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THE URBAN DESIGN PLAN

For THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF SAN FRANCISCO • May 1971

PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING • 100 LARKIN STREET • SAN FRANCISCO • CALIFORNIA 94102

May 1971

To the Honorable Members
of the City Planning Commission:

It is with considerable pleasure that I present this Urban Design Plan for your consideration.

The Plan is the product of two years of study by the newly formed urban design staff of the Department of City Planning, with the assistance of several consultants and the participation of the San Francisco community. We wish to express our appreciation, especially, to the Urban Design Advisory Committee for their devoted work in reviewing the progress of the study.

This report is in three parts: 1) an Introduction and Background describing the need for an Urban Design Plan and the important issues to which it must be addressed; 2) the Plan itself, proposed for adoption by the Commission, after public hearings and further revisions if necessary, as part of the San Francisco Master Plan; and 3) a section on Implementation describing many of the methods by which the Plan may be put into effect.

The Urban Design Plan is intended as a definition of quality upon which the community — the people of the city and their leaders — can firmly agree. It is my hope and expectation that this kind of agreement can lead to rational decisions upon the courses of action necessary to preserve, and in places to improve upon, the magnificient environment of San Francisco.

Sincerely yours,

Allan B. Jacobs

Allan B. Jacobs
Director of Planning

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INTRODUCTION

Reasons for This Study

The Urban Design Study was undertaken in San Francisco because the environment of this city is magnificent, and because it is threatened. Every day residents, and people throughout the world who consider San Francisco their second city, are sounding the alarm over issues affecting the fragile physical makeup of this great urban place.

Nearly all San Francisco citizens share the belief that urban design is one of the leading concerns of planning, and that a plan to assure retention of the timeless qualities of the city is overdue. It is the purpose of this report to propose such a plan.

The greatness of San Francisco's character has been described in many ways over the years, in terms of beauty, charm, urbanity, warmth, pleasing contrasts, and vitality strangely woven with stillness. The setting at the head of a dramatic peninsula is unsurpassed, and the combination of sea and bay, urban hills, distant mountains and stimulating climate is surely unique. Man's treatment of the landscape has been benign, as he has imposed on the hills and valleys a sweeping street pattern and tightly knit buildings, giving his city a bright and textured quality in panorama and pleasant intimacy near at hand. In total impression, the city's image depends upon its natural setting and its human creations in equal measure: the city can be seen, felt and experienced as few others can.

Much of the face of San Francisco displays its history and its past development. During two centuries the early dominance of the missions has been succeeded in turn by military actions, the gold rush, waves of immigration and the rise of trade and finance. Building and rebuilding have brought the succeeding eras together, telescoping time. Business has settled in the city, and visitors have come and returned, in order to enjoy long-noted traditions.

The people who live in San Francisco are also a source of pride and vitality. Their energy and tolerance are well known, and their various life styles add interest to the communities and neighborhoods of the city. For many residents, the San Francisco environment provides a sense of purpose, direction and belonging that can be matched in no other urban area. As in any city, it is the people who will decide what the city is to be like, through either their action or their acquiescence. By good fortune, the people of the Bay Area have emerged as leaders in the national awakening to issues of the environment. The consciousness of these issues among San Franciscans rises from an abiding awareness that their city is and always will be a fragile place.

As it entered the 1970's, San Francisco was experiencing strong pressures for development and change, and in some ways these pressures have continued to accelerate. With most of its land area already built upon, San Francisco will necessarily change and intensify as it grows. But the pressures for change have called to mind the unenvied experiences of other cities where unstructured and unabated growth has reached extremes now totally inconsistent with the traditions that are valued in San Francisco.

Development tends to follow a self-sustaining cycle of space needs, jobs, profits, taxes and national status that maintains the pressures for growth. In the long run, however, the most important effects upon the city are not economic but physical and social. Some of these effects are positive, or can be made so, but modern changes tend to be extremely potent and to have sharply visible negative effects: disruption of skyline form, increased auto traffic, more roadways, less open space, loss of older buildings and features, greater density and congestion, and pollution of the living environment.

Not all of San Francisco's physical problems come from growth. On the contrary, many are produced by the counter-trend of deterioration. Some areas of the city are disfavored by economic forces and have declined in vitality and appearance. Their buildings are unkept, and in them reside people who are isolated, hemmed in, and lonely. Other areas are in danger of similar physical decline, and still others are notable for the opportunities not yet taken to bring to them the best of San Francisco's design traditions.

In order to help meet these problems of growth, deterioration and lost opportunities, this report proposes a citywide, structured Urban Design Plan, the first of its kind in an American city. The Plan is intended to be followed and built upon as a broad, lasting basis for decision making and public confidence. It is a guide for choosing, in a given situation, among the available alternatives, as rationally as possible, with the probable consequences for the city known at the time of the decision, and with all the public values taken into account. That is the substance and purpose of planning.

The Subject Matter of Urban Design

Urban design is not just an academic discipline, or a pastime for visionary planners and architects. Neither is it coldly oriented to physical things rather than to people and their experiences. It has to do, above all, with the visual and other sensory relationships between people and their environment, with their feeling of time and place and their sense of well-being.

Application of good urban design produces a logic and cohesion in the physical form of the city, and a respect for the salient features that give character to the city and its districts. It is concerned with both preservation and development, and not with one to the exclusion of the other. It teaches that man can do great things in cities, but it also teaches him that he must have the humility to live with the environment rather than attempt to master it. In a city such as San Francisco, urban design is inseparable from economic and social vitality, and it has a major role in making the city at the same time more noble and more bearable.

Urban design planning is a response to human needs. It is part of the process of defining quality in the environment, and quality is based upon human needs. Quality means degree of excellence, and when applied to cities it depends upon pleasing physical relationships, a fitting together with scale and interest and without jarring contrasts. Over time, quality means cultural heritage, and things and values that last. For the city's residents it means a good life, and the ability to take for granted a certain measure of security, health, comfort, enjoyment and convenience, and freedom from over-congestion and pollution. Quality in life must also include a chance for privacy, for interesting activity and for achievement.

The Urban Design Study which produced the Plan in this report was carried out over a period of two years. It was conducted primarily by the urban design staff of the Department of City Planning, a staff created as a public commitment to the importance of urban design concerns in San Francisco. Significant contributions were made by consultants engaged for specific parts of the work, especially in evaluating existing design resources and in assessing community needs. The Department was fortunate in being able to obtain the bulk of the special financing for this project through an Urban Planning Grant from the United States Government.

During the course of the study the Department published eight preliminary reports which served as source documents for the Plan and which formed a basis for communication with the public at large. The preliminary reports described the study format; reviewed existing plans and programs related to urban design; made preliminary appraisals of objectives toward which the Plan should be directed at citywide, district, neighborhood and sub-neighborhood levels; analyzed the makeup of the city's form, image and design character; set out fundamental urban design principles found to be of specific concern in San Francisco; assessed neighborhood and social needs related to urban design; and investigated means of implementing urban design planning. The last of the interim reports, Report 8, was published in October 1970 and described on a preliminary basis the components of the Urban Design Plan which is now expressed in revised form in this report. The study method and the preliminary reports are more fully summarized in the Appendix at the end of this report.

Relation to THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Planning operates at many levels, and in different degrees of scope and time duration. But it is most effective and meaningful when it fits within a total framework. This framework is the city's comprehensive plan, or Master Plan as it is called in the San Francisco Charter. The Charter gives to the City Planning Commission and the Department a central role in government, with responsibility for "a comprehensive, long-term, general plan for the improvement and future development of the city and county." The policies in the Master Plan are a basis for both public and private decisions and actions affecting the city.

San Francisco's comprehensive plan is now undergoing a total revision for the first time in 25 years, in order to make it a more useful document in response to current and future needs. The work of revision has been separated into a series of elements, each representing a category of city concerns or facilities. These elements include residence, recreation, education, public safety, health care, social services, employment, industry, commerce, transportation and urban design. All of the elements are inter-related, and when combined in the comprehensive plan they will provide a strong basis for the setting of priorities for the whole community. Each element must be studied separately, however, and each is a distinct area of concern and of policy. For each element, therefore, there will be a separate Plan for inclusion in the total comprehensive plan.

Use of THE URBAN DESIGN PLAN

The main part of this report is proposed for adoption by the City Planning Commission, after public hearings and further revisions if necessary, as part of the San Francisco Master Plan.

As a part of the Master Plan, The Urban Design Plan will be followed by the Commission and the Department in formal reviews of the City's capital improvement proposals, referrals from the Board of Supervisors concerning streets and other matters, and cases arising under the provisions of the City Planning Code. The Plan will also be a guiding framework for future studies to produce area plans, development controls, and detailed neighborhood improvements.

This Plan is not a development plan or program to determine precisely what should be done, or when, or where. It is all-inclusive but more general, indicating types of programs, stating rules, and outlining the nature of appropriate controls. Its substance is *policy*, which is a guide and directive for courses of action and decisions that will be made in more specific situations.

Where the Plan is not used in formal actions by the Commission, it will nevertheless have other uses of equal importance. Among these uses are the following:

1. The Plan will be the basis for day-to-day urban design work by the Department of City Planning.
2. It will provide a guide for other City departments, agencies and commissions in decisions affecting urban design in their own operations.
3. It will inform architects, builders and developers of public guidelines for development that are considered important to the community.
4. It will provide general education in urban design to increase public awareness of the issues, focus the efforts of improvement groups, and influence the many small design decisions that collectively affect the character of the city.

Ultimately, the Plan can be described as a form of communication, a common language, or a system of reference points that will enlist community agreement. Most simply put, it is a definition of quality in the San Francisco environment.

Citizen Participation

If a plan is to be useful and its impact significant, it must be responsive to citizen concerns. Therefore, one of the foremost efforts in the Urban Design Study was to determine what the people of the city identify as the relevant issues. In such an effort, the first impression may be one of confusion, and the urban design questions may seem too intangible to be fairly measured. Public comments are made at various levels of detail, from many points of view, and with differing degrees of consciousness or conviction. Nevertheless, the messages have common themes and often it is only the emphasis that changes with each speaker.

Many of the major issues are well known, but usually only as they are reflected in the public reaction to individual development proposals. The broader urban design questions tend to be lost in the controversy over these proposals, and in preoccupation with a concern that a sound process for decision making has not been clearly established. At the same time, many decisions felt to be of lesser impact are rationally made but do not command the same puhlic attention.

In the Urban Design Study, both the major controversies and decisions and the minor ones have heen analyzed, and surveys of the city's form, imagc and character have helped to clarify the related issues. At the neighborhood level, where opinions tend to be less focussed and the issues more varied, special inquiries were made as to the interests and concerns of residents. The publication of preliminary reports in the Study produced additional comments. When all this information was gathered, it was found that il could be organized in an overall framework to which The Urban Design Plan could respond.

The Issues Raised

During the past ten to fifteen years, a number of controversies of major proportion have raised issues concerning the urban environment, and at times the reactions to proposed or accomplished developments have been characterized as public "revolts." These matters have received significant and sustained publicity, have involved large projects of heavy impact in the city, and have caused more than the normal involvement of community groups and individual citizens.

- Freeways, bridges, street widenings and other major roadway changes have nearly always brought opposition based upon the effect of these changes upon adjacent properties and natural areas, the probable increase in traffic and the change in the balance between automobiles and transit.

- Development of any kind on land traditionally held as open space has been opposed: notable examples are the Federal properties at the Presidio, Alcatraz and Forts Mason, Miley and Funston, the Sutro Baths property, the open hillsides of Twin Peaks, and City parks and squares for which non-recreation uses have been proposed.

- Indiscriminate filling of San Francisco Bay has been stopped by a strong campaign leading to State legislation and a Bay Plan administered by a special agency.

- Threatened destruction of historic landmarks such as the Old U.S. Mint and the Seawall Warehouse has generated efforts to preserve these structures for new uses and has caused creation of a special board to assist in such preservation.

- Street vacations and release of air rights over streets have raised questions as to the City's urban design priorities, and as to the absence of standards for determining when streets should or should not be given up and under what conditions.

- Major new buildings of extraordinary height and bulk have been opposed and criticized for their effects upon skyline, topography and views, their overwhelming appearance and lack of harmony, and the disruption of their immediate surroundings.

A certain pessimism has been raised by these controversies, often going so far as to urge that the city is losing its character and moving toward formlessness by a slow, steady erosion. The desirability of growth itself has been questioned, as density and bigness are seen as losing bargains that will strain not only the

city's image but also its transit, streets, open space, public services and other facilities beyond their reasonable capacity.

San Francisco's private design professionals — the architects, landscape architects and planners — have an unusual stake in these urban design controversies. They have been able, through their professional talents, to see the underlying design issues and to observe the public interest in them; at the same time, however, they have been bound to produce building plans that will be accepted by their clients. Many of these professionals have called, therefore, for a citywide urban design plan that both they and their clients will be expected to observe. A Joint Urban Design Committee made up of these professionals made known its strong feelings nearly five years ago, when it urged that without a plan and process for urban design decision making, "San Francisco is rapidly throwing away its reputation as the Nation's most beautiful city by following trends that eventually will make it unpleasant, either to live in or to visit."

The controversies over major development proposals have often produced confrontations that work counter to rational decision making. The confrontations come too late to affect the original proposals, and modifications can be made only after delay and additional cost. Extreme positions and arguments are assumed, and rarely are there sufficient points of common reference for an agreement to be reached without a show of political strength.

In this climate the developers and businessmen may feel they have as much of a disadvantage as the general public in arguing the merits of their proposals in terms of citywide needs. After initial objection to the concept of greater control, the developers may therefore be quite willing to follow

San Francisco Skyline 1960
San Francisco Skyline 1971

urban design guidelines if the guidelines apply to all developers and if they are known at the start of their projects. Furthermore, the political leaders, who are subjected to pressures from all the parties, have found that planning guidelines lessen the extremes and make their decisions easier and more effective.

What of public opinion in the neighborhoods? Are the major citywide controversies felt to be important there, or are the concerns and interests more immediate and local? Assessment of neighborhood outlook and opinions in the Urban Design Study has been as important as review of the citywide concerns, because satisfaction of human needs begins close to home and because the decisions affecting the local environment are more numerous than those at a citywide scale.

Communication with neighborhood residents and leaders occurs constantly in other planning activities. The Department attends neighborhood meetings, confers on work in progress, engages in area planning, and discusses zoning matters in preparation for public hearings. These forms of communication are productive, although often they focus on single buildings and projects and on issues not directly related to urban design.

In order to develop better information about neighborhood issues, the Urban Design Study conducted interviews and made other special contacts throughout the city.

- A "social reconnaissance" by a consultant interviewed residents in thirteen survey areas representative of various kinds of neighborhoods to determine how the people interviewed perceive their local environment, and what types of neighborhood improvements they feel would be most important.

- A park user survey by a second consultant interviewed visitors to six parks of diverse types in various neighborhoods, inquiring as to the ways in which the parks are used and the changes in facilities that are desired.

- A survey of street livability by still another consultant interviewed residents along streets representing light, moderate and heavy traffic conditions, in order to determine the effects of traffic volumes upon the attitudes and patterns of life of the residents.

- Questionnaires distributed with two of the preliminary study reports brought comments on urban design objectives and policies for the city and its neighborhoods, and on the interim proposals for the substance of The Urban Design Plan.

- The Urban Design Advisory Committee provided continuous review of the work in the Study, and contributed to the identification of issues and the formulation of objectives and policies.

- Presentation and discussion of the preliminary reports at public meetings resulted in comments as to the importance of various issues and the treatment of them.

- Other studies and surveys by the Department, apart from the Urban Design Study,

provided comparable information on neighborhood opinions and conditions related to urban design: among these were the interviews described in Report No. 3 of the Survey of Housing in 1969, and the study of neighborhood amenities conducted as part of the Community Renewal Program in 1965.

Surveys performed as part of the Urban Design Study are described in more detail in the Appendix.

The results of these surveys from different sources are remarkably similar, both as to the issues raised and as to the emphasis and priorities given to them. The outstanding issues in all cases had to do with street traffic and its related problems. The safety and comfort of neighborhoods were felt to be closely affected by the amounts and speed of traffic, and the noise, vibration, pollution, dirt and trash produced by the traffic. Hazards to children were frequently cited, as were the difficulties in entering and leaving garages on heavily used streets. Lack of street parking space was often mentioned, as well as the danger in opening car doors into the traffic lanes. There was a general feeling that traffic problems on residential streets were growing and would continue to get worse. The tendency of residents was to try to shut the street out from their houses and to learn to bear the discomfort.

