

SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING • SEPTEMBER 1963

DOWNTOWN

SAN FRANCISCO

GENERAL PLAN PROPOSALS

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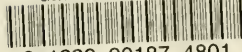
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DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO - GENERAL PLAN PROPOSALS

September, 1963

An excerpt from the report Downtown San Francisco prepared by the Department of City Planning and Mario J. Ciampi, F.A.I.A., architectural consultant employed by the City Planning Commission

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CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

100 LARKIN STREET · CIVIC CENTER · SAN FRANCISCO 2, CALIFORNIA

February 17, 1964

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The report Downtown San Francisco, prepared by the staff of the Department of City Planning and Mario Ciampi, F.A.I.A., the architectural consultant employed by the City Planning Commission, was issued in October 1963, and is available for reference in the library of the Department of City Planning. It contains an exposition of both the general plan proposals for Downtown, and the imaginative proposals and concepts of the design plan created by the consultant.

This volume is an extract from the original report and contains the general plan proposals for the development of Downtown San Francisco.

Public hearings on the general plan will be scheduled soon by the City Planning Commission, following which the Commission will then consider the plan, and any modifications resulting from public review, for adoption as a part of the Master Plan.

James R. McCarthy
Director of Planning

DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Reason For This Report

Across the nation in recent years, in large cities and small, the renewal and revitalization of Downtown has been the subject of special study and action. As cities have sprawled outward from their centers, there has been a counter movement to restore the attraction and significance of their centers. In some communities this has been a movement born of despair. In San Francisco, however, current interest in Downtown has been generated by respect for its traditional importance in the City and Bay Region, an acknowledgement of its present vitality, and an understanding of its magnificent potential. Given an acceptable guide, the growth and development of Downtown San Francisco offers one of the most exciting urban opportunities anywhere.

The Plan for Downtown San Francisco presented here is an outgrowth and elaboration of the report on Modernizing Downtown San Francisco published by the Department of City Planning in 1955.

This report, prepared for the City Planning Commission at the request of the Board of Supervisors, is submitted in the light of the changes that have occurred since 1955, the decisions that have been made, and the prospects for further change. It is intended to bring together the vast amount of study, thought and expressed ideas concerning the future development of Downtown San Francisco that have evolved in recent years.

It is hoped that the plan-subject, of course, to continuing evolution -- will be of considerable value to both the public and private interests of the entire City as a coherent statement of the goals as they have emerged and as they have been identified in the course of this study. It should also serve as a guide to future decisions. With such a plan adopted by the City Planning Commission, the agency having Charter responsibility, and supported by the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors, the City will be able to act effectively to maintain its present stature and role and to attain an even finer and more secure status in the future.

The Role of the Consultant

In 1962 the Board of Supervisors allocated \$25,000 to the City Planning Commission for the purpose of engaging an architectural consultant to aid in the preparation of a plan for Downtown San Francisco. Mario J. Ciampi, Architect, F.A.I.A., was commissioned by the City Planning Commission to assist its staff in this work. The role of the consultant has been one of collaboration with the Department of City Planning, as well as with other related departments of government, technical committees and citizen groups. Following the completion of preliminary research, basic planning and evaluation of the potential of the Downtown area, the consultant collaborated in the development of the general plan and prepared the more long range design plan. The design concepts are presented in the form of plans, illustrative sketches and models. The consultant was also required to prepare the brochure reporting upon the plan proposals.

The design proposals in the full report should be looked upon as evocations of the possible. The main intent in presenting them is to stimulate the imagination and to influence the decisions of future developers in key areas. These design schemes, that presently are without responsible private or public commitment or backing, should be viewed with a measure of appreciation for the inherent beauty they contain as designs and for the possible directions they indicate for future development.

This admonition is made lest, in certain cases, the architectural designs may tend to obscure the bare but precious bones that are, in reality, the essential plan. The plan is the underlying framework that can support and underlie quality and magnificence in infinite variety.

The Purpose of the Plan

What is the purpose of the Downtown Plan? This question may reasonably be posed, for Downtown is an area where a vast accumulation of visible structures and invisible connecting networks suggests that most aspects of its development are settled. Downtown San Francisco persists in spite of everything that would seem to point to a potential failure in its functions or vitality. It persists in its many roles as economic heart, as mart, as magnet, as a place to go for its own sake.

But one has only to look a little to the side of this marked fact of stability to see that the truly pertinent question is. "What is going to happen to Downtown?" If one is mesmerized by the big, the obvious and solid fact of Downtown, no question at all is apt to be raised. Herein lies a danger, for silence, based on apparent strength, may cover a range of weaknesses that should be examined. How, for instance, can the fair vision of a safe and solid Downtown be squared with the evident bleak aspect of the reaches stretching between Powell Street and the Civic Center, the squalor of South of Market Street, the tawdriness of that peerless avenue itself? Certain aspects of Downtown are susceptible of improvement, and that is the reason for and utility of the plan. It is meant to apply to those areas where the way is dark, the trend is down, and the future tangibly insecure and uncertain. It is meant to clear up uncertainty, to point the way by a salutary substitution of the needed new for the no longer useful old. In the process of building a city the required acts and decisions, expressed in a plan, make for a new coming alive of the community. The plan, in this sense, is an instigator as well as a commitment and its development is the business of all interested parties. The plan does not provide blueprints or precise cost estimates for detailed projects. If this plan provokes thought, stimulates imagination, and encourages policy and action decisions, it will serve its intended purpose.

What is Downtown?

Downtown, ideally, is the focus of an urban complex; the central place of involvement for the individual and the community, of commitments both public and private, and of decision in a world of real things, real issues and real problems. The lamentable history of devitalization occurring in central areas and in whole central cities can be traced to an abandonment of such areas in terms of commitment. The retreat from real commitment and involvement is in large measure responsible for that piecemeal despoilation of land in vast stretches all around central cities -- the retreat from the center. Downtown is the opposite of retreat buffering, fantasy, daydreams and isolation from others. It is not a stage set or a balanced formula for well-being.

Downtown should be compact, various and vital, a place of heightened participation. It should be a stimulating experience, not one that is bland or calm or always pleasant. It should be crisp, breezy, exhilarating; it should move with energy, even rush at times. Downtown should not have the unreal atmosphere of a shopping center -- an island of convenience in a sea of parking. It should not be exclusive on any terms; it should be all inclusive, even to the extent of assimilating thousands of private automobiles in some manner not destructive to itself. It should not be inevitably and always in the best taste. It can never be the product of one design concept because time and tradition and history -- change and the past and the future -- are part of the variety and vitality of Downtown.

These then -- compactness, variety, and vitality -- are the measures to be applied in judging Downtown San Francisco, not only in terms of what it is, but in the light of what is happening to it. These are the measures, as well, by which proposals for the future may be weighed.

The Economy of Downtown San Francisco

Judged in these terms, there is much that is healthy in Downtown San Francisco. The area which is the focus of this report is less than two square miles in extent. Within this small compass are the principal economic and core functions of San Francisco and the Bay Region, and major enclaves of special interest.

A major advantage of Downtown San Francisco is its compactness together with a quality and quantity of specialized services which cannot be duplicated in outlying thinly populated portions of the metropolitan area. Within walking distance are located an array of the world's finest medical specialists, engineers, law firms and business consultants, as well as such institutions and facilities as the stock exchange, large hotels, sport facilities, foreign consuls, port of entry customs, federal and state administrative headquarters, principal investment banking firms, corporation headquarters, a variety of the largest and more specialized retail and wholesale establishments, and major theaters, restaurants, and entertainment places.

Property and buildings within the core area contribute one-fifth of the tax revenue to the City's treasury annually. Some eighty corporations, whose individual assets equal or exceed ten million dollars are located here.

In Downtown 14 per cent of the metropolitan area retail sales and 37 per cent of the City retail sales occur. Of 24 cities studied, only Atlanta, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and Manhattan experienced an increase in retail sales volume in the last decade.

More than 500,000 trips are made daily in and out of Downtown. At midday the number of people found here is almost equal to the entire population of the City.

Although San Francisco contains less than 30 per cent of the population of the five central counties of the Bay Region, it is the location of 45 per cent of all jobs. Its employment specialization is indicated in that it contains 40 per cent of the five-county employment in government; 45 per cent of the employment in trade; 50 per cent of the employment in services; 50 per cent in transportation, communication and utilities; and 70 per cent of the employment in finance, insurance and real estate. Principal employment increases have been and will continue to be in the categories of finance and service, particularly business oriented service activities.

In October 1962, San Francisco ranked fourth in the nation in the amount of available office space. The 17 million square feet recorded did not include an additional 1.8 million square feet used for offices in loft buildings, 1.7 million square feet in governmental offices and space in buildings not devoted to office functions. From 1929, when just over 6 million square feet of office space was reported, to 1962, an increase of approximately 11 million square feet had occurred. Between October 1960 and October 1962 nearly 2.5 million square feet were reported added, or about 22 per cent of the total increase for the 1929-1962 period. The prospects for the immediate future included an additional 1.8 million square feet in office building commitments. New space is absorbed soon after it becomes available, and the vacancy rate is below the average of the cities studied. There appears to be a continuing incentive for the private investor to create new stocks of space for the competitive office market.

The strong and continuing anchor of San Francisco's economy is the financial district, both physically and functionally. The concentration of building investment in this area is clearly evident even from the most cursory inspection. In addition, several major new buildings are now either under construction or are firmly proposed in the Montgomery Street area. Also under construction in the Golden Gateway redevelopment area are the major units of residential buildings which will provide a new market for upper middle-income housing near places of work. The impact of these physical developments upon the economy of Downtown will serve to bolster its function as a financial headquarters of international significance.

