin and open directly onto the open space provided. Retail facilities should also be accessible from a public sidewalk or outdoor space not dependent on the accessibility of the interior public space. Carts, kiosks and movable retail businesses should be considered supplementary.
- The space should be accessible through permeable building openings without the need to open doors. Examples include sliding or folding panels that can be kept open.

OBJECTIVE 3.15

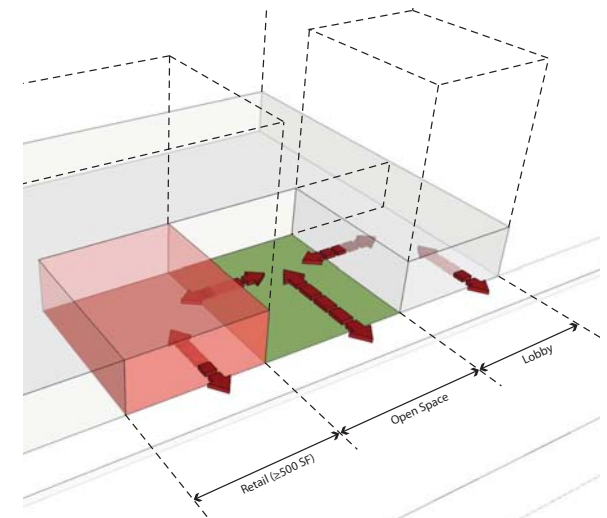
PROVIDE PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE AMENITIES IN THE DISTRICT'S TALLEST TOWERS.

Policy 3.22

The Transit Tower should have a facility of public accommodation at a level no lower than 650 feet above grade that provides the general public the opportunity for views of the cityscape and Bay.

The general public should have the ability to enjoy panoramic views from the tallest building in the city and region. With such an unparalleled and unique regional amenity, these towers enjoy a privilege that must be shared with the public, not just building tenants.

Such facilities may include observation decks, restaurants, bars, lobbies, or any space accessible to the general public, and which does not require an appointment or membership, but which may charge a nominal fee for entrance (to cover the costs of maintenance). Other tall buildings (greater than 600 feet high) are also encouraged to provide such amenities.



Private open spaces should have retail uses that have direct access to the open space.



Towers above 600 feet in height are encouraged to provide a publicly accessible viewing space.



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This Plan's vision to support...growth and regional infrastructure, and to transform the districts streets into world class spaces that support public life, necessitate aggressive improvements to the transportation system and rights-of-way that encourage travel by non-auto modes.

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