A comprehensive planning approach, that builds on previous efforts to revitalize the Transbay area, will create a livable, high-density residential neighborhood of the highest quality.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Redevelopment Agency (the Agency) and the City and County of San Francisco (the City) have created this Design for Development to accompany the Redevelopment Plan for the Transbay Redevelopment Project Area (the Project). The purpose of the Redevelopment Plan is to eliminate blighting influences in the Project Area. The Project will encourage new private development and will facilitate the design and construction of the new Transbay Terminal and extend the Peninsula Corridor commuter rail line to Downtown San Francisco (Caltrain Extension).

The Project is part of an inter-agency effort involving the City, the San Francisco Planning Department (the Planning Department), the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB), and the Agency to develop a new multi-modal transit Terminal on the site of the existing Transbay Terminal and to extend Caltrain to an underground terminus beneath the new Terminal. An entity called the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) and the JPB are taking the lead in planning, designing, and building the new Terminal and the Caltrain Extension, which will include the San Francisco station of the California High Speed Rail Project.

The Agency and the Planning Department are taking the lead in planning the future development in the Project Area surrounding the new Terminal. This development will contribute to the revitalization of the neighborhood and to the removal and reconstruction of the most significant blighting influence in the Project Area, the existing Transbay Terminal itself. Pursuant to an approved Cooperative Agreement with the California Transportation Authority (Caltrans), all land sale revenue and net tax increment generated by the development of
2.3 BACKGROUND

formerly state-owned parcels within the Project Area will be applied towards the costs associated with the construction and the design of the new Transbay Terminal and Caltrain Extension.

Future development within the Project Area has been the subject of a series of public workshops on the Transbay Design for Development. This extensive public process has enabled the Team to arrive at preferred frameworks for land use, urban form, streets, and public space within the Project Area.

PROJECT HISTORY

Since the 1930s the area has been dominated by regional transportation infrastructure associated with the Bay Bridge, such as the Terminal Separator Structure that had connected the Bridge to the Embarcadero Freeway, the Transbay Terminal, and the ramp structures that connect the Terminal to the Bridge. In 1989, however, the Loma Prieta earthquake caused extensive damage to this infrastructure and raised seismic concerns about the Terminal. As a result of quake-related damage, the Terminal Separator Structure and the Embarcadero Freeway were demolished, freeing up irregularly-shaped tracts of land which remain in public ownership today.

In 1994, the Board of Supervisors created the Transbay Terminal Redevelopment Survey Area (Survey Area). The Transbay Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed, and with community input, helped to create the 1996 Transbay 20/20 Concept Plan (20/20 Plan). This plan proposed locating a new Terminal between Main, Beale, Howard, and Folsom Streets and encouraged a mixed-use development within the surrounding area.

However, consensus eluded the Terminal location included in the 20/20 Plan, and a new process was undertaken, sponsored by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). That process resulted in the 2001 Transbay Terminal Improvement Plan (MTC Plan), which reached the following conclusions:

– The new Terminal would be located roughly on the existing Terminal site.
– The new Terminal would serve multiple regional and local bus lines, the terminus of the extension of Caltrain, and the possibility of a high-speed rail station.
– The new Terminal would be linked to the Bay Bridge via a single ramp.

The MTC Plan generated a broad consensus on the conceptual design of the new Terminal and Caltrain Extension. This new vision was incorporated into the Agency’s planning efforts and since then, the inter-agency effort has been proceeding within the framework outlined by the MTC Plan. In 2002, the City published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) covering the new Transbay Terminal, the Caltrain Extension, and a program level description for the redevelopment of the underutilized parcels in the Project Area.

The Project Area boundary and the new Terminal footprint are shown in the diagram above.

The Team has had the opportunity to understand the Transbay Redevelopment Area as it was envisioned over the last ten years and to weigh the opportunities and constraints that the district faces today by incorporating the analysis and development concepts from the previous consultant team, led by Simon Martin-Vegue Winkelstein Morris (SMVM), as well as from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the CAC. With significant changes in the economy and with
multiple municipal projects underway in and around the Redevelopment Area, it has been especially important to coordinate the context and framework analysis with the EIS/EIR, with the South of Market, Downtown and Rincon Hill Plans, and with economic and demographic projections.

The Transbay Design for Development process is occurring within the context of a series of planning efforts that will have a lasting impact on San Francisco. As discussed above, the Design for Development process is working in concert with the TJPA’s planning of the new Transbay Terminal and Caltrain Extension. The Agency is also working closely with the City to prepare the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Final Environmental Impact Report for the new Transbay Terminal and the Caltrain Extension.

PROJECT AREA BOUNDARY

The Project Area is roughly bounded by Mission Street on the north, Second Street on the west, Main Street on the east, and Folsom Street on the south. The area comprises approximately 40 acres between the Financial District, the Embarcadero, the Yerba Buena Center area, and Rincon Hill. The area currently includes a mix of light industrial, warehousing/distribution, commercial office uses and some residential buildings.

The Project Area includes a significant amount of publicly-owned land. After the completion of the new Terminal and Caltrain Extension and Caltrans’ work on the West Bay Approach Project, much of this property will be available for development. In addition, one property within the Project Area is currently owned by the Agency.

As shown on the preceding aerial photo, the public parcels comprise the majority of the buildable sites in the Project Area; approximately 10.4 acres. Additional land acquisition will likely increase the amount of publicly-owned land in the area. The plans and recommendations that follow assume the full development potential within the Project Area will be realized.

TERMINAL DESIGN

The new Transbay Terminal building will become the gateway through which thousands of Bay Area visitors and commuters enter the city. The Design for Development Plan and parcel development will be coordinated with the phasing and construction of the Terminal, scheduled to begin schematic design at the end of 2003, and its temporary replacement during the time of construction. Located on the existing site between Minna and Natoma Streets, the new Terminal will stretch from Beale Street to mid-block between First and Second Streets.