The shopping district has not witnessed a comparable degree of investment, although Downtown retail functions continue to hold their own in the metropolitan area. The assured provision of rapid transit, a potential increase in the number of middle-income families living nearer Downtown as a result of redevelopment in the Golden Gateway and the Western Addition project areas, and an increase in the pay-rolls of Downtown office buildings, will enhance the position of Downtown retail trade, despite the competition of outlying shopping centers. The traditional retail function of Downtown will continue to be that of making available a large variety of goods offering a wide choice in contrast to the somewhat more standardized goods found elsewhere.

Downtown Investment

Although there is evidence of stagnation and there are some aspects of blight, particularly in the stretches west of Powell Street and south of Geary to the Civic Center, the record of major building in this central area since the close of the Second World War, shown in the accompanying list, attests to its essential vitality.

Presently there is a strong wave of investment projects, primarily in the financial district. Among these are a new Standard Oil Building on Market Street near First Street, the Hartford Insurance Building on California Street near Grant Avenue, the Alcoa Building in the Golden Gateway redevelopment project, and the 43-story Wells Fargo Building on Montgomery Street between Sutter and Market Streets. A private redevelopment of the Fox Theater site and further development in the commercial portion of the Golden Gateway project are imminent if less definite.

Major investment in Downtown parking facilities was initiated by the Union Square Garage representing a cooperative arrangement between government and private capital. This formula was used successfully again in the Parking Authority program in the Downtown area. As a result of this sort of collaboration, the St. Mary's Square Garage, the Portsmouth Square Garage, the Civic Center Garage, the Fifth and Mission Garage and the Sutter-Stockton Garage have been built.

Purely private investment in large public garage structures produced the Lick Place Garage near Sutter and Kearny Streets, the Ellis-O'Farrell Garage, between Powell and Stockton Streets, the Downtown Center Garage at Mason and O'Farrell Streets and two parking garages on Nob Hill on California Street.

At present several major residential projects are completed or under way in the Nob Hill area. Among these are a 17-story apartment building on Jones between Clay and Washington Streets, a 25-story apartment building at Jones and California Streets, a 19-story apartment building at Mason and Pine Streets, a 12-story apartment building at Pine and Taylor Streets, a 20-story apartment structure at Sacramento Street and Sproule Lane, and two high-rise apartments on Miller Place, off Sacramento Street. These projects represent the nearest penetration to Downtown of a new group of similar, high-density, high-rise and high-cost residential investments strung out along the Nob Hill-Russian Hill ridge northward to the Bay.

New Buildings -- Significant Additions and Alterations
In Downtown San Francisco, 1945 -- 1963

OFFICE BUILDINGS

Three Twenty California	320 California St.	1946
Home Insurance Co.	580 California St.	1950
Pacific Mutual		
Life Insurance Co.	600 California St.	1954
Union Oil Co.	471 Harrison St.	1955
Internation Business Machines	340 Market St.	1955
Equitable Life Assurance Co.	98 Sutter St.	1955
America Fore Insurance Co.	100 Battery St.	1956
Pacific Employers Insurance Co.	244 Pine St.	1957
Market-Pine Co.	320 Market St.	1957
Kearny-Sacramento Co.	550 Kearny St.	1957
Crown-Zellerbach Corp.	1 Bush St.	1958
Bethlehem Pacific Coast Steel Corp.	100 California St.	1959
John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co.	140 Battery St.	1959
State Compensation Bldg.	501 Golden Gate Ave.	1959
Wells Fargo Bank	450 California St.	1960
Bank of America Service Bldg.	1501 Market St.	1960
International Bldg.	463 Kearny St.	1961
Federal Office Bldg.	450 Golden Gate Ave.	1963

HOTELS

Jack Tar Motor Hotel	1101 Van Ness Ave.	1959
Del Webb Town House	1173 Market St.	1960
San Francisco Hilton Hotel	250 Mason St.	1963

ADDITIONS AND SIGNIFICANT ALTERATIONS

Pacific Gas and Electric	245 Market St.	1947
I. Magnin	Geary & Stockton	1947
Macy's Department Store	Stockton & O'Farrell	1948
Merchandise Mart	1301 Market	1948
Standard Oil of California	225 Bush St.	1949
Metropolitan Life Ins. Bldg.	600 Stockton St.	1952
California State Automobile Assn.	145 Hayes	1958
Annex to the State Office Building	401-99 Golden Gate	1958
Fairmont Tower	Powell & California	1961
Grace Cathedral	Mason & California	1962

THE FORM OF DOWNTOWN

The spine of Downtown, Market Street, is located about where one would expect a spine to be in a vertebrate, along one side rather than in the center of the body. The back of the Downtown area is turned towards the South of Market district. New Montgomery Street uniquely does penetrate south, but otherwise the Downtown has tenaciously built onto the ribs extending north of the spine.

Nob Hill serves to make compact the area north of Market Street, pushing as it does south and east, and the pinching down of Grant Avenue through Chinatown adds further to the compaction. East of Grant Avenue, the financial district is most dense and most compact in the triangle formed by Kearny, California and Market Streets. At California Street there is a rapid falling off as one proceeds northward, uninhibited by any rising up of the land until one approaches Telegraph Hill.

Despite the shortcomings of its visual form, the freeway structure, enclosing the Downtown area on the west, east and south, serve as a strongly defining element. This particularly has the effect of announcing the entrance to the Downtown area on the west as one approaches on Market Street.

South of Market Street, the freeway lies a long and safe distance from the core but still may be perceived, as one looks down those major numbered streets, as a confining and defining element. This embrace of much of the South of Market Area is an advantage to the district contained since it puts it on the side of Downtown, and thus the Freeway may bring the South of Market district into something more like the Downtown fold.

The East Bay Terminal lying a short distance below Market Street and straddling the adjacent north-south streets pushes this boundary very much in. This closer boundary element at this location isolates the union headquarters and the other salient features on what remains of Rincon Hill.

On the east stands the Embarcadero Freeway, too high, certainly wide, and decidedly not handsome. As a closing element on Market Street it is redundant, for the real closing is provided by the Ferry Building and its exclamation point, the tower.

The weakest point, so far as its peripheral definition is concerned, is that part of Downtown lying west of Powell Street and south of Geary Street. Even Post Street manages a little hump on its way to Van Ness Avenue. But, on the flat east-west streets between Geary and Market, except where the City Hall importantly faces down Fulton Street, the area leaks out and away.

The relatively distinct areas within the core of Downtown are the financial district closest to the Bay, the retail shopping district to the west, the hotel and entertainment center to the west of this, and, finally the government or civic center to the west and south of this. Other strong and well defined areas are the Nob Hill hotel area, Chinatown, the North Beach entertainment area, and Jackson Square.

Downtown Focal Points

Downtown has its little or large focal points whose function and importance is often far greater than their size suggests. These spaces or points serve to provide direction, identification, orientation or, more simply, a sense of the organization of everything massed around them.

Union Square performs this clarifying function precisely and classically. It does not lie at the center of one of the major Downtown areas but, rather, at the point of transition between two such areas: the retail center and the hotel-entertainment area. The square may indeed have brought about this transition at this particular location, but it also receives the benefit of this meeting. Its purposes are doubled, not so much because the people in the different areas have different requirements, but that the transition itself is heightened or organized or made apparent. Without Union Square, an achievement, the crossing of Powell Street from the shopping district into the world of theater, hotels, restaurants and bars, would not be adequately celebrated.

Like Union Square, St. Mary's Square marks a transition, the abrupt one between Chinatown and the financial district. This abruptness has, heretofore, been dramatized by the high backs of the office buildings along Montgomery Street, a two block distance from Grant Avenue. But the financial district has tended to grow westward, particularly along California Street, and new buildings are pushing in on the square.

Portsmouth Square, now accommodating a garage, was for San Franciscans an historic spot and served a useful purpose as a ground level green space in a congested area. Now reconstructed with decks, terraces, steps, pergolas and benches it has become the very busy outdoor living room for most of Chinatown.

The New Civic Center Plaza which was replaced above Brooks Hall and the parking garage, provides a spacious setting for the monumental buildings which surround it. Finally, Huntington Park provides the visual focus for a large amount of competitive architecture on the summit of Nob Hill.

There are other, smaller spaces in the downtown area that work in much the same manner as these more critical organizing elements. Several of these, strung out along Market Street, have been created by the peculiarities of the street pattern where the two systems north and south of Market Street collide. A recognition of this nodal function is provided by the fragments of civic design at California and Drumm Streets, the focus provided by the cable car terminal and the plaza built in the intersection; at Bush and Battery Streets where the Mechanics Monument is located; the Crown Zellerbach Plaza; Lotta's Fountain at Kearny and Geary, more a symbol than a real space; Powell and Market where the cable car and the turntable bring people in, divert them, and carry them away; and finally the Pioneers Monument at Grove and Hyde Streets.

The intersection of Columbus Avenue and Broadway is a classic arrangement of another kind. It is the not so rare case of maximum confusion expressed in the conflict of automobile and pedestrian traffic. At this point, where Chinatown gives way to the North Beach entertainment area, a further complication arises due to the high volume of through-traffic pumped into the area by the freeway on the east, the Broadway Tunnel on the west and the traffic to and from the Golden Gate Bridge on Columbus Avenue.