Safety questions of other kinds, including the frequency of crime and violence, also rated high in the responses. A high ranking was given to the need for maintenance of streets by the City and maintenance of private properties by landlords and neighbors. Frequency of street paving and cleaning tended to be taken as an index of the quality of neighborhood upkeep.

Another matter of importance was the availability of child play space, adult recreation space and other open space, both on and off the resident's property. In the survey of park use, the park visitors were predominantly from the immediate neighborhood, and they tended to come frequently and alone, primarily to enjoy the quiet and natural setting of the park. On a wider scale, special importance was attached to the shoreline of the Ocean and Bay as a resource for recreation.

Some residents listed other types of concerns, but usually only if needs for safety, comfort and recreation were satisfied. The satisfied residents were able to give their attention to landscaping of streets and yards, interesting details in building facades, and removal of utility wires and other street clutter. For most people, concerns about the physical environment tended to be very personal matters: they wished for a tolerable and comfortable environment, safe and free from stress.

The issues expressed varied somewhat from neighborhood to neighborhood, but the differences merely reflected the prevailing family composition and age of residents, and the types of interests and activities they engaged in. Satisfaction was greatest overall in neighborhoods with lowest density and the best maintenance. In such areas the residents valued both the quality of the physical environment and the degree of privacy and neighborliness that this environment afforded.

A Framework for the Issues

Issues raised in various ways in the Study differ in viewpoint and emphasis, but taken together they show a considerable agreement upon basic human needs and upon what it is that makes San Francisco a great city, a worthwhile community and a good place to live.

Four general categories of issues may be defined,as follows:

1. CITY PATTERN. Disruption of the pattern that gives an overall character and image to San Francisco and to its distinctive districts.
2. CONSERVATION. Loss or dilution of irreplaceable resources with ecological, historic, aesthetic or form-giving values.
3. MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENT. Intrusion of new development which, through its visual dominance, height or excessive size, weakens or destroys important city or neighborhood qualities.
4. NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT. Erosion of the immediate environment that closely affects the daily lives of residents, through dangers to health and safety, deterioration of streets and properties, and lack of comfort or fulfilling experiences.

The perception of these issues by each citizen, and the importance he attaches to them, will depend upon his outlook and his own situation. For many, perception of issues at a citywide or district level tends to be an unaccustomed luxury because of overriding concerns in their own neighborhoods. For others, who find greater satisfaction in their immediate environment, a focussing on issues and satisfactions in the broader environment is possible. Such a focus brings personal fulfillment and also a sense of awareness that permits people to be more socially oriented citizens.

Are there issues affecting urban design that are not included in the four categories just defined? These categories concern the *substance* of city development, but development is also a *process*. There may be other issues, therefore, as to whether the community really cares about its environment, and whether a community that cares can put confidence in the ability of government and other institutions to protect the environment. The substantive issues can be addressed in a plan for urban design, but the process for achieving the plan must depend upon the sincerity, high motives and skill of the leadership chosen by the community.

The Response

The participation of citizens and their perception of the issues have helped to shape this Urban Design Plan. In the past, planning has responded to urban design issues in individual

parts of the city, and in those cases it has usually been positive and successful. Over the years, strong public interest in the views, skyline and character of development along the northern waterfront has resulted in a series of height limits, recently incorporated with other development criteria in the Northern Waterfront Plan as part of the Master Plan. A study of downtown issues led to amendments to the City Planning Code confining major development to certain areas, imposing height limits for preservation of skyline form and sunlight to public squares, and establishing a system of bonuses for building features with public advantages such as connections to transit stations, plazas and pedestrian passageways. Improvements for Market Street have been carefully designed and promise to make the street one of high quality and new vitality. A district plan for the large South Bayshore area has been drawn up with the residents and incorporated in the Master Plan. In Bernal Heights, an improvement plan stimulated by the neighborhood has been adopted and forms the basis for an upgrading of public and private properties under the Federally Assisted Code Enforcement (FACE) program. FACE projects in other neighborhoods have met with similar success. More extensive changes have occurred in redevelopment areas, and much of the new construction in those areas has been of exceptionally high quality.

These studies, plans and programs responding to specific needs and opportunities have been all to the good. When combined, however, they can only strive to form a total composite plan for urban design in the city. On the other hand, The Urban Design Plan is intended to be comprehensive. It includes and builds upon the urban design concepts contained in past planning, and will be the essential reference for future plans affecting portions of the city.

Defining Quality

If a plan for urban design is to define quality, it must determine what exists that is good, what needs to be improved, and in what respects the changes should be made. Once agreed upon, through adoption of the plan, such a definition of quality will be a basis for protection and enhancement of the environment, provided there is sufficient public will to see that the plan is carried out.

The pressures upon the environment, both willful and involuntary, are strong, and they are expected to increase. In the relationships between people and the environment, there are bound to be conflicts among interest groups and among individuals. Within each individual there also are conflicts: for example, most citizens enjoy the ease of travel by car in the city but abhor the increase in traffic in their own neighborhoods; most would not surrender the conveniences of modern living but are alarmed at the pollution they cause; and many find personal advantage in the employment and profits produced by development but hope to have the character of San Francisco remain as it has been in the past.

It is the job of planning to identify and resolve or minimize these conflicts. In the process, certain rights and certain options will be limited. Furthermore, planning cannot operate at its best in a continuing atmosphere of extreme positions and deliberate pluralism. This is especially true in urban design, where the emphasis is upon evolving design solutions with skilled professional assistance. For this reason, individual planning decisions ought to be made against a background of comprehensive, long-range planning that responds to present issues, anticipates future issues and establishes timely rules before the pressures on the environment cause extreme or irreversible positions to be taken.

In The Urban Design Plan that follows the four categories of concern, City Pattern, Conservation, Major New Development and Neighborhood Environment, are each covered in turn. In each case, human needs are identified and an overall objective relative to those needs is stated. Then fundamental principles concerning important urban design relationships are described, and policies are established as a guide for public and private actions toward realization of the overall objective. The final section of the report, following the Plan, describes the means for implementation of the Plan.

This Plan is proposed for adoption by the City Planning Commission, after public hearings and further revisions if necessary, as part of the San Francisco Master Plan. It is the result of a two year study by the Department of City Planning, based upon communication with the San Francisco community.

THE URBAN DESIGN PLAN

Nature and Purpose of the Plan

The Urban Design Plan is an element of the San Francisco Master Plan. It concerns the physical character and order of the city, and the relationship between people and their environment.

San Francisco's environment is magnificent, and the city is a great city, but the unique relationships of natural setting and man's past creations are extremely fragile. There are constant pressures for change, some for growth, some for decay.

The Urban Design Plan is concerned both with development and with preservation. It is a concerted effort to recognize the positive attributes of the city, to enhance and conserve those attributes, and to improve the living environment where it is less than satisfactory. The Plan is a definition of quality, a definition based upon human needs.

This is a general plan, responding to issues relating to City Pattern, Conservation, Major New Development, and Neighborhood Environment. In the case of each of these four types of issues, the Plan contains:

1. A review and definition of essential *human needs;*
2. An overall *objective* toward which both public and private efforts must be directed if the human needs are to be met and San Francisco's special characteristics are to be recognized, enhanced and conserved;
3. *Fundamental principles,* with graphic illustrations, reflecting the needs and characteristics with which the Plan is concerned, and describing the measurable and critical design relationships among parts of the environment such as open spaces, buildings, hills and streets; and
4. A series of *policies* necessary to achieve or approach the overall objective, which acknowledge the needs and principles, and which provide a continuing guide and directive for public and private decisions pursuant to this Plan.

CITY PATTERN

Human Needs

The agreeable pattern of San Francisco's appearance is, perhaps above all, what makes this a city with feeling. The pattern is a visual framework composed of the natural base upon which the city rests, together with man's development. In some ways the pattern is seen in two dimensions as though it were a map; in other ways it has a sculptural or three-dimensional form.

To describe the pattern is not to describe a rigid order, for rigidity will not produce a city meant for human needs. Rather than rigidity, the sense is one of balance and compatibility, with diverse and even random features fitting together to form the whole. The pattern is made up of:

WATER, the Bay and Ocean, which are boundaries for the city and a part of its climate and way of life. The water is open space, a focus of major views and a place of human activity.

HILLS AND RIDGES, which allow the city to be seen, define districts, and more than any other feature produce the variety that is characteristic of San Francisco. The central mass of Twin Peaks separates the city into quadrants, for example, while Telegraph Hill, Sunset Heights and Potrero Hill are neighborhoods. In the topographic form of the city, the valleys and plains are as important as the hills, for they define their own districts and give the hills their visual meaning.

OPEN SPACES AND LANDSCAPED AREAS, whose dark green patterns enrich the color of the city and define and identify hills, districts and places for recreation. These areas may be large, as at the Presidio, Lake Merced and Golden Gate Park, smaller but still prominent as at Bayview Hill and Alta Plaza, or mixed with buildings as on the slopes of Russian Hill and Buena Vista.

STREETS AND ROADWAYS, which unify the pattern, emphasize the hills and valleys, provide vistas and open space and determine the character of development. Streets and roadways are of many types, each with its own functions and characteristics, and together they make up a system that accommodates man's movements and joins the districts of the city.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES and clusters of them, which reflect the character of districts and centers for activity, provide reference points for human orientation, and may add to (but can detract from) topography and views. Some buildings and structures, such as the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges, Coit Tower, the Palace of Fine Arts and City College, stand out as single features of community importance, while elsewhere the dominant pattern of man's development is a light-toned texture of separate shapes blended and articulated over the landscape.

People perceive this pattern from many places and during many activities: from their homes and neighborhoods, from parks and the shoreline during recreation, from places of work, from the streets while traveling, and from entranceways and observation points while visiting the city.

The uses and benefits of the city pattern are many and profound. This pattern is, first of all, bound up in the image and character of

the city. To weaken or destroy the pattern would make San Francisco a vastly different place.

Second, the city pattern has important psychological effects upon residents of the city. It provides organization and measured relationships that give a sense of place and purpose and reduce the degree of stress in urban life. Outlooks upon a pleasant and varied pattern provide for an extension of individual consciousness and personality, and give a comforting sense of living with the environment.

The pattern also helps people to identify districts and neighborhoods, particularly those in which they themselves live. Recognition of such areas by their prominent features, their edges and their centers for activity breaks up a large and intense city into units that are visually and psychologically manageable. Furthermore, awareness of districts and neighborhoods increases the pride in one's area and in one's own life.

People also have a need to understand their city, its logic and its means of cohesion. They need to know where to find activities, and how to reach their destinations in shopping areas, downtown, at institutions and at places of entertainment and recreation. The city pattern helps them find their way, without inconvenience or lost time, letting them see the routes to be taken. Travel congestion is reduced if the best routes are easily found, and safety is increased.

Two of the controllable elements that help strengthen the city pattern are visually prominent landscaping and street lighting. Because these elements can be so easily affected in a positive way by human actions, and especially by programs of the City government, they are given important attention in the policies of

EXISTING STREET TREES AND LANDSCAPED AREAS

EXISTING STREET LIGHTING

this Plan. Opportunities for use of these elements are by no means fully realized now, and systems for landscaping and lighting are incomplete. As a consequence, parts of the city pattern that otherwise would be easily read are unclear, and the functions of the street system are apt to be confused both by day and at night. In addition, some areas of the city are favored by the amenities produced by good landscaping and lighting systems while others are not.

The human needs outlined above for the city pattern are further addressed by the fundamental principles that follow, and by the policies that conclude this section of The Urban Design Plan. In certain ways they are addressed, as well, in the other three sections of the Plan: by policies dealing with conservation of resources that are part of the city pattern; policies for moderation of major new development to enhance rather than detract from the city pattern; and policies to make the pattern more perceptible in the neighborhood environment. Such an interchange of needs and policies occurs throughout the sections of the Plan, for the Plan is a unified document and its sections are closely related.

Objective 1

EMPHASIS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC PATTERN WHICH GIVES TO THE CITY AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS AN IMAGE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND A MEANS OF ORIENTATION.

San Francisco has an image and character in its city pattern which depend especially upon views, topography, streets, building form and major landscaping. This pattern gives an organization and sense of purpose to the city, denotes the extent and special nature of districts, and identifies and makes prominent the centers of human activity. The pattern also assists in orientation for travel on foot, by automobile and by public transportation. The city pattern should be recognized, protected and enhanced.

Fundamental Principles for City Pattern

These fundamental principles and their illustrations reflect the needs and characteristics with which this Plan is concerned, and describe measurable and critical urban design relationships in the city pattern.

1

The city's overall visual structure can be strengthened and enhanced by use of large-scale planting on certain streets and open spaces.

2

Street layouts and building forms which do not emphasize topography reduce the clarity of the city form and image.

A: Tall, slender buildings at the tops of hills and low buildings on the slopes and in valleys accentuate the form of the hills.

B: Contour streets on hills align buildings to create a pattern of strong horizontal bands that conflict with the hill form.

3

Clearly visible open spaces act as orientation points, and convey information about the presence of recreation space to motorists and pedestrians.

COMMENT: Because Buena Vista Park is visible from many parts of the city, it is often used as a point of reference. The foliage, in contrast to the surrounding developed areas, indicates the proximity of recreational means.

4

Where large parks occur at tops of hills, low-rise buildings surrounding them will preserve views from the park and maintain visibility of the park from other areas of the city.

COMMENT: Areas around Mount Davidson and Twin Peaks have a pattern of low development. The hilltops are therefore citywide focal points of natural landscape, functioning much as Telegraph Hill's summit does in the North Beach area.

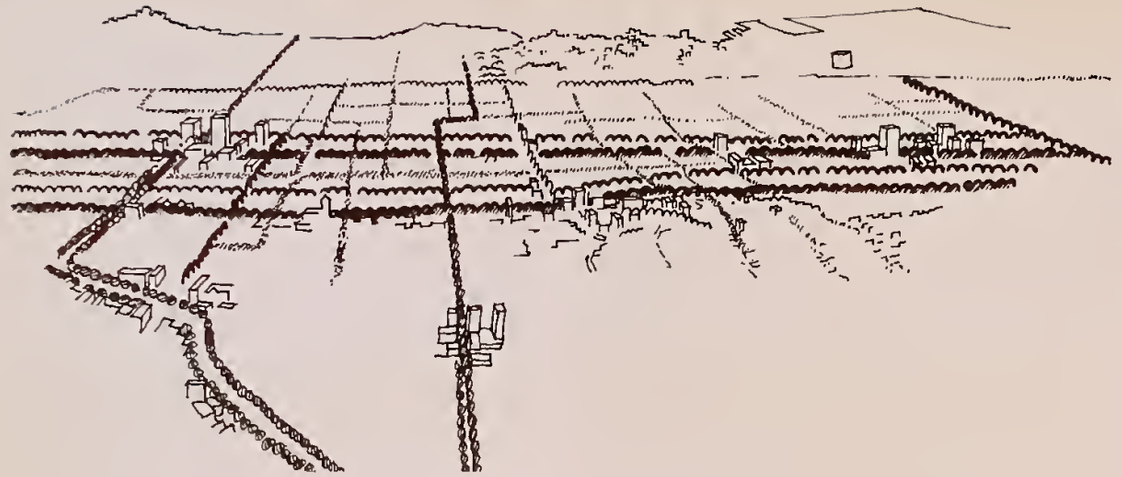
5

Street spaces impart a unifying rhythm to the pattern and image of the city.

6

Landscaped pathways can visually and functionally link larger open spaces to neighborhoods.

COMMENT: The roadside planting of Park Presidio and Sunset Boulevard, and the landscape connections between Mount Sutro, Twin Peaks, Laguna Honda and Glen Canyon are examples of a system that links parks and other open spaces to one another. Such linkages, creating strong defining features, can be extended to other parts of the city.



