An integral element of the Redevelopment Plan for Transbay is recognizing the value of the current historic pattern surrounding Second Street and adjacent alleys, and responding to it with planning decisions that sustain its character.

**DISTRICT OVERVIEW**

The western portion of the Project Area is unique in that it contains a cluster of low- and mid-rise, early 20th-Century commercial and industrial buildings and a diverse set of land uses. This area is referred to as the Mixed-Use Historic District and is located south and west of the new Terminal. The Mixed-Use Historic District is overlapped by two officially-designated historic districts — the New Montgomery-Second Street Conservation District and the Second and Howard Streets Historic District (refer to the Historic Resources in Downtown Neighborhoods Diagram on page 3.6).

The Second Street corridor, from Market Street to San Francisco’s waterfront ballpark, possesses great potential as a historic, pedestrian-retail district, as it is lined with mostly mid-rise early 20th-Century commercial and industrial buildings with pedestrian-level openings and facade transparency. Within the Transbay area, Second Street is chiefly commercial and contains several unreinforced masonry buildings. Behind Second Street, to the east, are several narrow, smaller side streets, such as Minna, Natoma, and Clementina, that contain several low-rise, industrial and heavy-commercial buildings, interspersed amongst surface parking lots and a handful of residential structures. Howard and Mission Streets in this district lend to the historic air of Second Street and are lined with older commercial and industrial buildings of a higher height. Some buildings are in use, while others are vacant. A particular challenge as well as an opportunity in this district is the existing Terminal bus ramp structure that weaves through the central portion of most of the blocks from north to south. The reconstruction of this ramp will be designed in a manner that provides active open space and safe pedestrian linkages underneath, mid-block, from north to south.

Low-rise brick buildings representing early 20th-Century architecture line Second Street. The scale and character of these buildings should be upheld with new infill development.
Mixed-Use Historic District
Requirements

- Continue the pedestrian lane network.
- Provide programmed open space (especially under the ramps).
- Require infill development comparable in scale and grain to existing architecture to maintain the character of the district.
- Rehabilitate, seismically retrofit, and improve the environmental performance of historic buildings.
- Encourage “eyes on the street” by renovating existing buildings to face open space and alleys.
- Require all development to incorporate pedestrian paths into building design.

STREETS AND OPEN SPACE
IMPROVEMENTS

With its mix of residential, office and retail uses, this district has the potential to be a unique neighborhood with similarities to South Park and the Hayes Valley neighborhoods.

This district will have a major open space component consisting of Oscar Park and adjoining recreation facilities. The elevated Terminal approach ramps create a unique situation that lends itself to these uses. The plan details (right and on page 8.7) illustrate the approach to configuring these recreation amenities.
Oscar Park will be located in the widest portion of available property, primarily between Clementina and Tehama Streets, but also extending somewhat north and south along the new Oscar Alley. While the areas directly under the access ramps will be largely in shadow, the larger park area will enjoy considerable sun exposure. Extensions of the park east to First Street, north to Howard Street, and south to Folsom Boulevard will provide enhanced pedestrian corridors that will facilitate pedestrian movements to and from the Terminal and Rincon Hill.

The cross-section at Oscar Alley shows the recreation uses, the narrow vehicular right-of-way, and improved sidewalks as they would fit under the elevated ramps. The ramp configuration, yet to be designed, will need to minimize the impact of support columns and roadway width, so as to create as sunny a zone at ground level as possible. Active recreation uses are ideal under these ramps, so they do not continue to be unused, unsafe zones, dividing the district.
Essex Street is the western boundary of Rincon Hill, cut into the hill and lying at the base of a steep slope. This street is quite wide, and southbound lanes feed the Bay Bridge. The cross-section of Essex Street shows the revised configuration of what is now a vehicle-dominated street. Lying to the west of a residential block, this street will be improved by widening the east sidewalk. This is made possible by converting one of the two southbound travel lanes to a tow-away/peak hour travel lane.
Additional active recreation facilities will be located to the east, across First Street along the Clementina alignment. Here the elevated ramps begin their descent, touching down at Fremont Street. On the eastern portion of the block, adequate height will allow a half-basketball court and smaller courts for such uses as handball. In addition, a skate park, dog run or other recreational sports can utilize the otherwise leftover space under and adjacent to the ramps. As the ramps descend, headroom is lost, but pedestrian connections continue to the east, out to Fremont Street.
PLAN DETAIL OF AREA AROUND FREMONT STREET RAMP
The character of the Mixed-use Historic District is distinctly different from the rest of the Transbay area. Rather than the wide, long blocks that characterize the majority of Transbay, the blocks in the Mixed-Use Historic District are broken up with pedestrian-oriented streets, adding to the quality and character of the district.

Small, public lanes like this one (shown gated) will be opened to the public and will be extended to link new and existing businesses with more "eyes on the street."

Existing small-scale buildings are met in scale and proportion by the new office building on the left, as it steps down to a comparable height.

New off-ramps will still pass over the district, but the space below them will be programmed as open space with direct access from the adjacent buildings.

Urban Form

The character of the Mixed-use Historic District is distinctly different from the rest of the Transbay area. Rather than the wide, long blocks that characterize the majority of Transbay, the blocks in the Mixed-Use Historic District are broken up with pedestrian-scale streets, such as Minna and Natoma. Fine grain, mixed-use residential, industrial, and office space comprise the District in a pattern of small parcels. In order to respond appropriately to the District's existing nature, all new development will be of a comparable scale. In addition, new development will respond to the narrow, low-rise buildings and to the architectural details that characterize the existing buildings.
Rather than developing one large building with various, individual historic-like façades (as is commonly done to achieve the historic “look”), instead the Design for Development Team recommends adhering to the original historic parcelization. As a result, the character and diversity of the District will be maintained, and the possibility for small business development will be more feasible.

When existing buildings in the District are renovated for seismic or aesthetic purposes, the buildings should be designed to open onto the new public open spaces and pedestrian lanes. Thereby, they can take advantage of public improvements and can activate the space adjacent to and under the off-ramps. These spaces are currently considered no-man’s land and undesirable for active community use. New open spaces with programmed active uses will take the place of derelict hardscapes below the ramps. In addition to programmed open space, the community has suggested some possible development uses under these ramps, including art studios and a community center.

Similarly, infill development should be designed with building façades that complement the adjacent open spaces and alleys and create active streetscapes. Based on the historic alleyway network, the new alleys will provide pedestrian, and in some cases, vehicular access to reinforce the walkability and human scale of the city.
A network of parks and mid-block pedestrian passages will make the Mixed-Use Historic District livable and lively.