Pedestrian Circulation

From the point of view of the pedestrian, there does seem to be a system and hierarchy of streets used to circulate through the downtown area, and, not surprisingly, Market Street ranks in this unmistakably high. Out of the many reasons why this should be so -- the arrangement of transit, or that all major destinations north and south of Market Street stay within relatively the same walking distance from this street -- it is the multiple functions of Market Street, in terms of people and activities, that give it whatever advantage it may enjoy in the system. None of the east-west streets north of Market Street penetrates all of the important centers of activity ranged in sequence in the area. Post Street or Sutter Street come closest to doing this, but both of these are somewhat peripheral to the hotel-entertainment area west of Powell Street. Market Street, by a series of character changes, registers participation in all three of these districts besides providing the only link between the Civic Center and these other districts.

This means that Market Street is less specialized, as this term may be applied to people as well as to functions. The financier and office worker, the saleslady and noonday shopper, the teenage moviegoer, the bureaucrat and the taxpayer all serve to multiply the circulatory function of the street.

Grant Avenue is second only to Market Street in this respect. From Market to Bush Street the street traverses the heart of the retail district. North of Bush Street, Grant Avenue, to the casual observer and the visitor, is Chinatown. Finally, to those who persevere, Grant Avenue bursts out of Chinatown at Broadway close to the heart of the North Beach entertainment district.

Post Street has a glorious two blocks between Powell Street and Grant Avenue, perhaps the epitome of the smart Downtown shopping street. Stockton Street too, although without the unadulterated overtones of posh of Post Street, makes its own statement in the relatively few blocks between Market and Post. Geary Street more formidably bristles between Taylor and Stockton Streets, partly as a street of bars, theaters, restaurants, and hotels and then, east of Powell Street as an important block in the downtown retail center. And, finally, Powell Street is a circuit from Sutter to Market, committed to bars, restaurants and hotels.

Downtown San Francisco has a fairly large scattering of major points of visual orientation represented by buildings and monuments whose rich values are attributable to both size and associations. The Ferry Building tower, for all its physical relegation, still reads from a distance as marking the terminus of Market Street. The Russ Building on Montgomery, by sheer dominance, marks its centrality in the finan-

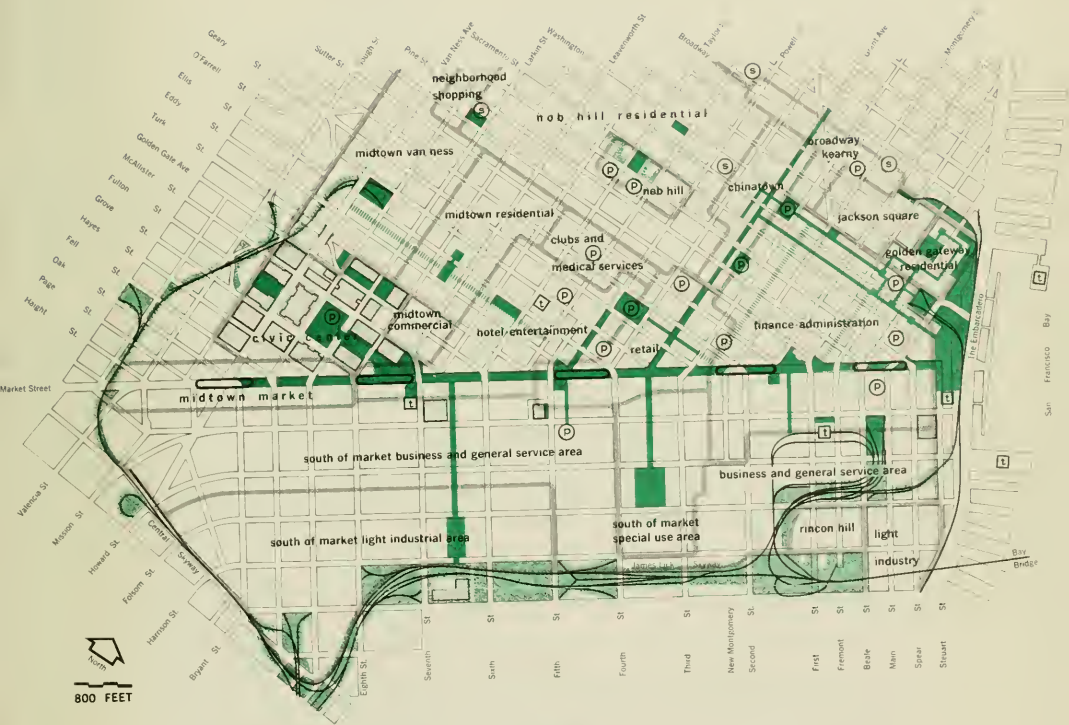
cial district, just as the Pacific Telephone Building, on New Montgomery, makes clear the importance of this particular street in an otherwise somewhat underused area, the South of Market district. The Crown Zellerbach Block, a new idea on Market Street, is one that depends heavily on the old for its ultimate effectiveness.

Hotels, to a surprising degree, prove the major markers to the sequence of Downtown events. The Sheraton-Palace Hotel stands at the point of transition on Market Street where finance gives way to retail selling. The St. Francis works with Union Square to mark the change from the retail to the entertainment center. The Fairmont and the Mark Hopkins extend the physical height of Nob Hill so that the high, allied with the mighty, is satisfyingly manifested without a trace of ambiguity. If Grace Cathedral and the Pacific Union Club, also on Nob Hill, are becoming overshadowed by their huge neighbors, their value as landmarks is still a quantity to be reckoned with, if for no other reason than their wealth of associations.

Looking from Nob Hill or further down to the east, the Bay Bridge, its towers and suspension cables, provides a backdrop that is remarkably musical for an object of strict utility. The bridge soars and sings and plunges into the City like an arrow marking its center.

The Civic Center at one time revolved securely around the eye-filling City Hall dome, although the competition of the new Federal Building does some violence to the firmness of the apparent order.

The minor points of emphasis in Downtown are many, so many that this report cannot contain let alone dwell on them. It is saliently where they are not, their relative or absolute sparseness in the declining area west of Powell or South of Market that points out their importance in the compact, visually rich areas where they are to be found. Time works in two directions, by adding to the sum of visual points or orientation and interest and by subtracting. Where there is health, investment and economic stability, landmarks tend to accrete. Where these things are lacking, nothing is precious enough to withstand the erosion of time and disuse.



THE GENERAL PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO

- FUNCTIONAL AREA BOUNDARY
- PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK
- PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION, SECOND PRIORITY
- MAJOR PUBLIC BUILDING
- SUBWAY STATION
- T MAJOR TERMINAL
- P MAJOR PARKING FACILITY
- S SCHOOL

THE DOWNTOWN GENERAL PLAN

Assumptions and Goals

The plan for Downtown San Francisco is based on the assumption that this active and compact center will continue to function in those roles that have provided it so far with its vitality and reason for being. Downtown San Francisco will continue to be the Pacific Coast center of finance and business administration, a government center, a retail center, a cultural and entertainment center, and a trade and distribution center. In addition, it is assumed that these activities will be sustained, enhanced and, where possible, augmented. Finally, the plan expresses the tenet that all this should be accomplished in such a way as to maintain and heighten the desirably compact, exciting and varied character of Downtown.

Downtown San Francisco has grown and developed as a compact center, yet with infinite variety, because of the high quality of public transit that has made it accessible from all parts of the Bay Region. The automobile has not been allowed to become master; in fact, Downtown is the only area of the City in which off-street parking provisions for it are not mandatory. This balance must be maintained.

More specifically, the key to the future development of Downtown San Francisco lies in providing and increasing convenience: convenience of arrangement within the area and, of equal if not greater importance, convenience of access from without. To do this and provide a Downtown that works well and looks well will require:

1. The provision of a complete regional rapid transit system;
2. The improvement of local transit serving Downtown and its integration with the regional system;
3. The improvement and expansion of the freeway distribution system;
4. The provision of needed parking facilities in appropriate locations and in a manner that will enhance rather than detract from the amenity of Downtown;
5. A balance of surface street movement so that public transit, pedestrians and taxis, trucks and private automobiles each move as freely as possible without causing inconvenience to the other methods of circulation; with avoidance of an over-commitment to the automobile and provision of a network for pedestrians;
6. The continued improvement in the overall appearance and amenity of Downtown including all major points of entrance such as transit stations and freeway ramps, and air, bus and ship terminals;
7. The continuance of private investment as needs are identified and the orderly programming of public improvements;
8. The identification of important historical and architectural structures and places and their preservation through special measures and controls.



THE DOWNTOWN TRANSIT PLAN

- REGIONAL AND LOCAL TRANSIT SUBWAY
- LOCAL EXPRESS TRANSIT SUBWAY
- FUTURE REGIONAL TRANSIT EXTENSION
- REGIONAL AND LOCAL TRANSIT SUBWAY STATION
- LOCAL EXPRESS TRANSIT SUBWAY STATION
- CABLE CAR LINE
- LOCAL SURFACE TRANSIT



THE DOWNTOWN CIRCULATION PLAN

- FREEWAYS AND RAMPS
- MAJOR VEHICULAR STREET
- NEW VEHICULAR STREET
- EXISTING STREETS PROPOSED FOR PEDESTRIAN USE
- P PARKING BELT
- D MAJOR EXISTING PARKING FACILITY

Circulation

Regional Transit

Inevitably the future health of Downtown, its continuance as a high-density employment area and as a convenient, compact, vital and exciting center of the city and the region, depends on major improvements in the realm of public transit. From the lesson of other cities, no one needs to be reminded how dismal and flaccid is the Downtown area too much committed to receiving and storing the private automobile.

