The blocks bordered by Main and Beale Streets have the opportunity to become a livable, high-density residential neighborhood comprised of a network of open space improvements, sensitively designed townhouses, and mid- to high-rise residential towers. Wide, usable sidewalks, neighborhood parks and public plazas will improve the quality of space for residents, while connecting the area to the downtown, the waterfront and the adjacent residential neighborhoods of Rincon Hill and South Beach.

**DISTRICT OVERVIEW**

The Main/Beale precinct is located just south of the southern edge of the downtown office core and just north of the Rincon Hill residential area. It has exceptional access to the future Transbay Terminal and is in close walking distance to the Financial District, Market Street, BART, numerous Muni lines (subway, streetcar, and bus), and the Embarcadero, making it potentially one of the city’s richest transit locations for housing.

The blocks bordered by Main, Beale, Natoma Streets and Folsom Boulevard will become the Transbay Area’s residential core. Across Folsom Boulevard, planning for Rincon Hill proposes to extend this residential district southward.

This precinct will develop its own neighborhood identity, characterized by townhouses with individual entries and front stoops at 20–25 foot increments along low-rise, mid-block buildings and incorporated into larger, high-rise development blocks, all lining significantly expanded sidewalk spaces. There is little existing accessible open space within the immediate area; thus, the new neighborhood will be centered on the new Transbay Square, the public park comprised of passive and casual active recreation space. This park will be accentuated with dramatic streetscape improvements featuring usable open space amenities along Main and Beale, and a pedestrian retail mews extending from the park to Folsom Boulevard.
This high-density residential district will be a hallmark of sustainability for urban development. All new residential buildings, from townhouses to towers, will make extensive use of “green” building technology, including natural lighting, energy and water efficient building systems, life-cycle building materials, green podium rooftops, and solar installations where feasible. The parks and streetscapes will incorporate permeable surfaces to filter rainwater, regionally appropriate tree selection, and other sustainable landscape materials.

The district circulation and walkability will be enhanced by three new right-of-way extensions. At the north end, Natoma Street will extend across Beale to become a pedestrian pathway at the transition point between office and residential development. South of Howard Street, two new narrow alleys will border the new park: one along the current alignment of Clementina, the other will be aligned with the existing pedestrian access way that connects Main Street to Spear Street. These alleyways will provide vehicular access to buildings with special pavement treatment and landscaping to create a safe, pedestrian-oriented realm between the townhouses and the park. Howard Street will also receive streetscape improvements and will become lined with walk-up residential units integrated into larger buildings.

### Streets and Open Space Improvements

Due to the low traffic volumes on Main and Beale Streets, this neighborhood will feature a public space resource that will be unique in San Francisco. Sidewalks on one side of each of these streets will be widened to 32 feet, creating sidewalks that actually function as open space in addition to pedestrian movement corridors. These wide sidewalks will create a new prototype for open space in San Francisco. Reserving eight to ten feet of width for pedestrian movement, the remaining 22 to 24 feet of width is gracious enough to accommodate usable open space amenities, creating a linear park along these streets and increasing the water-permeable open space. Such amenities and small-scale, active recreational uses could include tot lots, small gardens, bocce ball courts, life-size chess boards, and a myriad of other possibilities. In areas where these extra-wide sidewalks abut commercial uses, the open space portion could feature café seating, temporary merchant displays, or news kiosks. Much narrower than 32 feet, the sidewalk would not be able to comfortably fit such amenities along-side walking space.

![Image](https://example.com/image)
The linear park streetscapes along Main and Beale Streets bracket the new major community park at the center of this district. The new Transbay Square would be comparable in size to Sydney Walton Park in the Golden Gateway area. The park, intended to be a soft, landscaped space, would be framed on the north and south by residential townhouses opening directly onto the park frontage alleys. These park frontage alleys (as illustrated by the cross-section of the Clementina Street extension) will be narrow and designed as slow, pedestrian-oriented spaces. The rows of townhouses framing the park lanes, in addition to being very desirable park-fronting units, will give the park a neighborhood ambiance.

To provide for the wider sidewalks, one travel lane will be eliminated along portions of Beale Street (southbound), Main Street (northbound) and Spear Street (southbound). Parallel curb parking would be retained on both sides of these streets, with two travel lanes total. New bicycle routes will be established on Beale Street and Main Street, which will connect to the existing routes along the Embarcadero and within the Financial District. Traffic volumes and speeds will be low enough to allow these streets to be excellent bicycle routes without the need for striped bicycle lanes. New east-west alleyways will be established between Howard Street and Folsom Boulevard, which will enhance local vehicular circulation and pedestrian connections.
URBAN FORM

Like the blocks along Folsom Boulevard, each block will be comprised of a mixture of mid-block, low-rise buildings punctuated by mid-rise and high-rise buildings on the corners, all meeting the ground in the form of townhouse units. Landscaping and front stoops at the ground level will reinforce the human scale of the development, will soften the building edges, and will allow personalization and individuality to be expressed for each townhouse, making for an engaging pedestrian environment. Along Main, Beale, Tehama and Clementina Streets, the semi-private open spaces created by the stoops will face the linear parks or Transbay Square, creating a truly residential neighborhood with ample green space.

The height and width of the front stoop transition space for the ground floor units are very important in providing units with enough privacy and usability of the space, while creating an engaging interface with the sidewalk. Setbacks of different depths are appropriate in different street types and for different front entry arrangements. For example, a shallower, six foot setback along the less active alleys and streets like Tehama and Clementina is sufficient, whereas 10 feet is required along more active streets such as Main, Beale, and Howard Streets. A deeper (8–10 foot) setback enables the creation of a usable raised front porch in addition to a landscaped street edge, while a shallower (5–6 foot) setback is fine for conditions where only landscaping is desired. In all cases, the ground floor units must be raised at least three feet above the sidewalk level to keep windows above pedestrian eye level for privacy, but not much more than three feet to maintain a visual connection to and the private surveillance of the street.

The heights around Transbay Square, especially the 45-foot townhouse area to the immediate south, have been carefully tuned to allow maximum sunlight access to the open space. The corners on Beale Street along the west side of the square should be designed to accommodate retail tenants, such as restaurants and cafes, that will further the connection between the open space and community gathering spaces. The two tall residential towers between Tehama and Natoma Streets are proposed to be built fronting Main Street. While tower placement in this plan is prescriptive, in this case, an alternative tower siting fronting Beale Street, on the block between Howard and Natoma Streets, to offset the towers may be acceptable. The tower placement must meet the Design for Development performance standards, such as the maintenance of sunlight to public open space and permeable views from the Bay Bridge to downtown.
The three dimensional block studies above show how Transbay Square and the blocks to the north and south are little affected by shadow throughout the day during the spring Equinox (March 21st). Tower placement in the plan has been very deliberate to achieve this.

The five residential blocks along Folsom Boulevard and the two blocks between Main and Beale Streets are composed of mid-rise development along the perimeter of each block in addition to the high-rise towers. The courtyards in the center of each block and the surrounding building facades will receive sunlight during the mid-day hours between the spring and fall Equinox. Special attention was given to units with a single orientation inside double-loaded corridor buildings. The majority of these buildings will receive sunlight either during mid-morning or mid-afternoon between the spring and fall Equinox.
SUNLIGHT ACCESS TO PROPOSED TRANSBAY SQUARE

9 am
10 am
12 pm
2 pm
3 pm
4 pm
Looking east towards the park, the new extension of Clementina Street is lined with residential townhouses.