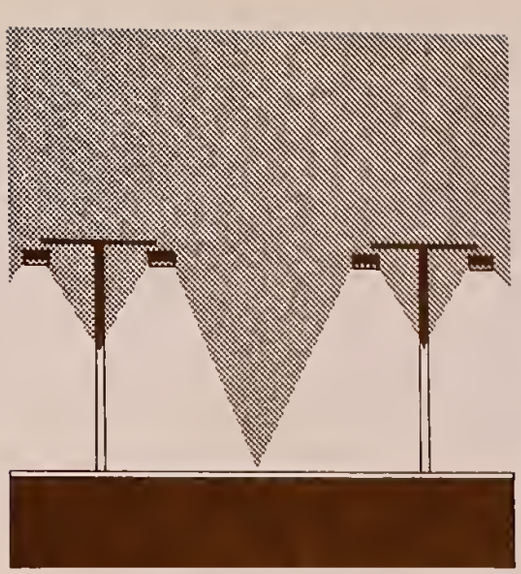
7

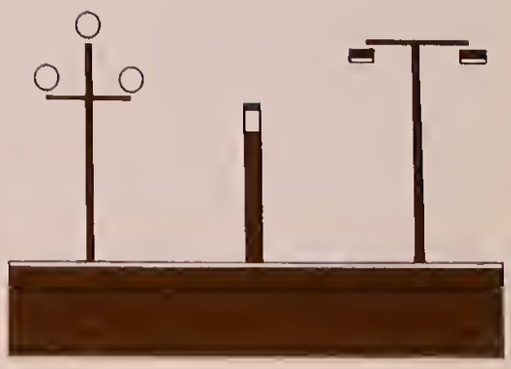
The pattern of major streets can be made more visible and apparent to users of the street system if the landscaping and lighting of major streets is different from that of local streets.

A: The consistent use of one type of tree, planted in regular intervals, can impart a sense of order and continuity appropriate to major through streets.

B: Informal, diverse patterns of planting and varieties of plant materials can act as an appropriate indication of local residential streets.

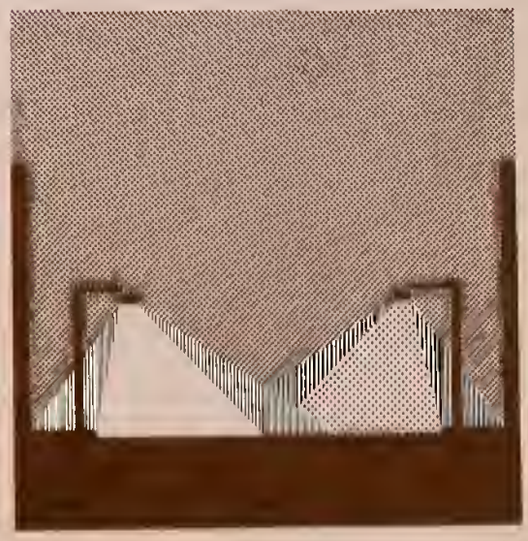
C: The difference between through and local streets can be made clearer by varying the apparent brightness, spread and color of light, as well as the height, spacing, and scale of street fixtures.





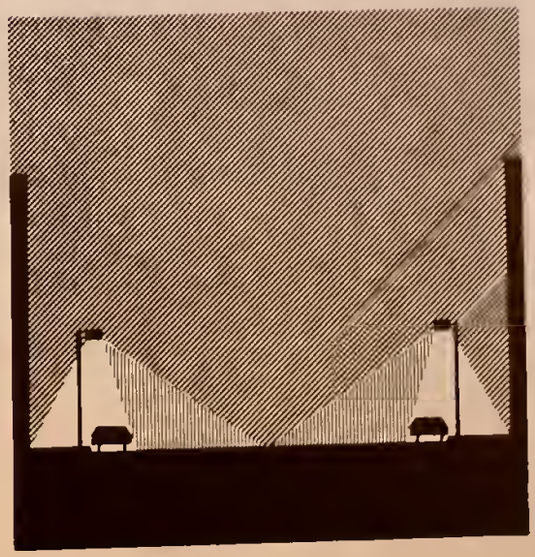
MAJOR THROUGH STREETS: Intense light, sidewalk and walls well-illuminated, blue-white light, paired spacing of high light standards.

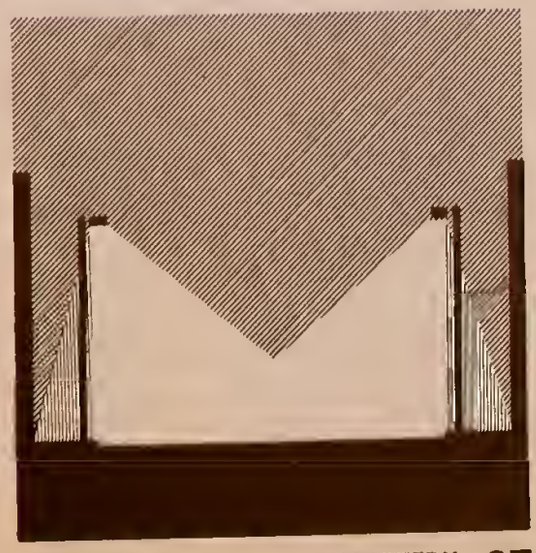
COLLECTOR STREETS: Well-lighted streets and sidewalks, color-corrected (white) light, alternate spacing of intermediate height light standards.



LOCAL STREETS: Low glare, warm color light, alternate spacing of low height light standards.

IMPORTANT INTERSECTIONS: More intense light focussed upon intersections and crosswalks.





8

Large-scale or extensive planting on major roadways that define areas of the city can enhance the importance of the roadways as both thoroughfares and visual boundaries.

COMMENT: The extensive landscaping along the James Lick Freeway at Potrero Hill is one example. Other "boundaries" such as Nineteenth Avenue, Ocean Avenue and Monterey Boulevard could be made clearer by such planting.

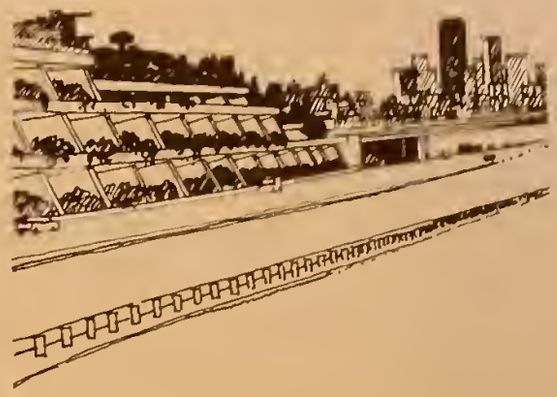
9

Special lighting fixtures and quality of light can enhance the identity of districts, distinctive areas, and important shopping streets.

10

Views from roadways that reveal major destinations or that provide overlooks of important routes and areas of the city assist the traveler in orientation.

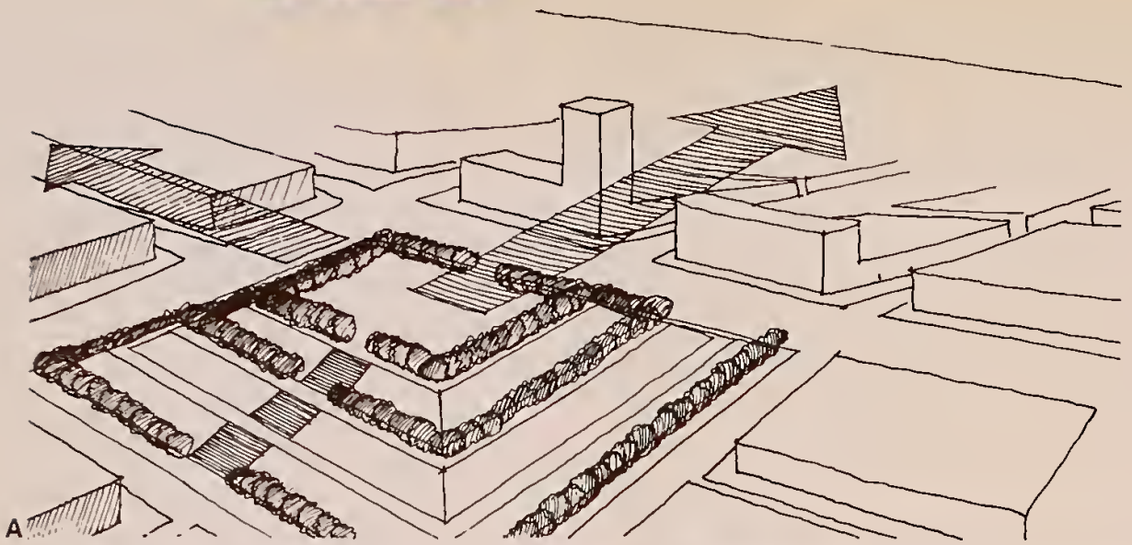
COMMENT: Traveling north along San Jose Avenue, the driver's position and direction are confirmed by the view of downtown across the Mission district.



11

Arterial routes can be clarified by screening unattractive or distracting elements with landscaping when such elements cannot be removed.

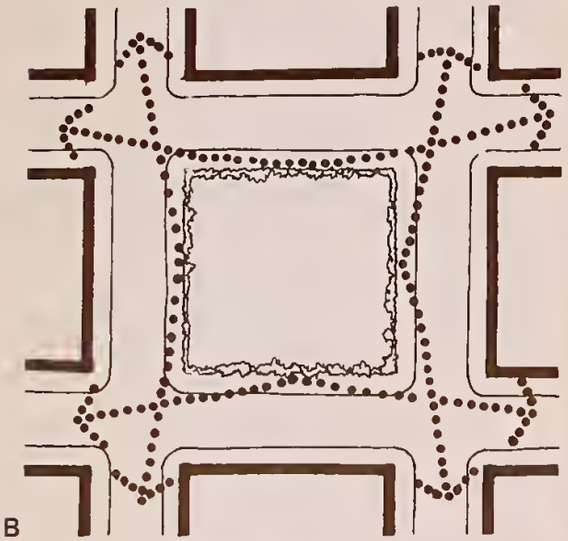
Natural foliage can soften and modify the effect of extensive retaining walls, large bleak surfaces or unattractive views. The terraced retaining wall along the east side of Potrero Hill is an example of such landscaping.



12

Open spaces with direct views down streets have a greater sense of spaciousness and can be seen more easily from a distance.

A: Hilltop open space larger than a block provides views down abutting streets.



B: Hilltop open space occupying a single block and surrounded by buildings provides views only from its edges, obliquely down streets.

C: Smaller open space on a hill occupying the street right-of-way provides direct views down the street.

13

Hilltop roads and open spaces provide panoramic views if adjacent buildings are far enough below the viewpoint.

14

Highly visible open space presents a refreshing contrast to extensive urban development.

15

Strong and organized development adjacent to parks creates an effective contrast and makes the street space between the two a pleasing space to be in.

Weak and disorganized development adjacent to parks neither complements nor effectively contrasts with the park edge.

16

Certain streets, because of unusual width or direction, are important form elements in themselves, giving identity to districts and order to the city structure.

COMMENT: Columbus Avenue and Market Street are examples of such streets. Any major interruptions of these streets would reduce their value as form elements.

17

Wide streets with low and/or scattered buildings are poorly defined and do not contribute to an orderly city pattern and image.

18

Green space closing a street provides an accent on an upper slope or top of a hill.

19

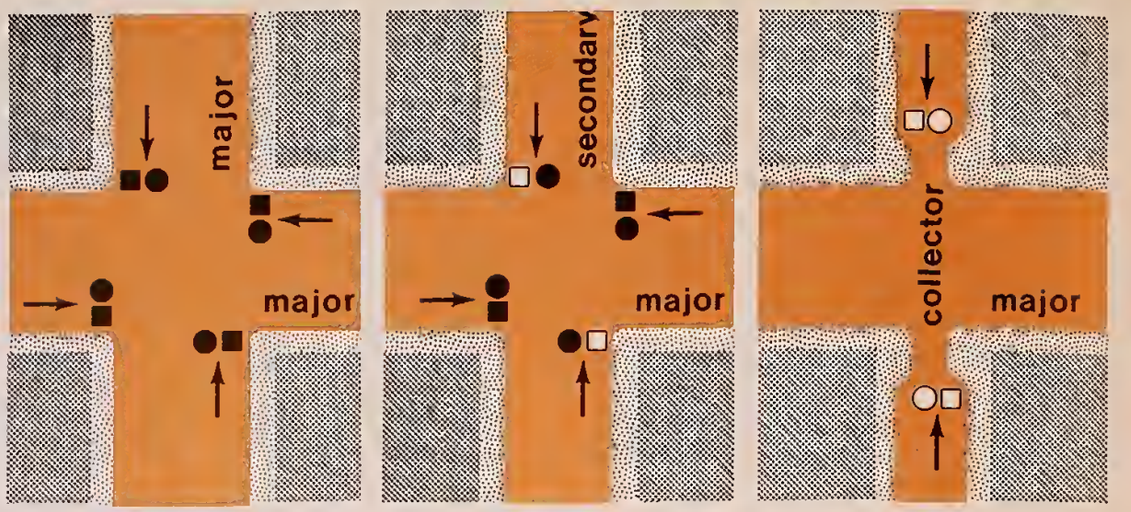
Uninterrupted grid streets in flat areas often result in monotonous vistas.

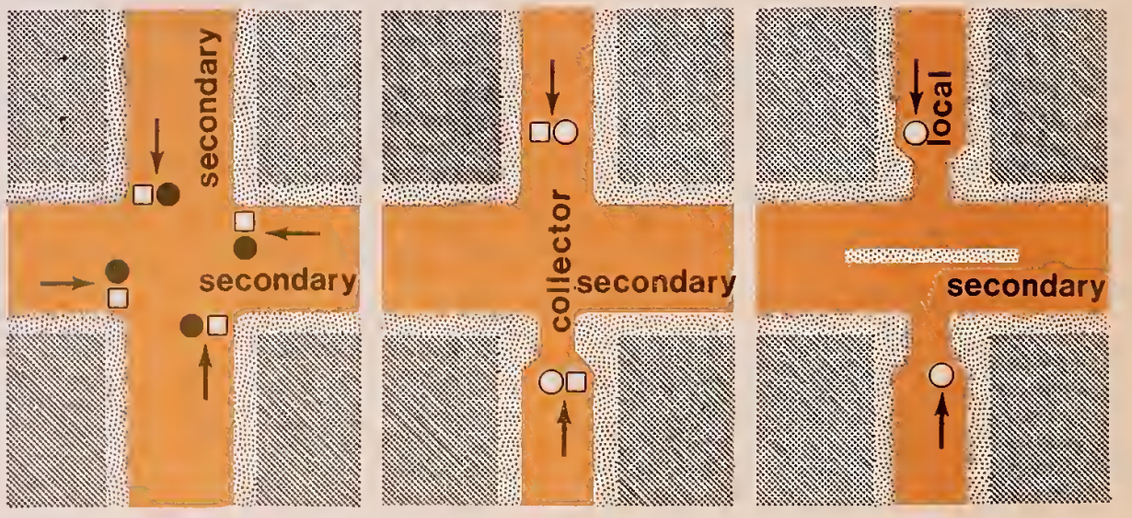
Closure formed by planting contains the street space, creating a more comfortable environment.

20

The width of intersecting streets, the information displayed on street signs, and the type and location of traffic control elements can indicate the function and relative importance of streets.

COMMENT: These diagrams illustrate how the relative importance of streets can be expressed at intersections. For some intersection conditions different arrangements of curb alignment, control devices or information may be required.