A regional rapid transit system has been approved by the voters to serve three Bay Area counties: San Francisco, Alameda and Contra Costa. The ultimate expansion of the system to incorporate suburban areas north and south of San Francisco and in the Santa Clara Valley is an all important requisite for solving the transportation problems of the Bay Area and its central cities. Such an eventual expansion is assumed in the plan.

The system as approved in the recent bond issue will provide San Francisco with a subway under Market Street connected, on the east, by an underwater tube to the East Bay. The line extends west of Van Ness Avenue to the county line at Daly City via a subway under Mission Street and a line on grade and structure along or within the right-of-way of the Southern Freeway. Future lines would include a Bayshore route serving San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, which would enter Market Street at Ninth Street, and a Marin line which would enter Downtown either from the north (Montgomery Street) or the west (Post Street), depending on what future San Francisco-Marin crossings are developed.

Regional transit stations on Market Street serving Downtown San Francisco will be located between Montgomery and Sansome Streets (serving the financial district), between Powell and Stockton Streets (serving the retail and hotel and entertainment districts), and between Seventh and Eighth Streets (serving the hotel and entertainment district and the Civic Center).

The Rapid Transit District will also provide a subway for local rail transit under Market Street from Drumm Street on the east to the Twin Peaks Tunnel, and under West Portal Avenue to St. Francis Circle. Local transit subway stops Downtown in addition to the three mentioned above, would include a station at Van Ness Avenue and a terminal station at Drumm Street.

As originally planned, a continuous pedestrian mezzanine would be provided under Market Street from the financial district to the Civic Center. However, if it is found possible to construct the subway in a bore, rather than as a cut and cover operation, pedestrian mezzanines would be provided only at and near the stations. In either case the pedestrian mezzanine will make possible the development of open lower-level plazas on either side of Market Street at key locations which will greatly enhance the visual experience of entering the Downtown area from the subway. This concept is described and illustrated in the design plan section of the full report.

Market Street

Many schemes have been explored in the course of this study for the treatment of the surface of Market Street. In every case, it becomes apparent that, despite its width of 120 feet, Market Street cannot easily accommodate private vehicles, transit, and pedestrians in an improved situation. In short, the use of Market Street for all three forms of circulation combined inhibits its improvement in terms of appearance and the convenience and facility of any of these systems of movement.

The question then arises: to what extent is Market Street useful and, ideally, to be used for private vehicular operation? Market Street, in the Downtown area, is not a designated major thoroughfare in the adopted Trafficways Plan. The ramp locations of the freeway system, which is presently completed to points north of Market Street both on the east and the west of the Downtown area, do not provide direct access to Market Street. Market Street, therefore, between Van Ness Avenue and The Embarcadero, is largely a local access street, which, because of its peculiar location at the joining of two disparate street patterns, is more of a barrier than it is a carrier.

The proposal made in the plan is to use Market Street as a carrier of public transit and as a pedestrian mall. The reasons for making such a far reaching proposal are as follows: a significant change and improvement in the appearance of Market Street through major street tree planting or other landscaping, cannot be accomplished if the street must continue to serve the pedestrian, transit, and the private vehicle. Downtown Market Street has always served as a major transit and pedestrian spine; it has been of only marginal use as a traffic carrier. If one function of the street is to be sacrificed, it should be that of carrying private vehicles. The alternative is keeping Market Street very much as it is with perhaps the addition of a planting island up the center. The plan recommends that the sidewalk area of Market Street east of Van Ness Avenue be expanded to allow for a row of trees on either side, for ample stairways leading to the mezzanine and transit stations under the street, and that a roadway be provided at the center wide enough to accommodate two lanes of transit, emergency vehicles and, on occasion, parades.

The Department of Public Works, in an analysis of the effects on traffic flow of the closing of Market Street, estimates that with a projected increase of traffic loads of two per cent per year, Mission and Howard Streets would reach their full capacity in twelve years if Market Street is closed now to general traffic. If Market Street is kept open and improved for general traffic, the Department of Public Works estimates that Market, Mission and Howard Streets will reach their maximum usefulness in 22 years. In either case, a decision must be made that will restrict the general use of the automobile, and it is proposed that, insofar as this decision affects Market Street, it be made now rather than waiting for intolerable congestion to choke the street and make it even less attractive for pedestrians and less convenient for public transit than it is even today.

In all cases, when streets are proposed to be prohibited for use by private vehicles, the problem of making deliveries is raised. On the north side of Market Street, because of the triangular shape of the blocks, most properties have two frontages, one on Market Street and one on an adjacent street to the north or the west. Some mid-block properties are at a more severe disadvantage, but blocks on the north side of Market Street are relatively short. On the south side of Market Street deliveries to the larger stores are presently made along the alleys, Stevenson Street and Jessie Street, that parallel Market Street and intersect the tier of blocks between Market and Mission Streets. East of First Street, the blocks along the south side of Market Street are short and, in several, there are only one, two or three structures in the block facing Market Street so that servicing from the corner is not beyond the realm of feasibility. Deliveries along Market Street using the pedestrian area and limited to certain hours during the day is another possible solution to this problem.

If this proposal for Market Street is not adopted, major access to the mezzanine and subsurface transit levels would have to be from stairways within the building line along either side of Market Street, either in existing structures or replacing smaller structures where necessary, rather than from kiosks or stairways placed in the sidewalk. These stairways could be better and more handsomely accommodated in a widened sidewalk on Market Street.

Local Transit

Surface bus transit will continue to operate on Market Street as well as on other streets Downtown. One of the important concepts expressed in the plan is that such surface transit should be maintained on streets in two-way operation whose major or even, in certain cases, single vehicular function is that of carrying public transit.

With the exception of the cable cars, fixed rail and trolley bus transit using the public streets will eventually be a thing of the past within the Downtown area. The result of this change in operations and equipment will be a greater flexibility in the use of equipment and streets by the local transit system. However, the principle that certain streets should be used primarily as transit carriers remains a valid one. Furthermore, as transit carriers, such streets should not be incorporated into the one-way street system. This is a principle which, since it works to the advantage of both the transit user and the transit operator, should not be abandoned simply as a means of achieving greater general ease of automobile circulation.

As a case in point, both Geary and Sutter Streets presently operate primarily as transit carriers in the Downtown area, and the plan proposes that this system be retained. Other streets where this principle would apply include Eddy and McAllister Streets in the east-west direction.

In the north-south direction, because of topographical problems, there are fewer streets that can be adapted primarily as transit carriers. Both Stockton and Kearny Streets, for instance, will be required to share volumes of both public transit and private vehicles. At present these streets are in the one-way street system, to the considerable disadvantage of the transit operation. Any proposal to return Stockton and Kearny Streets to two-way operation would, no doubt, be a subject for considerable debate because of the great difficulties that would be experienced in general circulation. It would appear, on the face of it, that such a recommendation would be a step backward in easing traffic movement Downtown. The values that are inherent in such a recommendation, however, do deserve some consideration; i.e. that, if one form of traffic movement should be deprived of some of the advantages it presently enjoys, it is the private vehicle. This will be so because, over the last decade or so, traffic management and engineering have been primarily concerned with facilitating private vehicular flow and there have been few instances where this has worked to the advantage of the public transit system or the pedestrian. If some re-adjustment and redress of this imbalance is to be made, inevitably, it is the private vehicle that must suffer in ease of movement. This control on the use of the automobile applies throughout the Downtown area in respect not only to transit operations, but to the use of certain streets for pedestrian malls.

Freeways

It is difficult to discuss any one aspect of Downtown circulation independently of all other aspects. Transit systems and vehicular traffic systems are so inter-meshed and inter-related that proposals regarding one system invariably affect the operation of the other.

Perhaps the element least affected, since it is designed as a separate and independent element, is the freeway system. But its effect on Downtown and on the whole City is so enormous that, in a way, it may be said to have an impact on everything, no matter how remotely related. This can be applied to emotions as well as esthetics and the tax structure.

The problem of connecting the Golden Gate Bridge with the completed portion of the Central Freeway west of the Civic Center is presently being studied jointly by the City and the State Division of Highways. The alternate routes under study will not, however, affect land uses east of Van Ness Avenue. A related proposal to extend the Central Freeway northward and eastward, crossing under Van Ness Avenue near Ellis Street and terminating between Ellis and O'Farrell at Polk Street is an important feature of the Downtown Plan. This extension would give the Central Freeway, which is presently connected with the Bayshore Freeway and the Bay Bridge, a terminus east of Van Ness Avenue, a proposal that was made in the trafficways re-appraisal study published by the Department of City Planning and Public Works in 1960.

The extension of the Embarcadero Freeway south of Howard Street will be built as a part of the approved Southern-Embarcadero Freeway connection. A single-deck freeway is planned for that part of the route close to and parallel to the channel. The transition from double-deck structure to single-deck should occur as quickly as possible south of the present termination of the double-deck freeway. The ramps from the Embarcadero Freeway to Clay and Washington Streets will be built in conjunction with the Golden Gateway redevelopment project. A ramp north of Broadway providing a connection between The Embarcadero and the freeway, although beyond the area of this plan, is important to it as a measure to divert traffic from Broadway and the North Beach entertainment district that might be more expeditiously carried around it.

All freeway ramp connections entering the Downtown area as well as the general alignment of all freeways, where possible, and the raw slopes of Rincon Hill, south of Harrison Street and west of Beale Street, should be extensively landscaped. This recommendation is intended to make this method of entering Downtown as attractive as possible. This applies both to the effect for the person using the freeway system and to the effect of the freeway system itself on areas alongside it.

