PART II: DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

THE PLAN
In order to meet San Francisco’s current and future housing needs, remaining undeveloped land in the city must be used wisely. The Transbay Area is the perfect place to achieve high-density development because it is immediately adjacent to downtown and numerous residential neighborhoods. Dense residential development in this area can take advantage of the proximity of the Transbay Terminal, a transit hub for the region. The Design for Development proposes 3,200 housing units mixed with retail and commercial development designed to create an attractive, livable urban community. The easy access to public transit, walkable streets, bicycle facilities, and new open space support the district’s environmental sustainability. With attention to green building and landscape designs, the Transbay Plan can serve as a model of best practices for other new developments in the region. The following requirements for the future downtown neighborhood were incorporated:

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- Create a mixture of housing types, sizes and affordability to attract a diverse residential population, with a mix of towers, mid-rise, and low-rise units of various sizes.
- Develop high-density housing to capitalize on the transit-oriented opportunities within the project area, and provide more housing close to downtown San Francisco.
- Support residents’ choice to purchase or rent housing without parking, reducing their overall housing cost.
- Focus residential development along Folsom, Beale and Main Streets, and design these streets as mixed-use residential corridors.
- Maximize housing development on publicly-owned properties in order to provide financial support to the new Transbay Terminal and Caltrain Extension according to the Development Controls and Design Guidelines.
- Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures within the area, where feasible.
- Encourage energy-efficient and environmentally sound practices with regard to water, indoor air quality and materials procurement.

NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES
- Promote neighborhood serving retail establishments to provide residents and workers with immediate walking access to daily shopping needs.
- Encourage adequate public community services, such as childcare, schools, and libraries.
- Assist in funding streetscape and open space improvements and maintenance.
- Give preference for smaller retail tenants over one large tenant per block.
- Encourage the creation of ground-floor flex space in new developments that can be used as offices and later be converted to retail uses when market demand is sufficient.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT
- Concentrate new office and hotel development on parcels adjacent to the new Transbay Terminal and along Mission Street.
- Create well-designed parks and sunny plazas for office workers and residents.
- Encourage retail and restaurant establishments to serve employees, residents, and visitors.
- Allow a mix of uses on the upper floors of new commercial buildings.
BASE TREATMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Activate the street edge with attractive, engaging entry treatment and uses.
- Form streets, alleys or mews at the human scale.
- Vary low-rise building heights and architectural character to encourage pedestrian interest.
- Provide a rhythm of entries to individual units allowing a “personalization” of the ground floor environment.

Residential Treatment
- Create individual entries at street.
- Soften building edge with landscaping.
- Provide privacy to ground floor residents.
- Ensure sunlight access to units and internal courtyards.
- Allow personalization of entry gardens and stoops.

Retail Treatment
- Provide engaging, identifiable, closely-spaced entries.
- Encourage retail and restaurants to open onto sidewalks.
- Design flexible ground level space.
SKYLINE TREATMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Require tall, slender towers to be widely-spaced to enhance public views and the skyline.
- Enhance the skyline with varying building heights.
- Step building heights down toward the waterfront and away from the downtown core to the south and west.
- Concentrate tallest buildings adjacent to the high-density Financial District and the Terminal.
- Enforce guidelines that ensure visual interests and slender dimensions.
THE CONSTRAINED PLAN

In addition to the Design for Development Plan, a “Constrained Plan” was prepared to reflect possible, yet highly undesirable external factors that could influence development. These factors include the Caltrans proposal for a curved freeway off-ramp at the corner of Folsom and Fremont Streets (the “Folsom leg”); a proposed elevated mid-block loop at the intersection of the new Terminal ramp and the Folsom Street off-ramp; and the construction of a livework project on a key acquisition site (the northwest parcel on the block between First Street and Edick Alley). Each of these constraints disrupt the full potential of blocks ideal for development. Overall, the Constrained Plan results in a less desirable development scheme and streetscape experience.