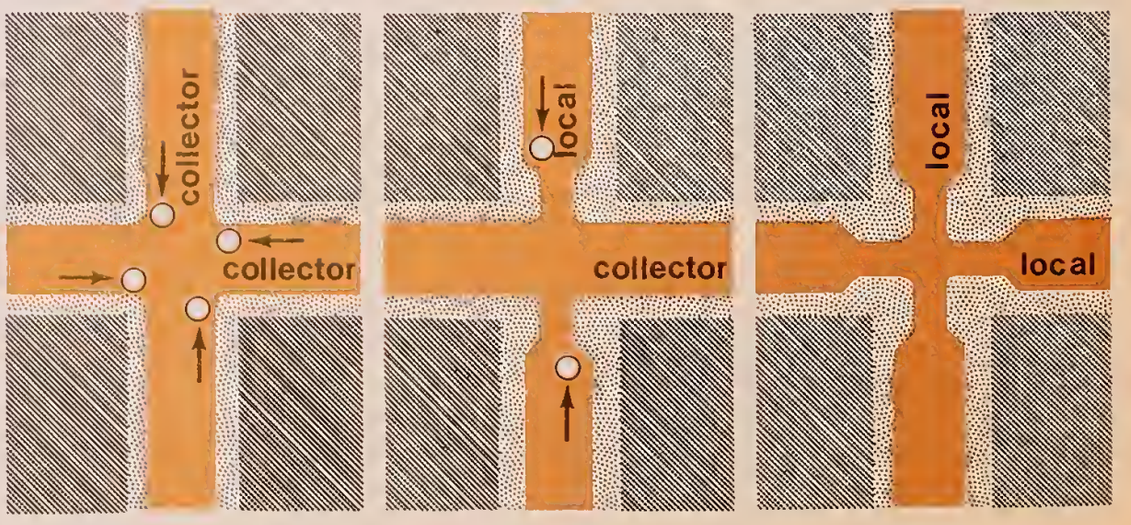


LEGEND

TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES
- ● Lights
- ○ Signs

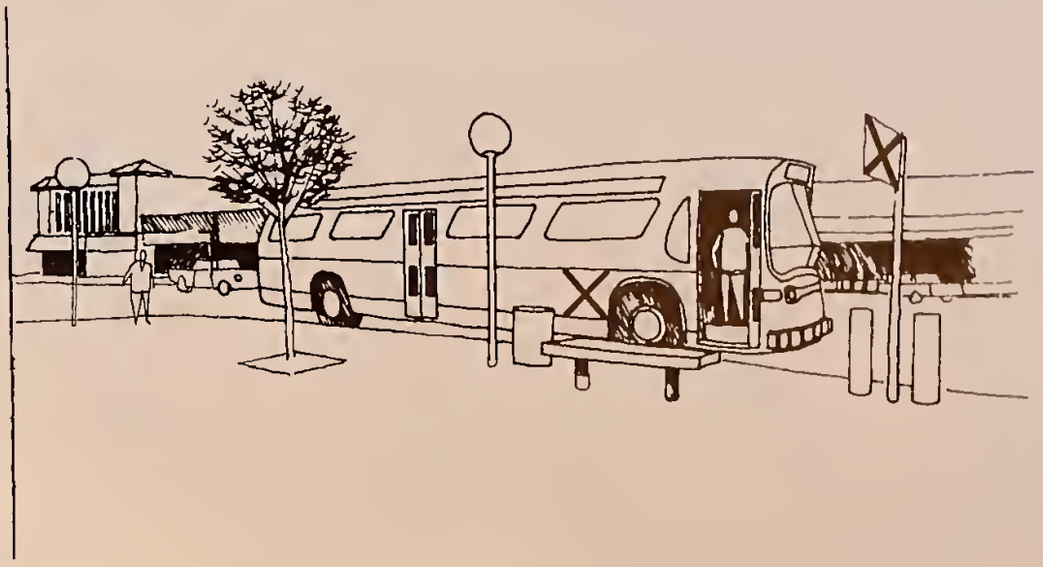
ROUTE, DESTINATION AND OTHER STREET INFORMATION
- ■ Important signs: Larger than used on other streets
- □ Optional signs: Smaller than used on major streets

DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC SERVED
→



21

Transit routes, stops and transfer points can be more easily understood and remembered if they are distinctively identified by signs, landscaping and illumination.



A: Attractive, easily seen symbols at bus stops that indicate the type of service and the route can facilitate use of the transit system.

B: The importance of transfer points can be expressed by the amount and type of landscaping, provision of shelters for waiting passengers, and nighttime lighting.

Policies for City Pattern

Image and Character

Policy 1

Recognize and protect major views in the city, with particular attention to those of open space and water.

Views contribute immeasurably to the quality of the city and to the lives of its residents. Protection should be given to major views whenever it is feasible, with special attention to the characteristic views of open space and water that reflect the natural setting of the city and give a colorful and refreshing contrast to man's development.

Overlooks and other viewpoints for appreciation of the city and its environs should be protected and supplemented, by limitation of buildings and other obstructions where necessary and by establishment of new viewpoints at key locations.

Visibility of open spaces, especially those on hilltops, should be maintained and improved, in order to enhance the overall form of the city, contribute to the distinctiveness of districts and permit easy identification of recreational resources. The landscaping at such locations also provides a pleasant focus for views along streets.

Policy 2

Recognize, protect and reinforce the existing street pattern, especially as it is related to topography.

Streets are a stable and unifying component of the city pattern. Changes in the street system that would significantly alter this pattern should be made only after due consideration for their effects upon the environment. Such changes should not counteract the established rhythm of the streets with respect to topography, or break the grid system without compensating advantages.

The width of streets should be considered in determining the type and size of building development, so as to provide enclosing street facades and complement the nature of the street. Streets and development bordering open spaces are especially important with respect to the strength and order in their design.

Streets cutting across the normal grid pattern produce unusual and often beneficial design relationships that should not be weakened or interrupted in building development. Special consideration should be given to the quality of buildings and other features closing major vistas at the ends of these and other streets.

Policy 3

Recognize that buildings, when seen together, produce a total effect that characterizes the city and its districts.

Buildings, which collectively contribute to the characteristic pattern of the city, are the greatest variable because they are most easily altered by man. Therefore, the relationships of building forms to one another and to other elements of the city pattern should be moderated so that the effects will be complementary and harmonious.

The general pattern of buildings should emphasize the topographic form of the city and the importance of centers of activity. It should also help to define street areas and other public open spaces. Individual buildings and other structures should stand out prominently in the city pattern only in exceptional circumstances, where they signify the presence of important community facilities and occupy visual focal points that benefit from buildings and structures of such design.

The form of buildings is covered in greater detail in this Plan under the section on Major New Development.

Policy 4

Protect and promote large-scale landscaping and open space that define districts and topography.

Open spaces provide a unifying and often continuous framework across the city. These open spaces are most prominent when they occur on hills and ridges and when they contain large trees and other large-scale masses of landscaping. Future landscaping efforts, both public and private, should be directed toward preservation of existing trees and other planting that contribute to this framework, and toward addition of large-scale landscaping that will add to and fill out the framework.

Where open spaces of any kind can be made more prominent by addition of new or large-scale landscaping, such additions should be made in order to enhance the city pattern and make the open spaces more visible in nearby neighborhoods. New building development should respect existing landscaping and avoid displacing or obscuring it. In the event that such landscaping must be displaced or obscured, a strong effort should be made to replace it with new landscaping of equal or greater prominence.

PLAN TO STRENGTHEN CITY PATTERN THROUGH VISUALLY PROMINENT LANDSCAPING

Organization and Sense of Purpose

Policy 5

Emphasize the special nature of each district through distinctive landscaping and other features.

The design of improvements for street areas, and to some extent for private properties as well, should capitalize on opportunities to emphasize the distinctive nature of districts and neighborhoods.

Street landscaping, in particular, can be selected and designed according to a special theme for each area, providing a sense of place in addition to its other amenities. Planting for public open spaces and on private properties can be carried out in the same way, taking account of established themes and the differences in climate among districts. Distinctiveness can also be imparted by preservation and highlighting of architectural features common to the area, and use of special materials and colors in buildings.

Policy 6

Make centers of activity more prominent through design of street features and by other means.

Shopping streets and other centers for activity and congregation of people should stand out in an attractive manner in their districts. In general, such centers may be expected to have buildings larger than those in the surrounding area, and a greater intensity.

Street landscaping of a type and size appropriate to the area should be used, as well as lighting that identifies the area through special fixtures and quality of light. Sidewalk treatment should be coordinated, with distinctive paving, benches and other elements suitable to the needs and desires of merchants, shoppers and other people using the area. Building facades and the total composition of the activity center should be designed to make clear the geographical extent of the center and its relationship to the district.

Policy 7

Recognize the natural boundaries of districts, and promote connections between districts.

Visually prominent features such as hills, roadways and large groves of trees often identify the edges of districts and neighborhoods. Although these features should not be regarded as barriers to movement from one area to another, they do have the advantage of creating an awareness of districts and neighborhoods within the total city pattern.

The positive effects of natural district boundaries should be emphasized in decisions affecting visually prominent features such as new roadways and large-scale landscaping. At the same time these same types of features can be useful links between districts, and between parks and other public and semi-public facilities. Connections between districts and facilities should be improved, with special attention to the possibilities for landscaped pathways that will provide an alternative to the street system in movement about the city.

Orientation for Travel

Policy 8

Increase the visibility of major destination areas and other points for orientation.

In travel about the city, the ability to see one's destination and other points of orientation is an important product of the city pattern. Such an ability should be fostered in public and private development.

The design of streets, the determination of street use and the control of land uses and building types along streets should all be carried out with the visibility of such orienting features taken into account. Views from streets and other public areas should be preserved, created and improved where they include the water, open spaces, large buildings and other major features of the city pattern. Entranceways to the city and to districts are of special concern in this respect, as are lateral and downhill views that show a panorama or corridor with prominent features.

Policy 9

Increase the clarity of routes for travelers.

Many types of improvements can be made in street areas and in their surroundings to provide greater clarity and increase the ease of travel. Once such improvements have been made, adequate maintenance of them is of equal importance.

Among the least difficult actions would be development of a better system of identifying and directional signs, through improvement of verbal messages, symbols, graphic design and sign placement.

Although trafficway signs should be improved, the purpose and direction of traffic channels should also be made as clear as possible through design of the channels themselves. The roadway should be consistent in width and materials, with channels separated by islands and dividers where possible and changes of direction made distinct. At intersections, the differences in importance and function of the intersecting streets should be made visually clear by differences in roadway width, landscaping and lighting. The number of streets intersecting at one point should be minimized, and signs and traffic control devices should be adequate to indicate the movements permitted in all traffic lanes.

The roadway environment should be simplified and made attractive through screening of distracting and unsightly elements by landscaping, walls and buildings. The clutter of wires, signs and disordered development should be reduced.

Clarity of routes is of similar importance for transit riders. Better trafficway signs and an ordered roadway environment will assist these riders. Other improvements should be made in the vicinity of transit vehicle stops: these include wider sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and waiting shelters to help identify the stops, and better signs at stops and on vehicles to explain routes, types and frequency of service, and transfer points.

Policy 10

Indicate the purposes of streets by means of a citywide plan for street landscaping.

Orientation for travel is most effectively provided where there is a citywide system of streets with established purposes: major through streets that carry traffic for considerable distances between districts, local streets that serve only the adjacent properties, and other streets with other types of assigned functions. Once the purposes of streets have been established, the design of street features should help to express those purposes and make the whole system understandable to the traveler.

One type of feature that can be readily adjusted to the street system is landscaping. Accordingly, a plan should be put into effect for street landscaping that indicates the relative importance of streets by the degree of formality of tree planting and the species and size of the trees. In addition to differences in traffic-carrying functions, the plan recognizes the width and visual importance of certain streets, the special nature of various activity areas, and the need for screening or buffering of residential uses along streets carrying heavy traffic. Special consideration is also required for major intersections, and for important views that should not be blocked by landscaping.

Policy 11

Indicate the purposes of streets by means of a citywide plan for street lighting.

The same considerations that apply to street landscaping under Policy 10 apply to street lighting as well. A plan similar to that for landscaping should therefore be carried out with respect to lighting, with the design and placement of lighting fixtures and the type of illumination determined by street type and other relevant factors.

STREET CROSS SECTION	LANDSCAPING	LIGHTING
	**Buffer Planting** • Screening effect where appropriate and possible • Trees and shrubs with close spacing • Variation in species and size • Include center median where street width allows • Maximize and enhance scenic opportunities	**Highest Intensity** • COLOR OF LIGHT: blue-white • LIGHT SOURCE: visible • LIGHT STANDARDS: high, alternate spacing
	**Formal Design** • Minimum variation in species • Large size trees • Even, close spacing • Include center median where appropriate	**High Intensity** • COLOR OF LIGHT: blue-white • LIGHT SOURCE: highly visible • LIGHT STANDARDS: high, paired spacing or in median
	**Less Formal Design** • Some variation in species • Medium to large size trees • Even spacing	**Medium Intensity** • COLOR OF LIGHT: white, color-corrected • LIGHT SOURCE: visible • LIGHT STANDARDS: medium high, alternate spacing
	**Informal Design** • Variation in species, size and spacing • Theme trees for districts	**Medium Intensity** • COLOR OF LIGHT: warm • LIGHT SOURCE: least visible or concealed • LIGHT STANDARDS: low, alternate spacing, pedestrian oriented

Note: Street cross sections are diagrammatic and indicate only the desired characteristics.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

●●●●● BRIDGE APPROACH LIGHTING: distinctive color

ACTIVITY AREA LIGHTING: high intensity, warm tone

IMPORTANT VIEWS: should not be blocked by landscaping

PLAN FOR STREET LANDSCAPING AND LIGHTING

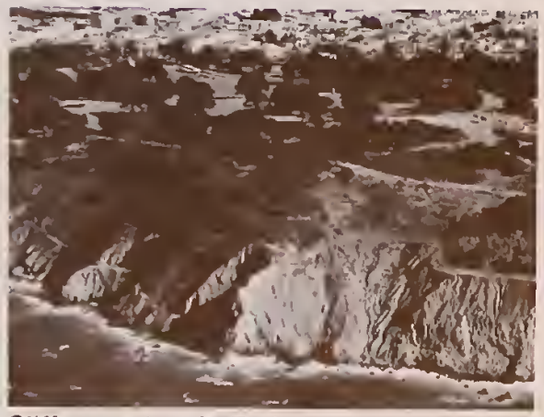
CONSERVATION

Human Needs

In the intensely urban environment of San Francisco, there are things that have not changed. These features provide people with a feeling of continuity over time, and with a sense of relief from the crowding and stress of city life and modern times. As the city grows, the keeping of that which is old and irreplaceable may be as much a measure of human achievement as the building of the new. Certainly, the old should not be replaced unless what is new is better.

Natural areas are one such irreplaceable resource. Few examples remain of the original sand dunes, hills, cliffs and beaches that once characterized the peninsula, and fewer still are the examples of natural ecology. Reduction of such areas by development has continued until recent time, and the city can be seen to have reached an irreduceable minimum if it is to keep a sense of unspoiled nature for future generations.

UNDEVELOPED NATURAL AREAS AND BAY FILL



Cliffs near Lands End
Corona Heights

Fort Funston

The natural areas answer human needs for rest, quiet, escape from the city's pace and freedom from confinement. They provide places to view the city from afar, but just as often they can turn the viewer's attention to the secluded interior of the area or to the expanses of the Ocean or the Bay.

The Bay is itself a resource of nature, although it has been encroached upon by filling and by barriers that prevent access to much of its present shoreline. Hardly any of the original shoreline remains, but the water of the Bay is still a natural area that can be seen and used by the city's residents as an important part of their lives.

The parks and other open spaces developed by man are also resources that change little over time. These areas often approach a natural state, and even as pure open space they would have value for recreation and relief from city congestion. Creation of substantial new open space is both financially and physically difficult, and therefore existing open space has even greater public value as time goes on.

McLaren Park

Older buildings, too, lend a sense of permanence and pleasant contrast. They are links with past history, and with earlier styles of development and of living. Buildings that endure maintain a continuous culture and may set standards of excellence with which contemporary development can be compared. In some cases certain buildings may be identified with specific people or events or with great architects. Such buildings are resources for education, recreation and other human enjoyment.

Historic buildings, and in fact nearly all older buildings regardless of their historic affiliations, provide a richness of character, texture and human scale that is unlikely to be repeated often in new development. They help characterize many neighborhoods of the city, and establish landmarks and focal points that contribute to the city pattern.

The work of San Francisco's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board has been notable as a dedicated effort to gain recognition for the city's heritage of older buildings. A number of landmarks have been designated, but many others are threatened and even those designated will not be permanently retained without the cooperation of their owners. Of equal importance to the designation of individual buildings is the recognition and protection of whole block frontages and areas that exemplify early architectural styles and a high quality of design character. The retention of many of the traditions of San Francisco is dependent upon an expansion of preservation efforts in the future.

DESIGNATED LANDMARKS

1. MISSION DOLORES
2. OLD SAINT MARY'S CHURCH
3. BANK OF CALIFORNIA
4. SAINT PATRICK'S CHURCH
5. SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH
6. HOLY CROSS PARISH HALL (OLD SAINT PATRICK'S CHURCH)
7. AUDIFFRED BUILDING
8. SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO OPERA HOUSE
9. BELLI BUILDING (LANGERMAN'S BUILDING)
10. GENELLA BUILDING (BELLI ANNEX)
11. HOTALING STABLES BUILDING
12. HOTALING BUILDING
13. HOTALING ANNEX EAST
14. MEDICO-DENTAL BUILDING
15. GHIRARDELLI BUILDING
16. GHIRARDELLI ANNEX – JACKSON STREET
17. COLONIAL DAMES OCTAGON HOUSE
18. GARDEN COURT OF THE PALACE HOTEL
19. GOLDEN ERA BUILDING
20. HOTALING ANNEX WEST
21. SAN FRANCISCO CITY HALL
22. SOLARI BUILDING EAST (LARCO'S BUILDING)
23. SOLARI BUILDING WEST (OLD FRENCH CONSULATE)
24. YEON BUILDING
25. MOULINIE BUILDING
26. BANK OF LUCAS, TURNER & CO
27. CROCKER-LENT ATHERTON BUILDING
28. OLD HOLY VIRGIN RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
29. OLD FIRE HOUSE, ENGINE 22
30. GHIRARDELLI SQUARE
31. BURR HOUSE
32. ABNER PHELPS HOUSE
33. COLUMBUS TOWER (SENTINEL BUILDING)
34. ORIGINAL UNITED STATES MINT AND SUB-TREASURY
35. STADTMULLER HOUSE
36. FEUSIER OCTAGON HOUSE
37. BOURN MANSION
38. HALLIDIE BUILDING

Colonial Dames Octagon House

Hotaling Building
Mission Dolores

Koshland House - Potential Landmark
Houses on Buena Vista Ave. East

Houses on Castro Street
Fortifications in the Presidio

STRUCTURES AND AREAS OF HISTORIC OR ARCHITECTURAL MERIT

There are other developed areas which, though they may not contain individual buildings that are historic or otherwise outstanding, have a special character worthy of preservation. These areas have an unusually fortunate relationship of building scale, landscaping, topography and other attributes that makes them indispensable to San Francisco's image. Threats to the character of these areas are sure to be met with intense concern by their own residents and by the public at large.