Vehicular Streets

Changes in the vehicular street pattern, other than those that will be discussed later in reference to the pedestrian pattern, include the extension of Fifth Street and Seventh Street north of Market Street.

In the case of Fifth Street, it is proposed that this extension be continued north of Eddy Street along the alignment of Anna Lane as far as O'Farrell Street. This would facilitate the distribution of traffic east and west entering Downtown, from the south, on Fifth Street.

Similarly, Seventh Street would connect with Leavenworth Street as a north-bound route, removing the present awkward routing of Seventh Street traffic by way of Market Street and Leavenworth Street and it would facilitate the closing of Fulton Street, a feature of the plan described in the design section of the full report.

A requisite to the conversion of Market Street to pedestrian and transit use would be the improvement, to the extent possible, of the traffic-carrying capacity of Mission and Howard Streets. This would initially be accomplished by placing these streets in one-way operation, with Mission Street in the west-bound direction, and by sidewalk narrowing. At present, by far the greater volume of automobile traffic on Market Street is in the west-bound direction and this traffic would be least inconvenienced by removal to Mission Street one block to the south. West of Van Ness Avenue, eastbound Market Street traffic would be diverted to Howard Street on Dubece Avenue and westbound access from Mission to Market would be provided on McCoppin Street.

Parking

The most general recommendation in respect to parking is that these facilities should be located on the periphery of the functional areas rather than at their centers. The parking program of the last ten years, in large measure, follows this principle. Thus, the financial district is ringed by facilities at strategic locations including St. Mary's Square, Portsmouth Square, and the Golden Gateway garage which is to be built between Clay and Washington Streets.

The plan is not one that is predicated on supplying parking in the Downtown area for the bulk of the persons working there. As in New York and Chicago, the other central business areas in this country that contain large, highly concentrated financial and administrative centers, public transit must be relied on to get the largest proportion of those working in the area in and out. Parking facilities, primarily for customers' and visitors' convenience, must be carefully located so that they will not aggravate problems of circulation in and around the intensely developed financial district. New parking garages should be used as interceptors wherever possible, to receive vehicles before they enter the core area. A parking belt around the Downtown area is therefore proposed in which all future publicly sponsored parking facilities and, it is hoped, the majority of privately developed facilities will be located.

Beginning on the north, this parking belt would lie between Clay and Washington Streets from Portsmouth Square to the Ferry Park precinct. Extending south, it includes portions of the Golden Gateway project commercial area, where new parking facilities are planned. On the south, the parking belt is in the tier of blocks between Mission and Howard from The Embarcadero to Second Street and from Fourth Street to Seventh Street. On the west, the parking belt occupies the tier of blocks between Taylor and Jones Street from Turk Street to Sutter Street.

Specific proposals for new parking garages are as follows:

A garage at Mission Street and The Embarcadero, combined with a surface transit terminal, to serve the Ferry Park development.

A garage at the East Bay Transit Terminal (since the service provided by its major user, the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, will be replaced by the rapid transit system) connected directly with the Freeway and Bridge by the existing ramps.

A new facility in the vicinity of Seventh and Mission Streets.

A new facility occupying the northern half of the block between Ellis, Eddy, Taylor and Jones Streets to be developed with a landscaped plaza on top.

Other specific proposals, not directly related to the parking belt concept, include a Civic Center Garage, primarily to serve future state and federal annexes, located on Hyde Street between Golden Gate and McAllister (as indicated in the Civic Center Development Plan), and a combined parking and recreational facility to serve the midtown residential area in the block between Ellis, Eddy, Hyde and Leavenworth Streets.

Terminals

Long Distance Bus Terminals. Other forms of local and long distance transport have or will require terminals in or around Downtown San Francisco. Perhaps most important among these are long distance and regional bus operations, providing service to and out of San Francisco. The present location of the main Greyhound Terminal is on Seventh Street between Market and Mission Streets. The plan suggests that this location is an advantageous one, in many respects, and one that will become even more so with the development of the rapid transit system. The new Greyhound Bus Terminal at Seventh near Market will be able to take advantage of the many improvements proposed at this location. These include direct access to the pedestrian mezzanine under Market Street which will in turn provide direct pedestrian access to the Civic Center via the Fulton Street Mall, and the Seventh Street extension which will facilitate the movement of vehicular traffic. The site is closely related to the Downtown hotel and entertainment district. In general, it is a central location well related to local transit and the activity centers of Downtown.

Other long distance bus operations are relatively small scale in comparison with Greyhound. Ideally, they might be combined with the Greyhound Terminal at Seventh Street. The use of some part of the present East Bay Transit Terminal at First and Mission Streets is a feasible alternate location. There, the direct ramp connection with the Bay Bridge and the freeway is the major advantage of the location. It is not as good a location in respect to the Downtown activity areas, the financial district being a local commuter destination rather than a place where a great many long distance bus riders would want to arrive.

Helicopter Terminals. Helicopter service between the San Francisco International Airport and other points in the Bay Area, including Downtown San Francisco, has only recently become an important factor in local transportation. A new helicopter terminal is needed and sites have been investigated and found suitable on the waterfront and south of Market. The proposal in the plan recommends a new heliport in the Ferry Building Park complex in the vicinity of Pier 9. This would be economically feasible if it were located on the roof of a new structure which would house such other rental uses as offices, clubs, and entertainment facilities.

A proposed alternate location is the East Bay Terminal south of Market Street. The noise nuisance to adjacent uses and obstructions in the approach zones, however, make sites south of Market Street considerably less desirable than the waterfront location.

Passenger Ship Terminal. A passenger ship terminal is a long felt need in San Francisco as indicated by recent criticism of the unattractive and inefficient facilities now provided this increasingly popular form of passenger movement.

The difficulty of financing such an investment has, heretofore, prevented such a development from taking place. However, a location for a passenger terminal combined with a freight terminal is indicated in the plan at the south end of the Ferry Park precinct for such a need should be given the status of official recognition. A

combined passenger-freight facility that would include offices, restaurants, shops, parking and other rentable space would produce an economically feasible development.

Other Terminals. The terminal shown in the plan at Taylor and O'Farrell Streets is the relatively new airport bus terminal.

The Third and Townsend depot of the Southern Pacific Railway will continue as long distance terminal and as a commuter terminal until such time as rapid transit system is developed on the Peninsula. The fate of rail passenger service is difficult to predict, but it is apparent that no major investment in new facilities is likely to occur and that the Third and Townsend depot, once relieved of commuter operations, will be used by no more than two or three train arrivals and departures a day. Bus collections for passengers departing by transcontinental trains from the East Bay are now carried on at this depot rather than at the Ferry Building. While the Third and Townsend location is not a particularly convenient one, its approaches to the Downtown area will be greatly enhanced by the redevelopment program in the South of Market area. However, all bus collections, including similar operations of the Western Pacific and Santa Fe Railways, might better be relocated to the present East Bay Terminal, closer to Downtown and the Bay Bridge.

The Pedestrian Network

The development of an adequate rapid transit system will result in a great increase in the number of persons circulating on foot in the Downtown area. Space for greater pedestrian volumes will be required and this space will have to be taken away from other users in this densely developed area, primarily from the private vehicle. Thus, the pedestrian network shown in the plan involves, in most although not all cases, closing streets to private vehicular use.

The backbone of this system, Market Street, has already been discussed along with the typical problems this type of conversion poses. The other elements of the pedestrian network are listed below and are described more fully in the design section of the full report.

The Fulton Street Mall will occupy all of Fulton Street between Market Street and the Civic Center Plaza at Larkin Street. Leavenworth Street between McAllister and Market Streets would also be incorporated.

The Powell Street Mall lies between Market and Geary Streets. Provisions for truck deliveries and loading during certain hours of the day and for taxi access to hotels on Powell Street will be required in the mall treatment on this street. A linkage from the Powell Plaza to the Fifth and Mission Garage is also proposed.

The Grant Avenue Mall is composed of three segments that might be developed at different times. The more immediate proposal would be the development of Grant Avenue as a pedestrian street from Bush Street to Broadway through Chinatown. The second section will be Grant Avenue through the retail center, between Market Street and Bush Street. A pedestrian underpass at Broadway, Grant and Columbus is also proposed.

The Merchant and Commercial Street Malls in the Portsmouth Corridor extend from the Grant Mall in Chinatown to and through the Golden Gateway redevelopment project where pedestrian ways will be developed on a level two floors above the street level. The plan proposes the extension of this concept west of the Golden Gateway to link Chinatown and Portsmouth Square to this new and important development. The system of pedestrian walkways which will serve other parts of the Golden Gateway project are shown on the plan as they connect with and are related to Merchant and Commercial Streets.

South of Market Street it is proposed that a "New Grant Avenue" pedestrian access be developed in the blocks between Third and Fourth Streets leading to and through the South of Market redevelopment project. Beginning at Market Street and continuing over Mission, Howard, and Folsom Streets, using moving sidewalks, or other similar forms of shuttle, this mall would serve to link the core area with new developments and uses in the redevelopment area.

The Russ Mall to Columbia Park is shown in the plan between Sixth and Seventh Streets linking Market Street, Columbia Square and the new Hall of Justice along the alignment of Russ Street.