A new narrow, double-decker bus ramp will connect the Terminal to the Bay Bridge.

The current conceptual design for the Terminal proposes a welcoming, transparent building with multiple entrances onto the street to engage the pedestrian. The configuration of the Terminal and its relation to pedestrian and vehicular traffic are significant factors in determining the layout of the redevelopment of adjacent parcels and the development of design guidelines. Of equal importance is incorporating the Muni bus drop-off zone into the design of the Terminal Plaza at the main entrance of the Terminal (at Mission Street between Fremont and First Streets). The sidewalk and alley way treatment, as well as the pedestrian access around Muni’s boarding area (positioned at ground level between Fremont and Beale Streets), is addressed in the design guidelines. Refer to the Terminal Hub Chapter for a thorough review of the Design for Development’s Terminal treatment.

During construction, a temporary terminal, located on the block bordered by Howard, Folsom, Beale and Main Streets, will serve current users.

Estimated Transbay Terminal Schedule

2004: Terminal design and permitting begins
2008: Terminal and ramp construction begins
2007–2009: Construction of Caltrain Extension
2011: Move into new Terminal

Acreage Summary

| Total Acreage within Project Area Boundary: | 39.2 acres |
| Public Sites Available for Development: | 10.4 acres |

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The City’s Planning Department has launched a new planning effort for downtown San Francisco. One pillar of the San Francisco’s Citywide Action Plan, the Downtown Neighborhoods Initiative (DNI) will provide a comprehensive strategy for strengthening the vitality of the downtown by encouraging dramatic new housing production and creating balanced, livable neighborhoods in and around the downtown core. The overall goal for this initiative is to enable the creation of “whole neighborhoods,” akin to San Francisco’s most beloved neighborhoods, with a gracious public realm, transportation options, and a full range of community services. This effort seeks to provide an overall unifying framework for the ongoing and recent localized neighborhood planning efforts by the Planning Department, including Market/Octavia Plan as part of the Better Neighborhoods Program; South of Market (SoMa) and Showplace Square as part of the Eastern Neighborhoods rezoning; Rincon Hill rezoning; and by the Agency in Transbay, Rincon Point-South Beach, Mission Bay, Yerba Buena Center, the Sixth Street Corridor and Mid-Market. The DNI will weave these projects together, including the remainder of the C-3 core districts.

In total, areas within the DNI have the potential for over 40,000 new housing units. It is important that this housing be holistically accompanied by public and private improvements to create true neighborhoods. They should not become unsupported “warehouses for people” in areas previously occupied by commercial and industrial space and bereft of necessary residential amenities.

**DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE**

The Transbay Redevelopment Area is the gateway to the city from the East Bay, surrounded by the Downtown Financial District (C-3), Rincon Hill, South Beach, South Park, and Yerba Buena. Source: San Francisco Planning Department
To this end, the DNI will propose:

1. Systemic changes to the street, circulation, and transit systems, in order to create a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly area that supports the City’s Transit First policy and residential uses;

2. New open space opportunities and strategies for utilizing public rights-of-way as usable civic space in an area generally deficient in open space;

3. Urban form recommendations, including building height limits (based in part on citywide skyline and public view analysis and localized concerns for shadowing of streets and open spaces); bulk; tower separation (where towers are present); appropriate form for alleyways; and design guidelines that ensure a rich pedestrian realm and show sensitivity towards historic resources;

4. Siting and provision of necessary community facilities;

5. Planning Code and policy recommendations that ensure the creation of a diverse housing mix, in terms of affordability and unit size, in addition to a wide range of supporting uses;

6. Public benefit requirements of private development that contribute to and help implement public realm improvements and community facilities.

**Rincon Hill Neighborhood Plan**

Within the framework of the DNI, the Planning Department is proposing to rezone the Rincon Hill area, which is Transbay’s prominent neighbor to the southeast, and to update the Rincon Hill Area Plan of the General Plan, in order to include specific streetscape and open space proposals. This current planning effort is being coordinated with the Transbay Design for Development. Together, the two will establish a comprehensive plan that creates a dynamic, high-density downtown residential neighborhood, utilizing Folsom Boulevard as the seam and neighborhood commercial heart.

The planning controls being considered not only regulate new development; they will also increase private development to a level substantial enough to support an attractive and engaging public realm of streets and open spaces, and a variety of housing types that meets the needs of San Francisco’s diverse work force (including families with children). New development will provide easy access to shops and services and will enhance the area’s livability. The urban form envisioned for the Rincon Hill neighborhood is similar to that of the Transbay Area: buildings up to 85 feet in height, punctuated by slender, high-rise residential towers, spaced to allow sunlight to streets and to maintain an airy feeling to the skyline. The planning controls will carefully consider appropriate controls for towers, including separation, bulk, and overall density throughout the district. Individual entries with front stoops to lower-floor townhouse-style, residential units will line the north/south streets. Pedestrian-oriented, ground floor retail will be concentrated along Folsom Boulevard. On-site parking will be located completely below grade. Enhanced by this pattern of active residential entries with landscaped setbacks, Beale, Main, and Spear Streets will be improved as “living streets,” with reduced traffic lanes and significantly widened sidewalks, featuring usable open spaces. The draft planning controls for Rincon Hill are currently in public discussion, and the draft Environmental Impact Report is being completed.

The Agency is coordinating its efforts with those of the Planning Department, and Planning Department staff members are fully involved in the Transbay Design for Development process. Work on the Transbay Design for Development will inform future rezoning in the downtown area.