QUALITY OF VISUAL FORM AND CHARACTER

STREET AREAS IMPORTANT TO PERCEPTION OF THE CITY

The city's streets are a further resource to be conserved. Their value is not merely in the carrying of traffic. Streets are important in perception of the city pattern, since they make visible the city's outstanding features and its points of orientation. Streets also help regulate the organization and scale of building development, spacing out buildings and giving continuity to their facades.

Good views are another product of the street system. A majority of the city's streets may be said to have pleasing views of the Bay, the Ocean, distant hills or other parts of the city. Where good views are not available, streets can still function as open space for use by neighborhood residents and for landscaping to bring some sense of nature to the area.

STREETS IMPORTANT FOR THEIR QUALITY OF VIEWS

Where the intensity of development is high, streets may even be necessary to maintain decent levels of light and air for residents and for pedestrians. In these areas, streets are the "breathing space" that permits buildings to reach high density on private properties. In other functions, streets also carry a complex of utility lines and provide access for truck deliveries and police and fire protection.

With this great variety of public values in the street system, it is necessary that clear policies be established to determine when streets must be retained in their present state, and when, under exceptional circumstances, street areas may be released for other uses consistent with the public interest.

WHERE STREETS ARE MOST IMPORTANT AS SOURCES OF LIGHT, AIR AND OPEN SPACE

Objective 2

CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES WHICH PROVIDE A SENSE OF NATURE, CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST, AND FREEDOM FROM OVER-CROWDING.

If San Francisco is to retain its charm and human proportion, certain irreplaceable resources must not be lost or diminished. Natural areas must be kept undeveloped for the enjoyment of future generations. Past development, as represented both by distinctive buildings and by areas of established character, must be preserved. Street space must be retained as valuable public open space in the tight-knit fabric of the city.

Fundamental Principles for Conservation

These fundamental principles and their illustrations reflect the needs and characteristics with which this Plan is concerned, and describe measurable and critical urban design relationships for conservation.

1

Natural areas and features such as sand dunes, cliffs, hills and beaches — particularly where a relatively undisturbed natural ecology exists — are irreplaceable and of special public value and benefit within an intensely developed city.

A: The function and beauty of natural areas are significantly diminished by the intrusion of trafficways, parking lots and buildings. These facilities detract less when located in areas that have already been built upon or otherwise developed.

B: Development for human activity within these areas, such as pathways and service buildings, must be carefully located and designed if it is not to damage the natural landscape.

C: The value of natural areas can be diminished by views of buildings, parking lots and trafficways in adjacent areas.

2

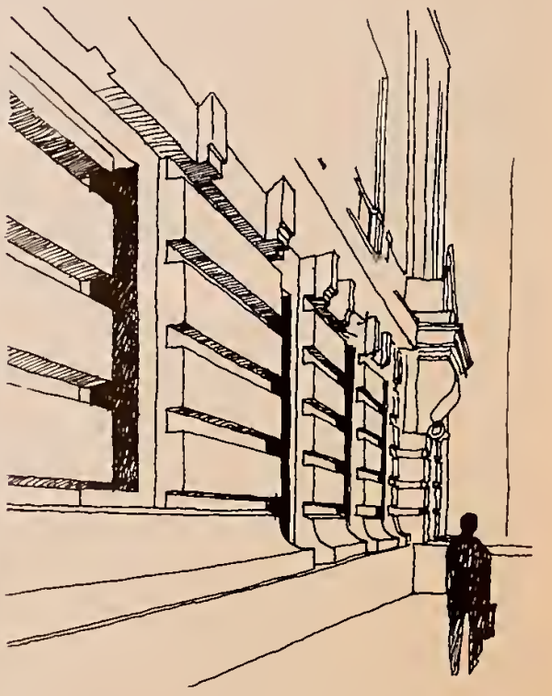
New development can enhance and preserve San Francisco's distinctive qualities if it is designed with consideration for the prevailing design character and the effect on surroundings.

3

External details in building facades, entries, stairways, retaining walls and other features provide visual interest and enrichment and are consistent with the historic scale and texture of San Francisco.

A: Richly detailed facades enhance the character of the street by giving it greater visual variety. Such detail often reduces building facades and textures to a more human scale and makes the street a more pleasant place to be.

B: Even blank walls may possess visual interest if they are textured and scaled.



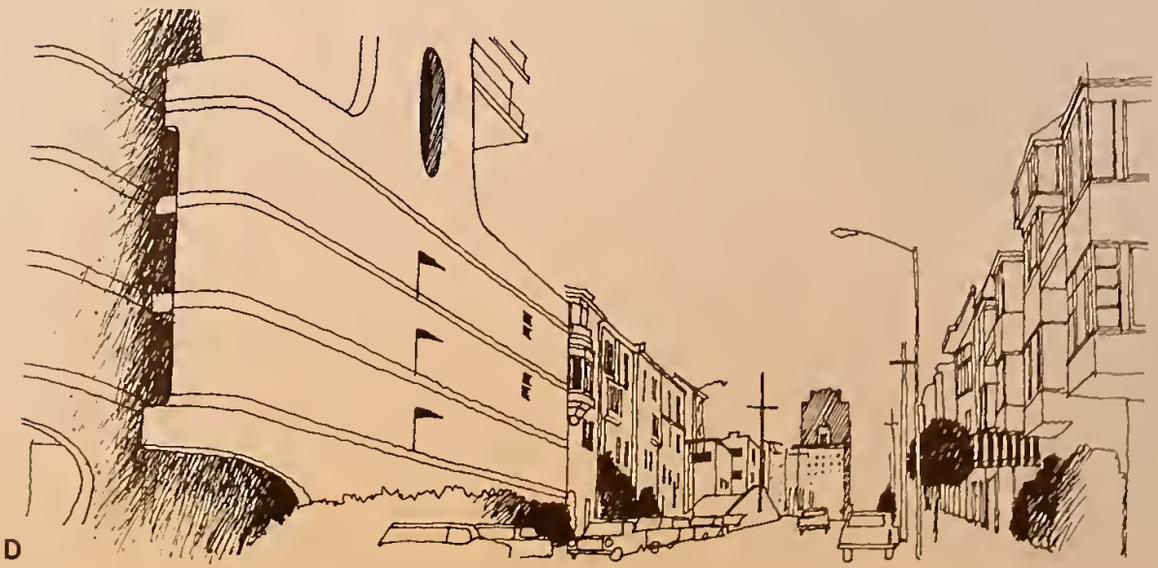
4

To conserve important design character in historic or distinctive older areas, some uniformity of detail, scale, proportion, texture, materials, color and building form is necessary.

A: Large buildings impair the character of older, small-scale areas if no transition is made between small-scale and large-scale elements.

B: New blank facades introduced into areas of older, more detailed buildings detract from neighborhood character.

C: New buildings using textured materials with human-scaled proportions are less intrusive in older areas characterized by fine details and scale.



D: Visually strong buildings which contrast severely with their surroundings impair the character of the area.

5

Preservation of San Francisco's strong and continuous downtown street facades will ensure maintenance of that area's distinctive character and spatial quality.

A consistent commercial facade on neighborhood shopping streets will give definition to these areas and promote activity.

6

New construction can have a positive effect on the area around it if it reflects the character of adjacent older buildings of architectural merit.

7

Renovation and restoration of older, well-designed buildings can preserve the character and interest of the streetscape if the original building design is respected in use of materials and details.

On commercial buildings, signs that fit within the architectural order of the facade do not obscure or damage the building's integrity.

COMMENT: Renovation of the old White House building includes signs that fit the building's facade. The architectural order of the Lincoln Building is almost totally obscured by signs.

8

Historic buildings represent crucial links with past events and architectural styles and, when preserved, afford educational, recreational, cultural and other benefits.

A: Historic buildings often serve as landmarks and focal points for interest or orientation and add to a neighborhood's visual image.

B: Relatively homogeneous groupings of buildings of architectural and historic merit, such as in Jackson Square, are especially rare and irreplaceable.

9

Historic buildings and grounds often provide necessary visual open space or passive recreation areas. Open space in the city can be supplemented by enhancing the semi-recreational functions of historic areas.

Historic buildings and grounds open to the public can function as a recreational resource.

10

Preservation of some older, low and small-scaled buildings and grounds amidst larger building towers will help conserve unique cityscape character, maintain a sense of openness and green space, and produce a more livable environment.

11

Building of parking garages under parks can seriously lessen their natural qualities when the access ramps, air vent and elevator structures and other changes in the park's surface intrude upon the landscape.

12

Street space provides an important form of public open space, especially in areas of high density that are deficient in other amenities.

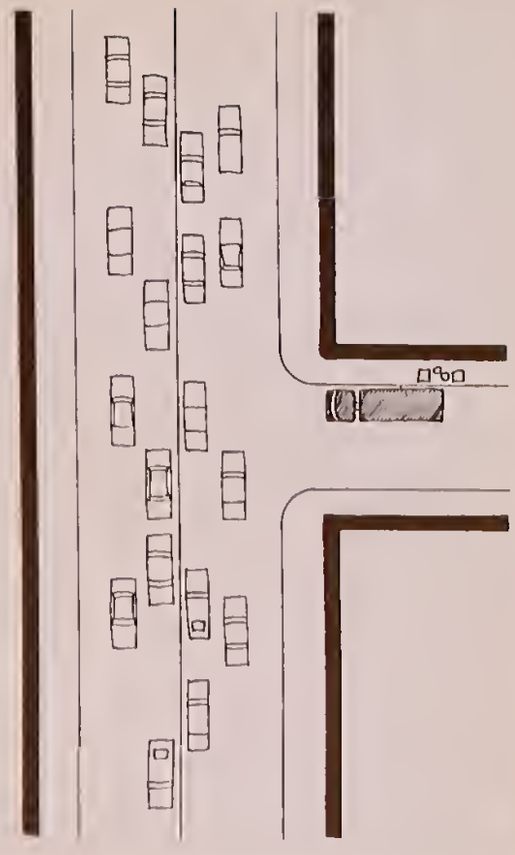
COMMENT: Alleys and streets in Chinatown and in the Mission district often serve as recreation places. Building in the street would remove this important resource.

13

Street space provides light, air, space for utilities and access to property.

COMMENT (a): Building development in or over street spaces can reduce light and air.

COMMENT (b): Alleys and small street spaces are often one of the few means for trucks and other service vehicles to stop out of the main stream of traffic. Vacation of them could add to the congestion of other city streets.



14

Street space serves as a means to control and regulate the scale and organization of future development by: a. protecting against the accumulation of overly large parcels of property under single ownership on which massive buildings could be constructed; and b. indirectly controlling the visual scale and density of development, as well as maintaining continuity of facades.

COMMENT: Once vacated, a street space could be built upon to allowable densities. In some critical areas of the city, the addition of dwelling units or floor space on vacated street areas might be acutely felt.

15

Traditional street patterns and spaces can often be essential to maintaining an appropriate setting for historical and architectural landmarks or areas.

COMMENT: Development in the street space abutting historic buildings would destroy the setting.

16

Views from streets can provide a means for orientation and help the observer to perceive the city and its districts more clearly.

17

Blocking, constriction or other impairment of pleasing street views of the Bay or Ocean, distant hills, or other parts of the city can destroy an important characteristic of the unique setting and quality of the city.

Policies for Conservation

Natural Areas

Policy 1

Preserve in their natural state the few remaining areas that have not been developed by man.

Natural areas in the city that remain in their original state are irreplaceable and must not be further diminished. Significant development should not take place in these areas, and facilities necessary to aid in human enjoyment of them should not disturb their visual feeling or natural ecology. Accordingly, parking lots and service buildings should be confined to areas that are already developed, and access pathways should be designed to have a minimum effect upon the natural environment. Where possible, the interior of these natural areas should be out of sight of the developed city.

Lands in public ownership, primarily those of the City and Federal governments, constitute the bulk of these natural areas. Coordinated programs for conservation of both land features and ecology should be carried out, with high priority given to such management functions. Where natural areas are in private ownership, either special incentives or public acquisition should be used to assure a similar degree of preservation.

Policy 2

Limit improvements in other open spaces having an established sense of nature to those that are necessary, and unlikely to detract from the primary values of the open space.

The recreation and open space values of parks and other open and landscaped areas developed by man ought not to be reduced by unrelated or unnecessary construction. These resources are not expected to be increased substantially in future time, whereas the public need for them will surely grow.

Facilities placed in these areas should be of a public nature and should add to rather than decrease their recreation and open space values. Facilities that can be accommodated outside of established parks and open spaces should be placed at other appropriate locations. Where new facilities are necessary in these parks and open spaces, they should be sited in areas that are already partially developed in preference to areas with a greater sense of nature.

Through traffic, parking lots and major buildings should be kept out of established parks and open spaces where they would be detrimental to recreation and open space values. Parking garages and other facilities should not be placed beneath the surface in these areas unless the surface will retain its original contours and natural appearance. Realignment of existing trafficways in these areas should avoid destruction of natural features and should respect the natural topography with a minimum of cutting and filling. The net effect of any changes in parks and open spaces should be to enhance their visual qualities and beneficial public use.

Policy 3

Avoid encroachments on San Francisco Bay that would be inconsistent with the Bay Plan or the needs of the city's residents.

The filling of San Francisco Bay over more than a century has already reduced the size of the Bay and the quality and extent of its natural shoreline below acceptable limits. Further filling and replacement of filled areas should be severely limited to cases in which there are strong public purposes to be served and clear opportunities for increased public use and enjoyment of the Bay and its shoreline. These basic policies have been established on a regional basis by the San Francisco Bay Plan.

Development on the Bay shoreline should be related both to the water of the Bay and to the uses and activities that occur inland. Specific plans for sectors of the shoreline adopted by the City should govern the urban design aspects of detailed development, and should emphasize access to the Bay by the city's residents.

Access to the Bay should be considered as a total system in which a maximum of communication with the water is made possible consistent with other shoreline uses. Access includes physical contact with the water and the shore at recreation areas, and it also includes visual contact through views of the water and of water-related activities. The system of access requires careful review of development and land use at the water's edge, and similar review of projects further inland that will affect physical and visual contact with the water.

Policy 4

Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

Older buildings that have significant historical associations, distinctive design or characteristics exemplifying the best in past styles of development should be permanently preserved. The efforts of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board should be supported and strengthened, and a continuing search should be made for new means to make landmarks preservation practical both physically and financially.

Criteria for judgment of historic value and design excellence should be more fully developed, with attention both to individual buildings and to areas or districts. Efforts for preservation of the character of these landmarks should extend to their surroundings as well. Preservation measures should not, however, be entirely bound by hard-and-fast rules and labels, since to some degree all older structures of merit are worthy of preservation and public attention. Therefore, various kinds and degrees of recognition are required, and the success of the preservation program will depend upon the broad interest and involvement of property owners, improvement associations and the public at large.

Policy 5

Use care in remodeling of older buildings, in order to enhance rather than weaken the original character of such buildings.

Although the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and other agencies have certain powers relative to the exterior remodeling of designated landmarks, the problem of detrimental remodelings is far broader. The character and style of older buildings of all types and degrees of merit can be needlessly hidden and diminished by misguided improvements. Architectural advice, and where necessary and feasible the assistance of public programs, should be sought in order to assure that the richness of the original design and its materials and details will be restored.

Care in remodelings should be exercised in both residential and commercial areas. Along commercial streets, the signs placed on building facades must be in keeping with the style and scale of the buildings and street, and must not interfere with architectural lines and details. Compatible signs require the skills of architects and graphics designers. In commercial areas as well as residential neighborhoods, the interest and participation of property owners and occupants should be enlisted in these efforts to retain and improve design quality.