The whole system as described above would provide a pedestrian network, extending from the Civic Center to the Ferry Park, that would link such important sub-areas as Chinatown, North Beach (Broadway-Kearny), the Golden Gateway (both commercial and residential sections), and the South of Market redevelopment area to the major Downtown districts. Other extensions include a pedestrian loop at an upper level mid-block between Kearny and Montgomery Streets extending from Market Street to the Portsmouth Corridor, and between Battery and Front Streets from Market Street connecting with the pedestrian network in the Golden Gateway and to the Portsmouth Corridor. A mid-block pedestrian walkway is also proposed between Ellis and Eddy Streets where other open space proposals are made in the plan.

The Functional Areas of Downtown

Downtown San Francisco has distinct groupings of activities which establish the character and economic purpose of the several districts within it. The plan defines the location and extent of these areas as a framework for the organization of Downtown. The boundaries of the areas shown on the general plan are not meant as immutable legislated lines, but reflect recommendations concerning their future size and development.

The Financial District

The financial district, the center of finance and business administration, is a key area of particular significance. It includes the most substantial and stable underpinning of the entire Downtown complex, containing the activities that sustain to a major degree almost all the others.

The growth of the financial district should have definite limits. Convenience is one such limit, for the area is one that can be easily traversed on foot and that particular limit should be respected. Further, it is limited by the character and contour of the surrounding areas, particularly to the north and west. The northern boundary is indicated at Washington Street. East of Battery Street the residential portion of the Golden Gateway redevelopment project serves as a distinct boundary. West of Battery Street and north of Washington Street, the Jackson Square area, containing an assembly of buildings of particular historical value and specialized purpose, is a defining element that should not be sacrificed for future expansion of the financial district. To the west, Chinatown and the slopes of Nob Hill are similar defining elements requiring protection to insure their integrity. Thus, the financial district should not encroach on Jackson Square to the north or Chinatown on the west, or beyond present commitments on the lower slopes of Nob Hill. There is only one direction in which the district may go and that is south. At present, except for New Montgomery Street, the financial district stops at Market Street. The financial district should expand south of Market Street between Bay and New Montgomery Street including both sides of Mission Street. There is still space, however, for considerable development north of Market Street, including the commercial portion of the Golden Gateway redevelopment area, as old and obsolete buildings are replaced. A physical leap of administrative headquarters investment to a new location, such as occurred in New York, is neither necessary nor desirable.

The Retail Shopping District

The retail shopping district should be maintained and improved within its present compact area. Its compactness is a convenience to the shopper on foot and is one of its major advantages. This district has experienced considerable renovation and has attracted to it the local branches of several prestige stores. Saks Fifth Avenue, Brooks Brothers, Abercrombie and Fitch, Dunhill, and Tiffany are among the names that have been added to the local roster of retail merchandisers, reinforcing the special luxury character of this shopping district. Although this retail center has sustained its comparative sales rank despite the enormous investment in suburban shopping facilities, this investment and the shopping habits it has fostered must be recognized as a major limitation to future retail expansion Downtown. The retail function of Downtown will be dependent primarily on the high density concentration of residential population close to it, Downtown employees, visitors and tourists. As each of these categories increases in size, continued upgrading and renovation should be experienced. Future retail development in the South of Market redevelopment area must be of a different and specialized nature so as not to have a divisive and deleterious, if not disastrous, effect on the Downtown retail core.

The Hotel and Entertainment District

The hotel and entertainment district at present is strongest along its periphery -- on Geary, Powell and Market Streets -- and is weak at the center. Most of the major hotels in the district are located on or near Powell Street and Geary Street.

The new Hilton Hotel is located more centrally in the district between O'Farrell and Ellis Streets on Mason Street. There should be a further strengthening of the inside of this horseshoe area, both as a matter of convenience and as a measure of counter-attack against an incipiently blighting situation. The hotel and entertainment district should be improved in appearance and amenity through the provision of public open spaces and street tree planting so as to stimulate new private investment.

Like the hotels, the principal entertainment facilities are also located on the periphery. Most moving picture theaters are on Market Street, and the two remaining legitimate theaters are on Geary Street west of Mason Street. At least four other theaters have been razed in this district, most recently the Alcazar on O'Farrell Street and the Tivoli on Eddy Street. The legitimate playhouse is a vulnerable investment. If the middle-aged Geary and Curran Theaters on Geary Street were to disappear, San Francisco would not have a suitable facility for professional theater and the vitality and interest of the Downtown entertainment district would be considerably impaired. This would be a grave blow to this City's role as a cultural, entertainment and tourist center. If private investment could not supply this need, public investment in this type of medium-sized auditorium would be necessary. A new theatrical "district" is recommended along the east side of Mason Street between O'Farrell Street and Eddy Street. The proposed location, now principally occupied by open parking lots, could provide for two or more theaters of relatively small size combined with other commercial facilities. This area, which is the traditional theatrical area of San Francisco and is in close proximity to several major hotels and the shopping district, seems highly appropriate.

Other Entertainment Areas

Three other major entertainment districts are identified in the plan. These are Nob Hill, Chinatown, and the Broadway-Kearny (North Beach) area. Of these three, the one most susceptible to expansion is the Broadway-Kearny district where a large number of new entertainment facilities have been added in recent years.

Chinatown is an attractive, compact and well established area today. New entertainment activities will continue to locate along Grant Avenue and along the east-west streets between Stockton and Kearny. Stockton Street is an important element in the Chinese community as a location for business and cultural facilities that are "non-tourist" in character.

The Nob Hill hotel and entertainment district is limited by the high-density residential development surrounding it, and any intensification of this use will perforce be made within the present defined area. The high-density is modified by Huntington Square and the Pacific Union Club, a landmark of historical and architectural importance. The latter site is an integral part of the open space which provides light and air and a sense of identity to the surrounding property on Nob Hill.

The Civic Center

The Civic Center is the area defined in the Civic Center Development Plan adopted by the City Planning Commission in 1959. In general, this area should also follow the rule of maximum compactness for reasons of convenience and to keep to a minimum the taking of private lands for public development.

The Civic Center Development Plan is the principal guide to the future development of the government area. One feature of that plan that requires further study, and, possibly amendment, is the added convention facility recommended in the block bounded by Polk, Grove, and Hayes Streets and Van Ness Avenue. While the Brooks Hall underground exhibit space and the Civic Auditorium, now being rehabilitated, will continue to be used as a major convention facility, convention activity and the business of government are not altogether compatible, as conventions are, for the most part, daytime activities. The Civic Center, also does not lend itself to the kind of advertising signs, posters and banners that most conventions consider desirable. Hence, peripheral expansion of a limited degree toward Market Street, or a new location in the South of Market area for larger facilities are the suggested alternatives.

Other Activity Areas North of Market

The Post-Sutter medical service and club area, the midtown commercial area, and the midtown market area are all parts of Downtown with varying degrees of significance.

The Post-Sutter area identified in the plan contains many substantial structures -- medical office buildings, small hotels, and the quarters of the Olympic, Bohemian, Press and Union League, and Women's City Clubs, among others. Despite a lack of new construction, the area has remained relatively stable over the last thirty years. Interior decorators, travel agencies, book stores and a number of businesses forced out of Union Square by the many air line offices that have recently located there have kept commercial space largely occupied. No expansion of this compact, well established area is recommended, as it is hemmed in by high-density residential development to the north and west and by the strongest section of the hotel and entertainment area to the east and south.

The midtown Market Street district is also closely related to the Civic Center but it has strong magnets of its own such as the Merchandise Mart and the recently completed Bank of America service headquarters. It is anticipated that other service activities of this sort will be added to this area as far west as the Central Freeway crossing of Market Street.

South of Market

South of Market, the vast and complicated area lying between the Bay and South Van Ness Avenue, the freeway and major downtown districts, today cannot properly be called Downtown. South of Market is, and should remain, essentially a service area performing subsidiary functions that support the life of Downtown but do not detract or subtract from it.

Market Street acts as a boundary that defines the active core; it holds the more intensively used downtown activity centers in place, and while convenience might dictate greater facility in crossing this boundary, to open the South of Market district for development of core activities would represent a drain on the established districts to the north, excepting the financial district where a combination of elements provides another boundary.

Detailed planning for the South of Market redevelopment project is in its beginning stages by the Redevelopment Agency based on detailed economic studies which will help determine the feasibility of the several developmental proposals that are under consideration.

Among these are a park, sports arena and exhibit hall, a popular entertainment complex, new parking facilities to serve both the South of Market special use area and the Downtown shopping district, and office space of a sort to complement rather than compete with space in the financial district, such as the Pacific Telephone service center now under construction on Folsom and Hawthorne Streets. Several group trade and industrial centers have been proposed including a graphic arts center and a garment center. All such proposals need careful scrutiny to determine what responsible backing -- both by developers and renters -- they might expect to obtain.

In the most general sense, a locational hierarchy needs to be established in the South of Market redevelopment area so that proposals that are most closely related to core Downtown functions and are most in need of transit services will be located closest to Market Street. On the other hand, proposals such as a sports arena, exhibit hall, and motels, least related to core functions and most dependent on the private automobile, should be located closest to the freeway.

Retail uses, restaurants and bars, and other commercial and service facilities should be closely related, in number and size, to whatever major uses are built in the area. This will help insure their own economic strength and prevent a weakening of the established core facilities.

Residential Areas

The residential areas that are indicated in the Downtown Plan include the Golden Gateway redevelopment project, the Nob Hill residential area, and the midtown residential area. In terms of basic stability and the amount of recent investment it has attracted, the Nob Hill area dominates the close-in living area around Downtown.

The Golden Gateway is only now under construction and its integrity as a residential enclave, in the long run, would seem to require an ultimate extension northward in the area between Telegraph Hill and The Embarcadero. This would provide a firmer alliance of the redevelopment area with other existing residential development on Telegraph Hill. Needed public facilities could then be supplied more economically and efficiently than is now possible for this somewhat isolated area.

The midtown residential district located between the concentrated hotel and entertainment district near Union Square, the Civic Center, and bounded by a rejuvenated Market Street has a tremendous potential for improvement. The advantages of the district include its close-in location, its large supply of relatively substantial buildings, its flatness, and convenient transit to all other parts of the City, all of which is attractive to the elderly population that already has its concentrations here. Its extension to Market Street is indicated by recent announced developments. A combined recreation and parking facility is indicated in the plan in the block between Ellis, Eddy, Hyde and Leavenworth Streets.

Preservation of Buildings of Historical Importance

The buildings in Downtown are elements in an amalgam of San Francisco's rich past and its vital present. Each year, the balance between the old and the new elements is altered as older buildings are razed to make way for new structures or for interim use as parking lots. To some, the disappearance of an older building is viewed as an instance of progress. To them, new buildings symbolize vitality; new parking spaces mean more customers. Others, however, are concerned that the disappearance of older buildings from the Downtown area results in a loss of historical continuity and visual pleasure.

To achieve a balance between the old and the new is not easy. The difficulty arises when such measurable criteria as the ability to serve new functions, the costs of maintenance, and diminishing economic return are matched against the more intangible values of esthetic merit, historical associations, and contribution to the urban landscape. Two examples illustrate the nature of this conflict.

In Jackson Square, a collection of buildings constructed in the 1850's and 1860's and containing no individual works of outstanding architectural merit, were by the standards of usefulness, maintenance, and economic return, prime candidates for the wrecker's bar. However, in 1952 a group of wholesale furnishers, antique dealers and interior decorators in need of warehouse and showroom space, began to acquire the buildings which, now rejuvenated, serve this new purpose both functionally and esthetically. This rare marriage of old buildings and new uses saved an historically important and visually pleasing enclave of San Francisco architecture.

The second example is the Old Mint, a building of considerable architectural worth and of unquestionable historic significance built between 1869 and 1874. Unlike the buildings in Jackson Square, the Mint is a highly specialized structure, designed for a purpose that newer mints can better serve. While structurally sound,

and serving certain needs for office space reasonably well, it is not readily adaptable to new uses, and it is extremely doubtful that the building would survive if it were placed in the highly competitive private real estate market. If the Mint is to survive as a building as recommended in the plan, and as an important focal point in the urban landscape of which it is a notable part, it seems probable that it is a governmental agency that will have to assume responsibility for its preservation.

Steps are being taken now on a City-wide basis by private organizations to establish criteria and catalogue significant buildings and sites to the end that adequate public protective measures may be taken to preserve important parts of the City's visual and architectural heritage. The growing concern of public groups that the character of the City be protected is reflected in certain of the plan recommendations which follow.



URBAN RENEWAL AREAS AND PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE CONTROLS

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- PARK
 OPEN SPACE PROTECTION AREA
 HEIGHT LIMIT AREA
 REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND CONSERVATION AREA
 CIVIC CENTER DESIGN CONTROL AREA

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Basic to the development of the Downtown Plan has been analysis of the various aspects of the area and the establishment of the qualities to be maintained and encouraged in the heart of the City.

Already financed and in the process of precise plan development is a project that will have a profound effect upon all of Downtown and upon Market Street in particular -- the Market Street subway. The quality of the station design, the plaza development as envisioned in the Downtown design plan, the location of stairways leading to the mezzanine level, and the surface treatment of Market Street require immediate policy decisions so that detailed designs and construction plans can be developed as a basis for construction. The extension of Fifth Street and of Seventh Street across Market Street, each providing space for subway station plazas, are the two projects of highest priority which are presently unfunded.

Public construction, whether of streets, subways, parks or buildings is the most important means of effectuating the plan for in such construction the City can play more than an advisory role. Specific recommendations for early execution are listed in the final section of this report.

There are also a number of regulatory and administrative measures whereby the City may act directly to implement the plan. These range from changes and additions to the City Planning Code (zoning ordinance) which governs the use of private property, special ordinances such as a sign ordinance and the establishment of a Civic Center design control area, and an improved administrative procedure to coordinate the variety of fixtures or furniture placed on the streets by public and private agencies.

Zoning

Since zoning is an expression of the Master Plan, more detailed refinement of the Master Plan, as proposed by the Downtown Plan, should be followed by appropriate zoning studies and revisions. Detailed zoning proposals could not, however, be part of this study, because:

1. The goals must first be established and accepted, and
2. The zoning studies for a single area must relate to the Planning Code as a whole and hence constitute a separate work project.

Modified zoning controls can help realize the recommendations of the Downtown Plan in various ways. While a general re-evaluation of planning code standards is beyond the scope of this study, the plan sets the necessary framework for such a review of zoning requirements in the Downtown area of the City. For instance, the direction of expansion of the financial and administrative center, and the amenity-- and therefore the vigor -- of this area, are directly related to zoning matters such

as distribution of the buildings on the land, the availability of sunlight to the streets and the accommodation of pedestrian traffic.

Building bulk controls should be reviewed to see that the boundaries of bulk districts are in accordance with the Downtown Plan, and that the overall bulk limits will not over-load certain areas and leave underused or waste spaces in other areas which are a disadvantage to the business district. The feasibility of developing floor-area bonuses for pedestrian arcades and plazas for some kinds of buildings should be considered. The desirability of adjusting building heights in relation to hillside slopes, open spaces, and street widths should also be investigated.

One special zoning control is recommended which can be considered independently of other problems of zoning review. This is the imposition of height control to preserve the historical and architectural integrity of certain areas, particularly Chinatown and Jackson Square. A limit of 65 feet, corresponding to Building Code Type III construction, would be most appropriate and is recommended.

The character of Chinatown, a red-brick enclave where the structures are, for the most part, four stories or less in height, deserves this special measure of protection. While architectural control has been suggested as such a protective measure, the present exuberant melange of east and west, old and new, is what creates the established character of the area. It is the scale of Chinatown that should be preserved and a height limit here is recommended as the most appropriate control. This is shown on the map indicating legislative controls proposed in the Downtown area.

Jackson Square, a district that covers a much larger area than the original wholesale decorators row on Jackson Street between Montgomery and Sansome Streets, like Chinatown, is also deserving of protection as an enclave of historical structures with a very special character. For this purpose it is included in the height limit area recommended for Chinatown. Specific design controls devised for this area by a majority of its occupants and owners might be developed for adoption by the Board of Supervisors, but these would be derived from the historic preservation studies now being initiated on a City-wide basis.

A review of parking requirements in the Planning Code in relation to public parking structures is needed to implement access and circulation goals. The review of parking requirements is particularly needed in connection with Jackson Square and the Broadway entertainment area, where building renovation is impeded by present requirements.

To protect and strengthen the midtown residential area, the whole scope of controls relating to combined residential and commercial structures needs special consideration.

Another special zoning control recommended for detailed study, independently of other problems of zoning review, is a special height limit to protect the small parks and public open spaces in the Downtown area. The function of such small open spaces as Union Square or Portsmouth Square is to provide light and air and a degree of amenity in such densely developed areas. An open space figuratively at the bottom of a barrel is of little value for those who might want to use it, and a small park completely ringed by tall buildings so that the sun cannot penetrate and the air cannot circulate is in that situation. Each small park should be separately analyzed and controlled, for circumstances and precise needs differ at each location.

Signs

Downtown without signs would be a monotonous and confusing place. The different kinds of advertising actually found Downtown -- billboards, lighted store front signs, posters, emblems, and rooftop signs -- have an impact that colors the whole experience of Downtown.

Signs in competitive profusion, such as the identifying signs projecting over sidewalks, provide a certain liveliness, particularly at night. But where there are too many of them, along with billboards, as on portions of Market Street, the resulting confusion defeats their purposes, and contributes to a visual incoherency. One of the goals of the plan is to achieve a pleasant environment; this does not rule out its being stimulating and exciting as well, but does require limitations to the proliferation of different types and sizes of signs that overwhelms some streets Downtown. To this end, the City Planning Commission will soon submit specific recommendations for new sign regulations which are being prepared in a separate study.

A special design control area around the Civic Center is indicated on the plan. Because of the tremendous public investment in this area special architectural and sign controls for private properties should be established by ordinance to complement the quality of the Civic Center environment.

Street Furniture

The problem of street furniture in the Downtown area -- all those utilitarian objects placed on the sidewalk and in the street such as street lamps, fire hydrants, drinking fountains, mail boxes, telephone poles, gratings, manhole covers, benches, police and fire boxes, parking meters, newspaper stands, litter baskets, curb railings, street signs, traffic lights, traffic signs, transit poles, transit wires and on and on -- is primarily a problem of clutter, of confusion, of poor design and poor placement. The solution lies in the direction of coordination within and among the departments of the City government that contribute to the problem, and also among those private groups who also add to the general chaos. Implementation of earlier efforts at coordination and regulation should be renewed.

S U M M A R Y O F R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

General Recommendations

The compact, vital and varied character of Downtown should be maintained and enhanced.

The future development of Downtown should provide for maximum convenience of access and of interior arrangement.

Circulation

Transit

The regional rapid transit system should ultimately be expanded to provide service to Santa Clara, San Mateo and Marin Counties.

Regional and local rapid transit stations on Market Street should be provided at Drumm Street (local), between Montgomery and Sansome Streets (local and regional), between Powell and Stockton Streets (local and regional), between Seventh and Eighth Streets (local and regional) and at Van Ness Avenue (local).