Policy 6

Respect the character of older development nearby in the design of new buildings.

Similar care should be exercised in the design of new buildings to be constructed near historic landmarks and in older areas of established character. The new and old can stand next to one another with pleasing effects, but only if there is a similarity or successful transition in scale, building form and proportion. The detail, texture, color and materials of the old should be repeated or complemented by the new.

Often, as in the downtown area and many district centers, existing buildings provide strong facades that give continuous enclosure to the street space or to public plazas. This established character should also be respected. In some cases, formal height limits and other building controls may be required to assure that prevailing heights or building lines or the dominance of certain buildings and features will not be broken by new construction.

Policy 7

Recognize and protect outstanding and unique areas that contribute in an extraordinary degree to San Francisco's visual form and character.

All areas of San Francisco contribute in some degree to the visual form and image of the city. All require recognition and protection of their significant positive assets. Some areas may be more fortunately endowed than others, however, with unique characteristics for which the city is famous in the world at large. Where areas are so outstanding, they ought to be specially recognized in urban design planning and protected, if the need arises, from inconsistent new development that might upset their unique character.

These areas do not have buildings of uniform age and distinction, or individual features that can be readily singled out for preservation. It is the combination and eloquent interplay of buildings, landscaping, topography and other attributes that makes them outstanding. For that reason, special review of building proposals may be required to assure consistency with the basic character and scale of the area. Furthermore, the participation of neighborhood associations in these areas in a cooperative effort to maintain the established character, beyond the scope of public regulation, is essential to the long-term image of the areas and the city.

OUTSTANDING AND UNIQUE AREAS

TELEGRAPH HILL

A hilltop park with the highly visible green of trees from which Coit Tower rises above all else.

Low, small-scale buildings having predominantly flat roofs and light pastel colors, hugging the topography in a highly articulated form which contrasts with the power of downtown construction.

Cliffs and complex stairs and walkways on the east side above the waterfront, with buildings perched precariously along the slope and trees interspersed.

Intimate pedestrian scale and texture of streets and housing, with sudden and dramatic views of the Bay and downtown through narrow openings.

RUSSIAN HILL

A harmonious, balanced relationship of low, small-scale older buildings and tall, slender towers. Increasing height of buildings toward the top that emphasizes the hill form and sets Russian Hill apart from other high areas to the south and west.

Varied and well-tended landscaping in parks, yards and streets that provides a rich background for the buildings and a cascading effect on the slopes.

Highly detailed buildings and many retaining walls that articulate the hill and provide warmth of color.

PACIFIC HEIGHTS

A sequence of building heights rising steadily up the north slope to the top of the ridge. Emphasis of this sequence, and of the contrasts of low and high buildings, by the dark colors of trees and houses at the base of lighter apartment towers.

Outstanding Bay views down streets and across the formally landscaped grounds of detached houses.

Spacious and distinguished residences with richness of detail and materials, including works of outstanding architects and excellent examples of the Victorian period.

Well-landscaped and well-proportioned street areas, with building setbacks and fine details in stairways, fences and paving patterns.

BUENA VISTA AND UPPER MARKET

Exceptional variety produced by differences in street patterns across an uneven chain of hills, and a diverse mixture of building styles and roof types.

A finely scaled building pattern of small wall surfaces and pastel colors, with highly visible planting on steep slopes.

Hilltop parks easily seen from below, with excellent views of the city from a central location.

Houses of varied sizes and individual forms having interesting setbacks, cornices and bay windows, many of notable architectural quality.

DOLORES HEIGHTS

A uniform scale of buildings, mixed with abundant landscaping in yards and steep street areas.

Rows of houses built from nearly identical plans that form complete or partial block frontages, arranged on hillside streets as a stepped-down series of flat or gabled roofs.

Building setbacks with gardens set before Victorian facades and interesting entryways.

Street Space

Policy 8

Maintain a strong presumption against the giving up of street areas for private ownership or use, or for construction of public buildings.

Street areas have a variety of public values in addition to the carrying of traffic. They are important, among other things, in the perception of the city pattern, in regulating the scale and organization of building development, in creating views, in affording neighborhood open space and landscaping, and in providing light and air and access to properties.

Like other public resources, streets are irreplaceable, and they should not be easily given up. Short-term gains in stimulating development, receipt of purchase money and additions to tax revenues will generally compare unfavorably with the long-term loss of public values. The same is true of most possible conversions of street space to other public uses, especially where construction of buildings might be proposed. A strong presumption should be maintained, therefore, against the giving up of street areas, a presumption that can be overcome only by extremely positive and far-reaching justifications.

Policy 9

Review proposals for the giving up of street areas in terms of all the public values that streets afford.

Every proposal for the giving up of public rights in street areas, through vacation, sale or lease of air rights, revocable permit or other means, shall be judged with the following criteria as the minimum basis for review:

a. No release of a street area shall be

recommended which would result in:

(1) Detriment to vehicular or pedestrian circulation;
(2) Interference with the rights of access to any private property;
(3) Inhibiting of access for fire protection or any other emergency purpose, or interference with utility lines or service without adequate reimbursement;
(4) Obstruction or diminishing of a significant view, or elimination of a view point;
(5) Elimination or reduction of open space which might feasibly be used for public landscaping or public recreation;
(6) Elimination of street space adjacent to a public facility, such as a park, where retention of the street might be of advantage to the public facility;
(7) Elimination of street space that has formed the basis for creation of any lot, or construction or occupancy of any building, according to standards that would be violated by discontinuance of the street;
(8) Enlargement of a property for the purpose of permitting additional dwelling units in multi-family areas;
(9) Reduction of street space in areas of high building intensity, without provision of new open space in the same area of equivalent amount and quality and reasonably accessible for public enjoyment;
(10) Removal of significant natural features, or detriment to the scale and character of surrounding development;
(11) Adverse effect upon any element of the Master Plan or upon an area plan or other plan of the Department of City Planning; or
(12) Release of a street area in any situation in which the future development or use of such street area and any property of which it would become a part is unknown.

b. Release of a street area may be considered favorably when it would not violate any of the above criteria and when it would be:
   (1) Necessary for a resubdivision, redevelopment project or other project involving assembly of a large site, in which a new and improved street pattern would be substituted for the existing street pattern;
   (2) In furtherance of an industrial project where the existing street pattern would not fulfill the requirements of modern industrial operations;
   (3) Necessary for a significant public or semi-public use, where the nature of the use and the character of the development proposed present strong justifications for occupying the street area rather than some other site;
   (4) For the purpose of permitting a small-scale pedestrian crossing consistent with the principles and policies of The Urban Design Plan; or
   (5) In furtherance of the public values and purposes of streets as expressed in The Urban Design Plan and elsewhere in the Master Plan.

Policy 10

Permit release of street areas, where such release is warranted, only in the least extensive and least permanent manner appropriate to each case.

In order to avoid the unnecessary permanent loss of streets as public assets, methods of release short of total vacation should be considered in cases in which some form of release is warranted. Such lesser methods of release permit later return of the street space to street purposes, and allow imposition of binding conditions as to development and use of the street area.

Mere closing of the street to traffic should be used when it will be an adequate method of release. Temporary use of the street should be authorized when permanent use is not necessary. A revocable permit should be granted in preference to street vacation. And sale or lease of air rights should be authorized where vacation of the City's whole interest is not necessary for the contemplated use. In any of these lesser transactions, street areas should be treated as precious assets which might be required for unanticipated public needs at some future time.

MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

Human Needs

Much of the characteristic pattern of San Francisco has remained the same, and yet change is continuous. New development stands out because it is new and because it is different — sometimes quite different from what the city has known before. The effect upon the pattern of the city and its neighborhoods is often auspicious, but at times it is not. As rebuilding occurs, there may be changes in the city's essential qualities.

The fitting in of new development is, in a broad sense, a matter of scale. It requires a careful assessment of each building site in terms of the size and texture of its surroundings, and a very conscious effort to achieve balance and compatibility in the design of the new building. Good scale depends upon a *height* that is consistent with the total pattern of the land and of the skyline, a *bulk* that is not overwhelming, and an *overall appearance* that is complementary to the building forms and other elements of the city. Scale is relative, therefore, since the height, bulk and appearance of past development differ among the districts of the city.

People in San Francisco are accustomed to a skyline and streetscape of buildings that harmonize in color, shape and details. Much effort has been made in the past to relate each new building to its neighbors at both upper and lower levels, and to avoid jarring contrasts that would upset the city pattern. Special care has been accorded the edges of distinct districts, where transitions in scale are especially important. By tradition in San Francisco, as in other great cities of the world, unusual building forms and monumental scale have been reserved for buildings with the greatest significance to the community. These buildings characterize the mood and institutions of the city, and by their quality and nature express the city's aspirations to the world at large.

In questions of scale, the height of buildings has received the greatest and most continuous public attention. San Francisco has established the most extensive system of legislated height controls in any American city, expressing its concern over building height in this manner since as early as 1927. Nevertheless, a citywide plan for building height has not existed prior to this time, and both residents and visitors have experienced stress and concern at the prospect that the appearance of the skyline may continue to change rapidly without further direction.

Tall buildings are a necessary and expressive form for much of the city's office, apartment, hotel and institutional development. These buildings, as soaring towers in a white city, connote the power and prosperity of man's modern achievements. They make economical use of land, offer fine views to their occupants, and can permit efficient deployment of public services. In recent times, however, new pressures upon the design of these buildings have been produced by increases in technical construction capabilities, in demands for large blocks of floor space, in the breadth of financing methods, and in the image-consciousness of major business firms. As each building becomes larger and the whole city becomes more intensively developed, the challenges for urban design are multiplied.

Exceptional height can have either positive or negative effects upon the city pattern and the nearby environment. A building that is well designed in itself will help to reinforce the city's form if it is well placed, but the same building at the wrong location can be utterly disruptive.

If properly placed, tall buildings can enhance the topographic form and existing skyline of the city. They can orient the traveler by

WHERE TALL BUILDINGS COULD ENHANCE VIEWS OF THE SKYLINE

WHERE TALL BUILDINGS COULD IMPROVE ORIENTATION FOR TRAVEL

EFFECT OF TALL BUILDINGS UPON VIEWS FROM NEARBY STRUCTURES

WHERE TALL BUILDINGS COULD ENHANCE TOPOGRAPHIC FORM

WHERE TALL BUILDINGS COULD HELP DEFINE DISTRICTS & CENTERS

EFFECT OF TALL BUILDINGS UPON VIEWS FROM MAJOR ROADWAYS

helping to clarify his route and identify his destination. Building height can define districts and centers of activity. These advantages can be achieved without blocking or reduction of views from private properties, public areas or major roadways, if a proper plan for building height is followed. Such a plan must weigh all the advantages and disadvantages of height at each location in the city, and must take into account appropriate established patterns of building height and scale, seeking for the most part to follow and reinforce those patterns. Such a plan must also be applied with recognition of the functional and economic needs for space in major centers for offices, high density apartments, hotels and institutions providing public services.

The remaining aspect of building scale to be considered is that of bulk, or the apparent massiveness of a building in relation to its surroundings. A building may appear to have great bulk whether or not it is of extraordinary height, and the result can be a blocking of near and distant views and a disconcerting dominance of the skyline and the neighborhood. The users of modern building space may find these bulky forms more efficient, and the forms may seem logical for combining several uses in a single development, but such considerations do not measure the external effects upon the city. Neither height limits nor limits upon the amounts of floor space permitted will directly control excessive bulk, and therefore specific attention to this problem is called for.

The apparent bulk of a building depends primarily upon two factors: the amount of wall surface that is visible, and the degree to which the structure extends above its surroundings. Accordingly, a plan seeking to avoid excessive bulkiness must consider the existing scale of development in each area of

APPROPRIATE ESTABLISHED PATTERNS OF BUILDING HEIGHT AND SCALE

GENERALIZED EXISTING BUILDING SCALE

EXISTING SCALES OF DEVELOPMENT BY AREA

SMALL SCALE:
A prevailing height of 30 to 40 feet, with most building walls ranging from 25 to 80 feet in length. Land uses are predominantly low to medium density residential and neighborhood commercial.

MEDIUM SCALE:
A prevailing height of 60 to 100 feet, with some occasional building towers exceeding 100 feet. Most building walls range from 50 to 100 feet in length. Land uses are predominantly medium to high density residential and district commercial, with some large hospitals and other institutions that tend to exceed the prevailing building sizes.

LARGE SCALE:
Prevailing heights vary by area, with the greatest height reached downtown and the least height found in industrial areas of low intensity. In areas of greatest height, most building walls range from 30 to 137 feet in length, while in areas of least height building walls have lengths ranging upward from 100 feet.

In each type of area, an appearance of excessive bulk will occur when a building exceeds both the prevailing height in the area and the prevailing range in length of building walls. As height increases, the apparent bulk produced by a given length of building walls becomes greater. Where both the length and width of a building are exceptional, the apparent bulk is greater than where the length alone exceeds the prevailing range.

the city and the effects of topographic form in exposing building sites to widespread view.

The largest potential building sites present the greatest problems and challenges for moderation of building form. On these sites, normal controls over the form and intensity of construction that are intended primarily for smaller sites have less precision, and the external effects of large developments upon the surrounding area and upon the city may be far greater. The stakes are high for both the developers and the future of the city, with a resulting tendency toward controversy and frustration, and unfortunate divisive effects in the community. For these reasons, the larger sites require separate and more intensive consideration in policies relating to building form.

Objective 3

MODERATION OF MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENT TO COMPLEMENT THE CITY PATTERN, THE RESOURCES TO BE CONSERVED, AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT.

As San Francisco grows and changes, new development can and must be fitted in with established city and neighborhood patterns in a complementary fashion. Harmony with existing development requires careful consideration of the character of the surroundings at each construction site. The scale of each new building must be related to the prevailing height and bulk in the area, and to the wider effects upon the skyline, views and topographic form. Designs for buildings on large sites have the most widespread effects and require the greatest attention.

Fundamental Principles for Major New Development

These fundamental principles and their illustrations reflect the needs and characteristics with which this Plan is concerned, and describe measurable and critical urban design relationships in major new development.

1

The relationship of a building's size and shape to its visibility in the cityscape, to important natural features and to existing development determines whether it will have a pleasing or a disruptive effect on the image and character of the city.

A: Tall, slender buildings near the crown of a hill emphasize the form of the hill and preserve views.

B: Extremely massive buildings on or near hills can overwhelm the natural land forms, block views, and generally disrupt the character of the city.

C: Low, smaller-scale buildings on the slopes of hills, at their base and in the valleys between complement topographic forms and permit uninterrupted views.

D: Low buildings along the waterfront contribute to the gradual tapering of height from hilltops to water that is characteristic of San Francisco and allows views of the Ocean and the Bay.

E: Larger, taller buildings can blend pleasantly with small-scaled areas if the change in scale is not excessive and if their form or surface pattern is articulated to reflect the existing scale.

2

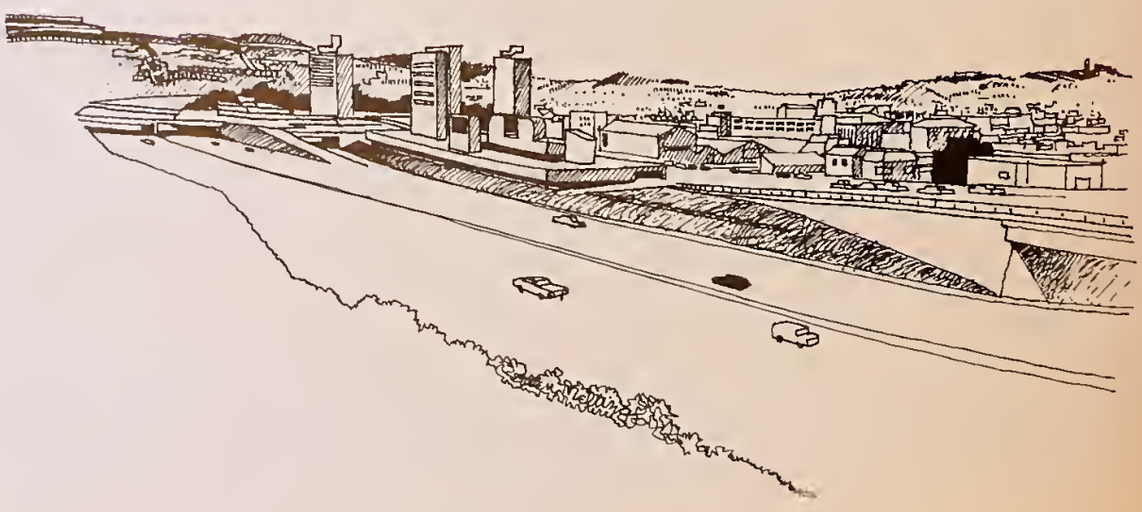
Building siting and massing with respect to street pattern influence the quality of views from street space.