Lower level plazas leading directly off the rapid transit station pedestrian mezzanines should be provided at Seventh Street and at Fifth Street.

Two-way surface transit on Market, Sutter, Geary and Eddy Streets should be maintained.

Market Street should be exclusively used by surface transit, pedestrians, and emergency vehicles; ample stairway and escalator access should be provided to the rapid transit mezzanine in the pedestrian area; attractive waiting stations for surface transit should be provided in the pedestrian area; planted street trees and other attractive street furniture should be provided.

The cable cars now in operation on Powell Street (Powell-Mason and Powell-Hyde) and on California Street, must be maintained. The Van Ness Avenue terminal of the California Street line should be provided with an attractive waiting station.

Vehicular Traffic

The freeway system around the Downtown area should be extended on the west by carrying the Central Freeway under Van Ness Avenue to a terminus at Polk Street between O'Farrell and Ellis Streets.

Freeways and ramps around the Downtown area, including Rincon Hill under the Bay Bridge, should be landscaped to provide a parklike setting for the freeways and for all freeway entrances to Downtown.

Fifth Street should be extended north of Market Street to Eddy Street, and north of Eddy Street, along the alignment of Anna Lane to O'Farrell Street.

Seventh Street should be extended north of Market Street and connected to Leavenworth Street.

Mission and Howard Street should be made a one-way pair with sidewalk narrowing to provide for added private vehicular traffic resulting from the closing of Market Street.

Parking

Publicly sponsored facilities should be located around the periphery of the Downtown core area in a parking belt.

New parking garages in the parking belt are proposed at Mission Street and The Embarcadero; at the present East Bay Terminal at Mission and First Streets; in the South of Market redevelopment area; in the vicinity of Seventh and Mission Streets; and in the vicinity of Ellis and Taylor Streets.

The Ellis and Taylor Street garage should be wholly or partially underground with a landscaped plaza on top to add to the amenity of the area west of Powell Street.

Other parking facilities should be developed at Columbus and Broadway to serve the North Beach entertainment district; in the vicinity of Hyde Street and Golden Gate Avenue to serve expanded state and federal office facilities; and between Ellis and Eddy Streets west of Leavenworth Street to serve the adjacent residential area.

Terminals

The new Greyhound inter-city bus terminal to be located in the vicinity of Seventh and Market Streets should have a direct access to the subway station.

Other long distance bus operations are recommended for location at the present East Bay Terminal, which has direct ramp connections to the Bay Bridge.

A new helicopter terminal should be provided adjacent to the Ferry Park on the waterfront.

A new shipping facility designed to accommodate a passenger ship terminal should be located south of the Ferry Building in the vicinity of the present Pier 16.

The surface transit terminal to be built at Mission and Steuart Streets should be combined with a parking garage at that location.

Pedestrian Network

In addition to Market Street, the following streets should be developed as part of a Downtown pedestrian network:

Fulton Street between Market Street and Civic Center Plaza.

Powell Street between Market and Geary Streets.

Grant Avenue between Market Street and Broadway.

Commercial Street between Grant Avenue and the Ferry Park.

Merchant Street between Portsmouth Square and the Golden Gateway at Battery Street.

New pedestrian linkages should be developed along the following routes:

A New Grant Avenue Mall between Third and Fourth Streets through the South of Market redevelopment area, possibly using moving sidewalks.

A pedestrian loop between Montgomery and Kearny Streets from Market Street to Merchant Street in the Portsmouth Corridor; and between Battery and Front Streets from the Golden Gateway to Market Street.

Between Sixth and Seventh Streets along the alignment of Russ Street from Market Street to Columbia Square and the Hall of Justice.

Between Ellis and Eddy Streets from Van Ness Avenue to Mason Street.

Streets closed to private vehicular use should be designed to permit deliveries during certain hours of the day and taxi access, where necessary, to serve hotels and entertainment facilities.

Functional Areas

The financial district should expand south of Market Street in the area between New Montgomery Street, The Embarcadero and Mission Street.

The financial district should not encroach on Jackson Square to the north or Chinatown on the west, nor beyond present commitments on the slopes of Nob Hill west of Grant Avenue.

The retail shopping district should be maintained and improved within its present compact area.

The hotel and entertainment area should be improved in appearance and amenity south of Geary Street and west of Powell Street.

A new theatrical district should be encouraged along the east side of Mason Street between Eddy and O'Farrell Streets.

The general recommendations of the adopted Civic Center Development Plan should guide future development in this area although no major expansion of convention facilities in this area is recommended.

The Chinatown, Nob Hill, and Broadway-Kearny entertainment areas should maintain their compact and vital character with enhancement of their colorful and unique qualities.

Redevelopment in the South of Market area should accommodate such special service and entertainment facilities that will complement rather than compete with the established Downtown core.

The Downtown residential areas should be rehabilitated and provided with recreational facilities, street trees and other amenities.

Van Ness Avenue should be maintained as an auto sales and service oriented commercial thoroughfare.

Other Developmental Proposals

The Ferry Park should ultimately incorporate the area along the east side of The Embarcadero from Pier 7 to Pier 16 and include small boat, sightseeing and commuter boat facilities and new commercial development.

The Portsmouth Corridor between Clay and Washington Streets extending from Portsmouth Square to the Golden Gateway redevelopment area at Battery Street should be developed for new Downtown commercial and parking uses.

Open, lower level, landscaped plazas should be developed at Fifth and Market Street and at Seventh and Market Street, providing direct access to the rapid transit stations at the mezzanine level.

Preservation of Buildings of Historical Importance

A survey and inventory should be undertaken by responsible private and public organizations identifying buildings worthy of preservation.

A list documenting such structures and recommending specific measures for their preservation should be adopted by the City Planning Commission as a matter of public record.

Public buildings outside the Civic Center that are specifically recommended for retention and enhancement include the Ferry Tower, the Old Mint, and the Main Post Office.

Plan Implementation by Municipal Controls

The Planning Code (zoning ordinance) should be reviewed and revised in respect to Downtown boundaries, bulk controls and parking requirements.

Special height limits of 65 feet should be adopted in Chinatown and Jackson Square, to help preserve their historical and architectural integrity.

Parking requirements should be reviewed and revised so as not to impede renovation and rehabilitation in those parts of Downtown not presently classified C-3 in the Planning Code.

Special height controls should be devised for each small park and open space in the Downtown area to preserve their qualities of openness and sunlight.

New sign regulations, now being prepared, will be submitted to control the proliferation of different types and sizes of signs despoiling some sections of Downtown.

Special architectural and sign regulations should be established around the Civic Center to complement and enhance the quality of the public investment in this area.

Implementation of previous efforts to coordinate and regulate all types of street furniture should be resumed.

Downtown Projects Presently Funded or Under Construction

1. Ferry Park, south of Clay Street and west of Embarcadero Freeway; by City.
2. Clay-Washington ramps of Embarcadero Freeway; by State Division of Highways.
3. Widening of Clay Street east of Sansome, and Washington Street east of Battery Street; by City.
4. Market Street subway, two tracks and three stations for regional transit, and two tracks and five stations for local transit; by Bay Area Rapid Transit District.
5. Mission-Embarcadero Surface Transit Terminal; by City.
6. Golden Gateway residential parking and commercial redevelopment, including Sidney Walton Park; by private financing.
7. Greyhound Bus Terminal.

City Projects Recommended for Next Five Years (1964-68)

1. Extension of Fifth Street north to Eddy Street, and widening of Anna Lane north to O'Farrell Street; development of plaza in triangle bounded by Fifth, Eddy, and Market Streets. Estimated cost: approximately \$2,500,000.
2. Extension of Seventh Street north to McAllister Street and development of plaza in triangle bounded by Seventh, McAllister and Leavenworth Streets, and a portion of Fulton Circle. Estimated cost: approximately \$1,500,000.
3. Powell Street Mall, Market to Geary.
4. Market Street Pedestrian Mall, coordinated with subway program.
5. Mission and Howard Streets, renovation for one-way operation.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the United States from its discovery to the present time.

The second part is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from the discovery to the present time.

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The sixteenth part is devoted to a detailed history of the United States from the discovery to the present time.

Projects Recommended for Second Five-Year Period (1969-73)

1. Grant Avenue Mall, Bush to Broadway, including pedestrian crossing at Broadway; by City.
2. Fulton Street Mall; by City.
3. New Grant Avenue Mall, south of Market Street; by City.
4. Central Freeway Extension to O'Farrell and Ellis Streets; by State Division of Highways.
5. South of Market redevelopment, Second to Fifth Streets.

Projects Recommended for Scheduling by City as Feasible.

1. Grant Avenue Mall; Market Street to Bush Street.
2. Columbus Circle; plaza and garage.
3. Taylor-Ellis; garage and park.
4. Powell Plaza; portion on Lincoln Building site at southeast corner of Market and Fifth Streets.
5. Fulton Circle; portions not included in 1964-68 plans.
6. Other pedestrian ways; including Merchant and Commercial Streets, Russ Street Mall, and the loop connections between Kearny and Montgomery Streets, and Battery and Front Streets.
7. Other garages in the parking belt.
8. Court House or City Office Building in Civic Center.
9. Theater District; if not accomplished by private financing.

Projects Recommended for Scheduling by Other Agencies as Feasible

1. State and Federal building annexes and parking facilities; Civic Center.
2. East Bay Terminal rehabilitation; by State Toll Crossings Division.
3. Heliport.
4. Ferry Park Basin development.