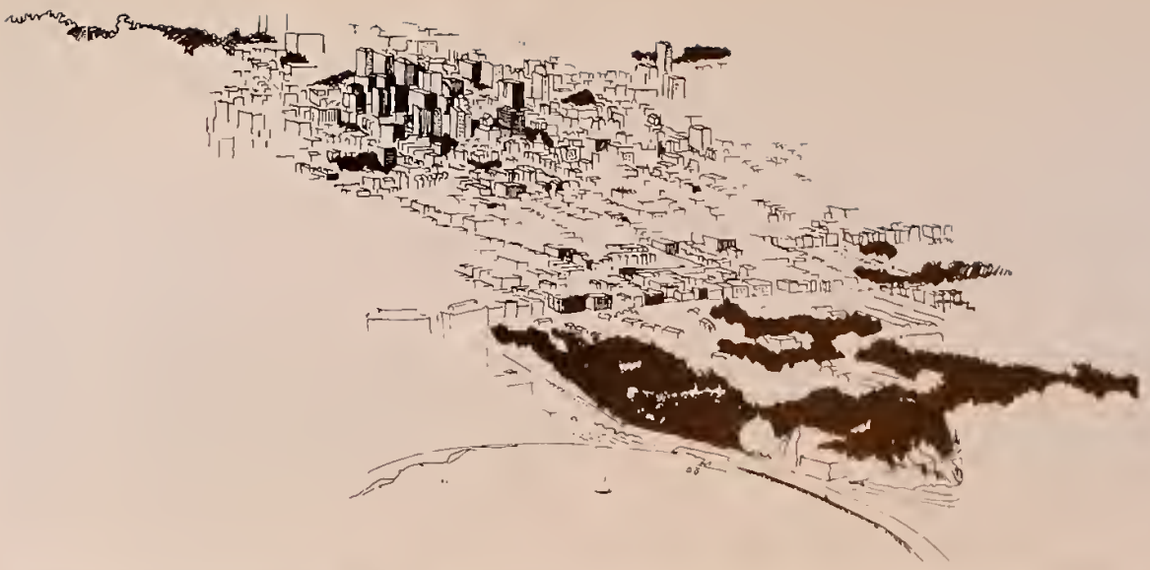
A: Tall buildings on the tops of hills allow clear views down streets.

B: Tall buildings on slopes of hills severely restrict views from above.

3

Clustering of larger, taller buildings at important activity centers (such as major transit stations) can visually express the functional importance of these centers.





4

The relationship between areas of low, fine-scaled buildings and areas of high, large-scaled buildings can be made more pleasing if the transition in building height and mass between such areas is gradual.

5

Taller or more visually prominent buildings can provide orientation points and increase the physical distinction, variety and contrast of large areas with similar streets and buildings, particularly areas of unrelieved monotony.

6

When highly visible buildings are light in color, they reinforce the visual unity and special character of the city.

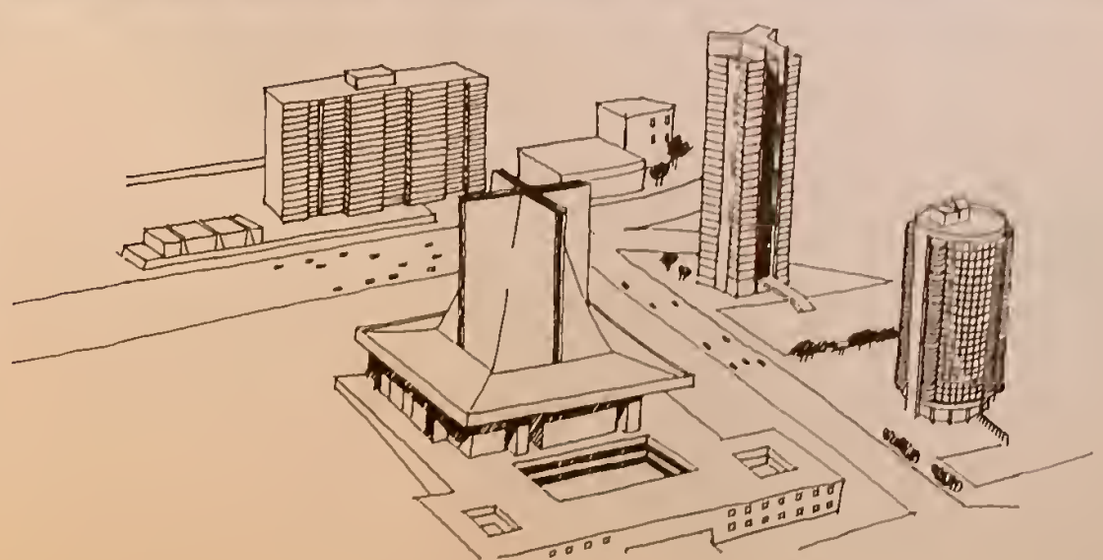
7

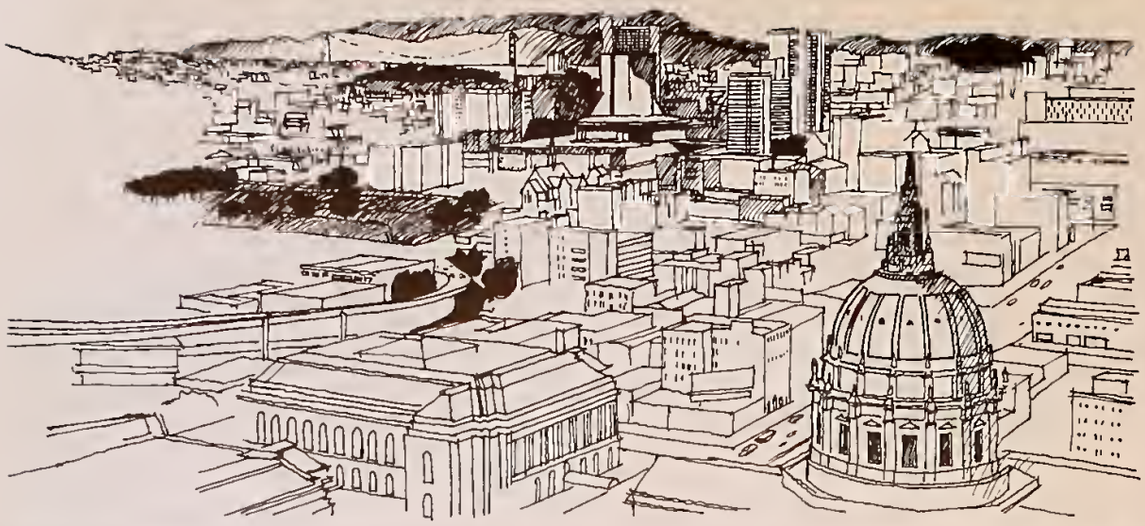
Buildings which meet the ground and reflect the slope of the hill relate to the land form.

Buildings on the downhill side of streets placed on stilts do not relate to the ground visually and create useless, unattractive space beneath.

8

The use of unusual shapes for tall office, hotel or apartment buildings detracts from the clarity of urban form by competing for attention with buildings of greater public significance. The juxtaposition of several such unusual shapes may create visual disorder.





9

Unique building forms can appropriately signify major community facilities.

COMMENT: The distinctive forms of City Hall and St. Mary's Cathedral clearly indicate their public importance.

10

Major public buildings of symbolic importance may be appropriately located in highly visible settings.

COMMENT: Major public buildings have traditionally been placed at the focus of axial street views, provided they do not block city views.

11

A building situated in a visually dominant position, whose exterior is blank and uninteresting, does not relate to surrounding development and tends to repel the observer's attention.

COMMENT: The exposed location and extensive, uninterrupted mass of the San Francisco College for Women dormitory produce a discordant form relationship to other college buildings, to the hill and to the immediate vicinity.

12

A long or wide building becomes excessively bulky in appearance when its height significantly exceeds that of buildings in the surrounding area.

COMMENT: While the Federal Office Building is similar in length and width to many large buildings nearby, it exceeds the prevailing building heights and is a discordant element in the skyline.

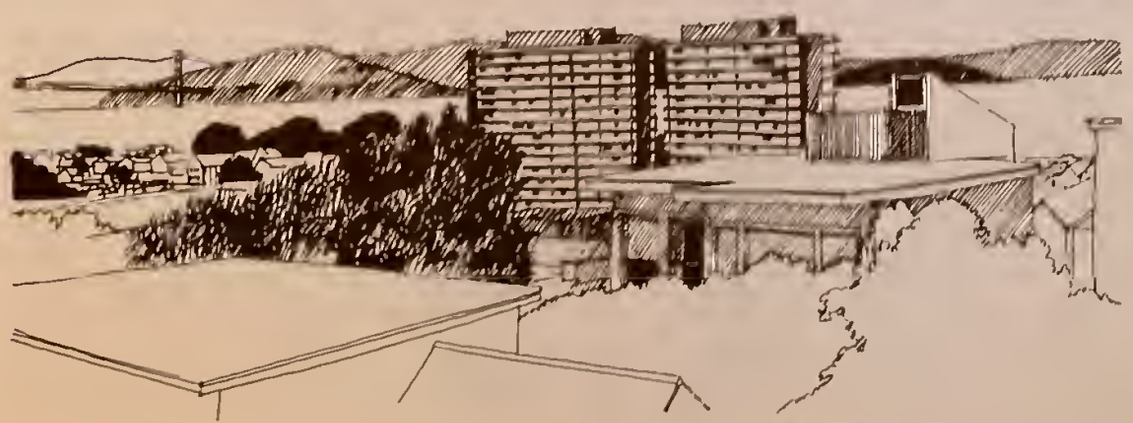
13

A bulky building creates the most visual disruption when seen from a distance as the dominant silhouette against a background and/or foreground of much smaller structures.

14

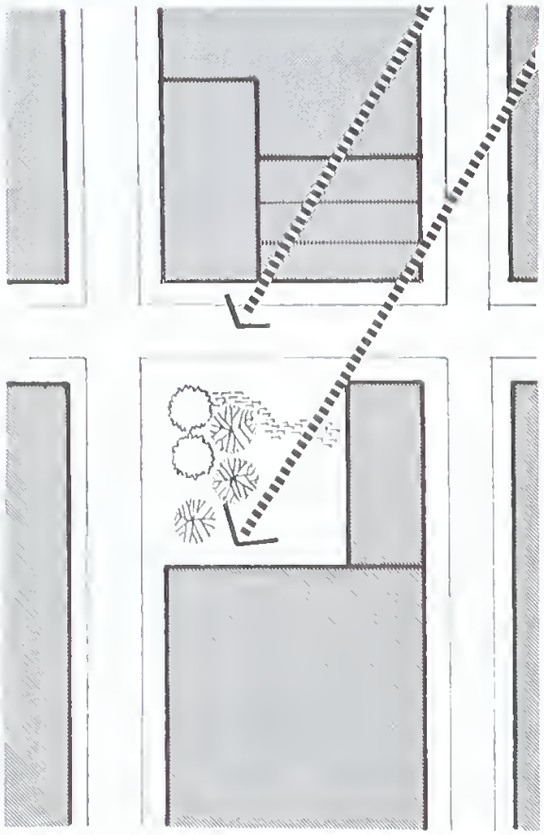
Bulky buildings that intrude upon or block important views of the Bay, Ocean or other significant citywide focal points are particularly disruptive.

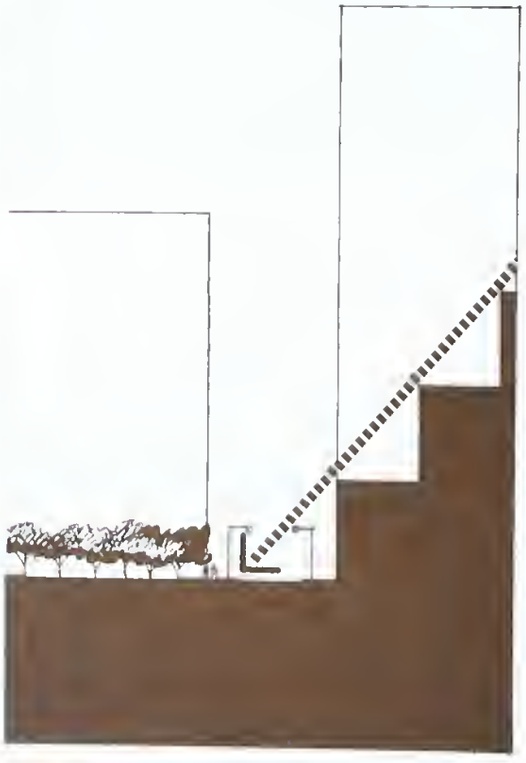
COMMENT: The Fontana Apartments, near the waterfront, block many public and private views of the Bay and Marin County.



15

Plazas or parks located in the shadows cast by large buildings are unpleasant for the user.



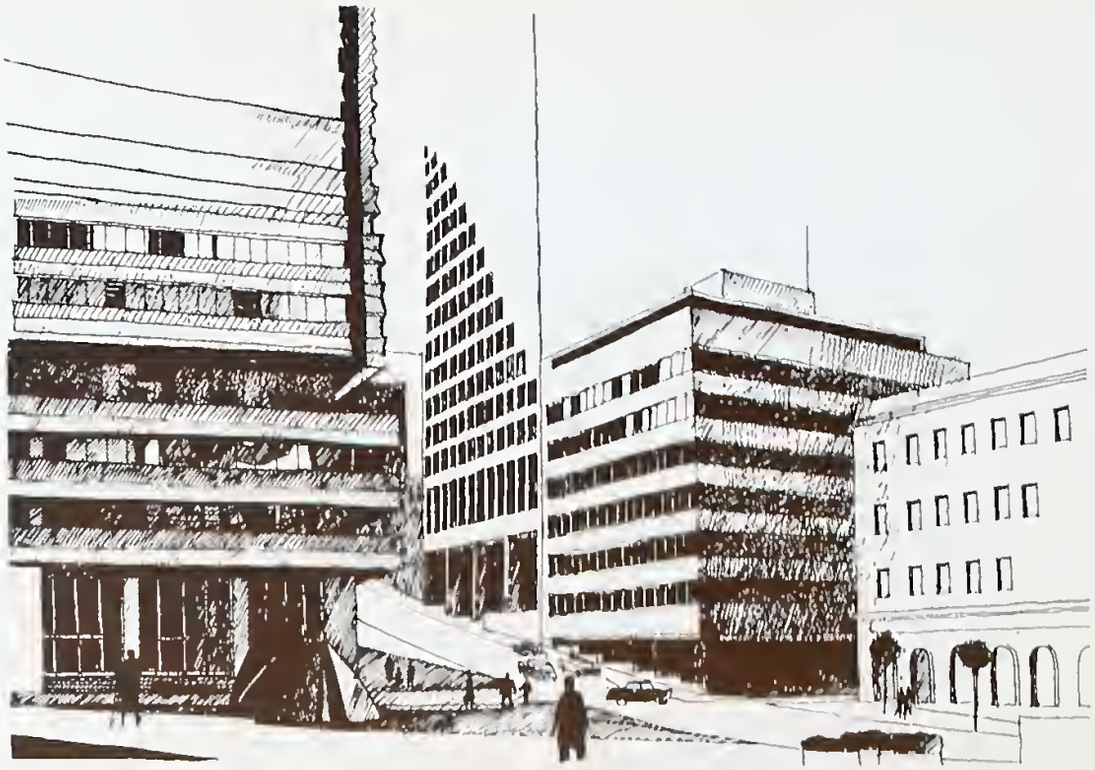


A: Large buildings can be oriented to minimize shadows falling on public or semi-public open spaces.

B: The height and mass of tall, closely packed buildings can be shaped to permit sunlight to reach open spaces.

16

Corner plazas can be pleasing if the streets are not excessively wide and if surrounding properties are developed with buildings that define the space well.



17

Elevated pedestrian levels in large developments, if they relate visually and functionally to the street-level pedestrian system, are easy to find and use and contribute to the consistency of development.

A clearly expressed transition from an elevated pedestrian system to the sidewalk ties the two systems together visually and functionally.

18

Buildings of a uniform height provide good spatial definition of larger public squares or plazas.

Larger public open spaces surrounded by irregular buildings are poorly defined.

Policies for Major New Development

Visual Harmony

Policy 1

Promote harmony in the visual relationships and transitions between new and older buildings.

New buildings should be made sympathetic to the scale, form and proportion of older development. This can often be done by repeating existing building lines and surface treatment. Where new buildings reach exceptional height and bulk, large surfaces should be articulated and textured to reduce their apparent size and to reflect the pattern of older buildings.

Although contrasts and juxtapositions at the edges of districts of different scale are sometimes pleasing, the transitions between such districts should generally be gradual in order to make the city's larger pattern visible and avoid overwhelming of the district of smaller scale. In transitions between districts and between properties, especially in areas of high intensity, the lower portions of buildings should be designed to promote easy circulation, good access to transit, good relationships among open spaces and maximum penetration of sunlight to the ground level.

Policy 2

Avoid extreme contrasts in color, shape and other characteristics which will cause new buildings to stand out in excess of their public importance.

Large buildings are most consistent with the visual unity of the city when they are light in color. The characteristics of San Francisco's climate and the varied effects of sunlight through the day in clear and fog-filled skies make bright but subtle hues a life-giving element in the skyline. Prominent new buildings should reflect this pattern.

Buildings of unusual shape stand out in the skyline. They call attention to themselves and correspondingly reduce the visual significance of other features in the city pattern. Such buildings may also create a jarring disharmony that counteracts the traditional blending of regular rectilinear forms in the San Francisco skyline. Unusual shapes, especially in large buildings, should therefore be reserved for structures of broad public significance such as those providing community-wide services.

Policy 3

Promote efforts to achieve high quality of design for buildings to be constructed at prominent locations.

Certain buildings will achieve visual prominence, whatever their design, because of their exposed locations. Among such locations are those at tops of hills; those fronting on permanent open space such as the Bay, parks, plazas and areas with height limits; those facing wide streets or closing the vista at the end of a street; and those affording a silhouette against the sky, a muted background or a formal order such as in the Civic Center.

At locations of such prominence, the quality of building design is of special significance, and special efforts should be made to promote the best architectural solutions in both public and private buildings. In such solutions, the positive potentials of the site should be emphasized.

Policy 4

Promote building forms that will respect and improve the integrity of open spaces and other public areas.

New buildings should not block significant views of public open spaces, especially large parks and the Bay. Buildings near these open spaces should permit visual access, and in some cases physical access, to them.

Buildings to the south, east and west of parks and plazas should be limited in height or effectively oriented so as not to prevent the penetration of sunlight to such parks and plazas. Larger squares and plazas will benefit, in addition, from uniform facade lines and cornice heights around them which will visually contain the open space.

Large buildings and developments should, where feasible, provide ground level open space on their sites, well situated for public access and for sunlight penetration. The location and dimensions of such open space should be carefully considered with respect to the placement of other buildings and open spaces in the area, and with respect to the siting and functioning of the building with which it is provided. Where separation of pedestrian and vehicular circulation levels is possible in provision of such open space, such separation should be considered.

Policy 5

Relate the height of buildings to important attributes of the city pattern and to the height and character of existing development.

The height of new buildings should take into account the guidelines expressed in this Plan. These guidelines are intended to promote the objectives, principles and policies of the Plan, and especially to complement the established city pattern.

Tall, slender buildings should occur on many of the city's hilltops to emphasize the hill form and safeguard views, while buildings of smaller scale should occur at the base of hills and in the valleys between hills. Views along streets and from major roadways should be protected. The height of buildings should taper down to the shoreline of the Bay and Ocean, following the characteristic pattern and preserving topography and views.

Tall buildings should be clustered downtown and at other centers of activity to promote the efficiency of commerce and avoid unnecessary encroachment upon other areas. Such buildings should also occur at points of high accessibility, such as rapid transit stations in larger commercial areas. In these various commercial centers, building height should taper down toward the edges to provide gradual transitions to other areas.

In residential and smaller commercial areas, tall buildings should occur closest to major centers of employment and community services which themselves produce significant building height, and at locations where height will achieve visual interest consistent with other neighborhood considerations. At outlying and other prominent locations, the point tower form (slender in shape with a high ratio of height to width) should be used in order to avoid interruption of views, casting of extensive shadows or other negative effects. In all cases, the height and character of existing development should be considered.

The guidelines in this Plan express ranges of height that are to be used as an urban design evaluation for the future establishment of specific height limits affecting both public and private buildings. For any given location, urban design considerations indicate the appropriateness of a height coming within the range indicated. The guidelines are not height limits, and do not have the direct effect of regulating construction in the city.

HEIGHT:
- 0-40 ft.
- 41-88 ft.
- 89-160 ft.
- 161-240 ft.
- 241-400 ft.

NO LIMIT: Height Determined by Floor Area Ratio

OPEN SPACE: Any Development Subject to Review
MAXIMUM HEIGHT: Elevation of Freeway
POINT TOWERS IN VICINITY

0 ONE MILE

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS

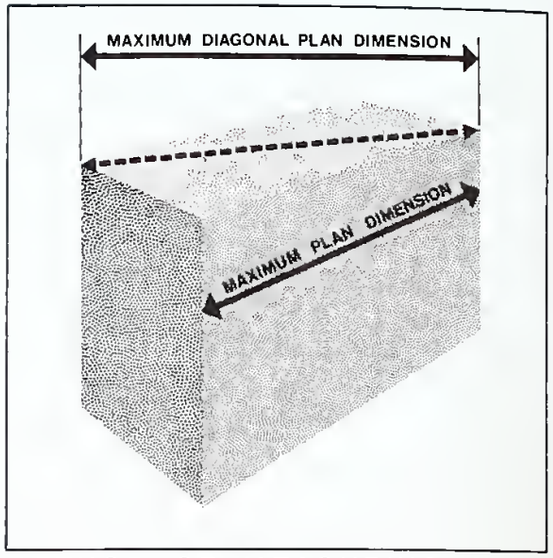
Policy 6

Relate the bulk of buildings to the prevailing scale of development to avoid an overwhelming or dominating appearance in new construction.

When buildings reach extreme bulk, by exceeding the prevailing height and prevailing horizontal dimensions of existing buildings in the area, especially at prominent and exposed locations, they can overwhelm other buildings, open spaces and the natural land forms, block views and disrupt the city's character. Such extremes in bulk should be avoided by establishment of maximum horizontal dimensions for new construction above the prevailing height of development in each area of the city.

The guidelines for building bulk expressed in this Plan are intended to form an urban design basis for such regulation. These guidelines favor relatively slender construction above prevailing heights, but would not limit the horizontal dimensions of buildings below those heights. Generally speaking, the guidelines would not limit the total floor space that could be built, but would help to shape it to avoid negative external effects. If two or more towers are to be built on a single property, their total effect should be considered and a significant separation should be required between them. The precise form of the building or buildings would in large measure be left to the individual developer and his architects under these guidelines.

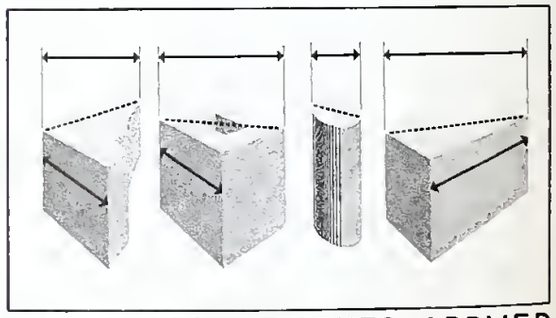
The guidelines of this Plan for building bulk are only minimum guidelines, and they are not intended to reduce the necessity for other expressed policies pertaining to height, visual harmony or other factors. Even with building bulk kept within these guidelines, efforts should be made to articulate and soften building surfaces to reduce the massiveness of appearance to a greater degree.



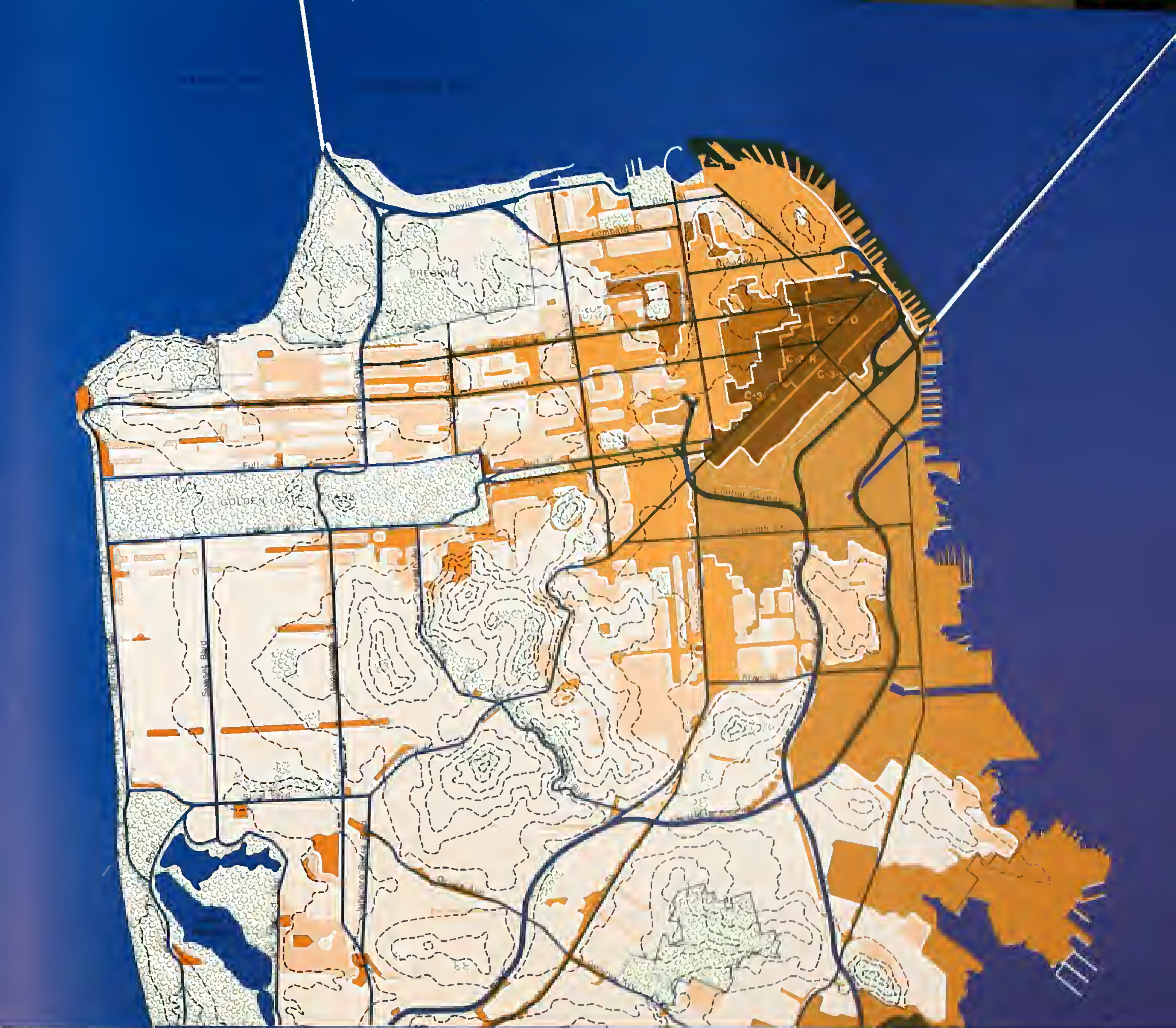
METHOD OF MEASURING BULK

MAXIMUM PLAN DIMENSION: The greatest horizontal dimension along any wall of the building, measured at a height corresponding to the prevailing height of other development in the area.

MAXIMUM DIAGONAL PLAN DIMENSION: The horizontal dimension between the two most separated points on the exterior of a building, measured at a height corresponding to the prevailing height of other development in the area.



BULK MEASUREMENTS APPLIED TO OTHER BUILDING FORMS

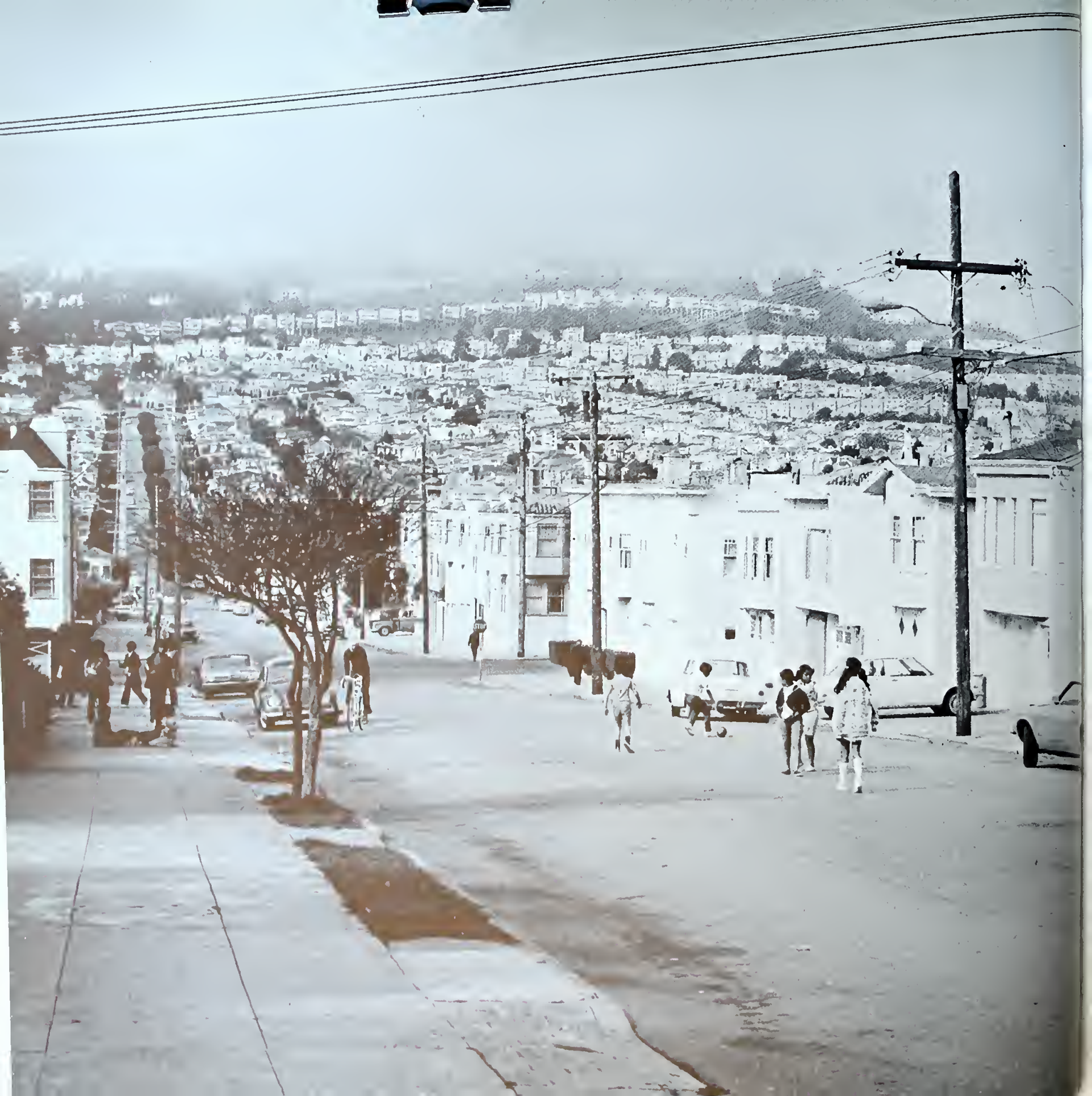


OPEN SPACE: Any Development Subject to Review

		Guidelines Apply Above Height of	Guideline for Maximum Plan Dimension	Guideline for Maximum Diagonal Plan Dimension
SMALL SCALE:	Low Rise: to 4 Stories	30ft	85ft	100ft
MEDIUM SCALE:	Low Rise: to 4 Stories	40ft	110ft	125ft
	Medium Rise: 5 to 12 Stories	80ft	110ft	125ft
LARGE SCALE:	High Rise Residence: over 12 Stories	40ft	110ft	140ft
	Industry and Warehouse	80ft	250ft	300ft
	Downtown (C-3) Districts — Office, Retail, General Support	150ft / 120ft	170ft / 250ft	200ft / 300ft

0 ONE MILE

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR BULK OF BUILDINGS



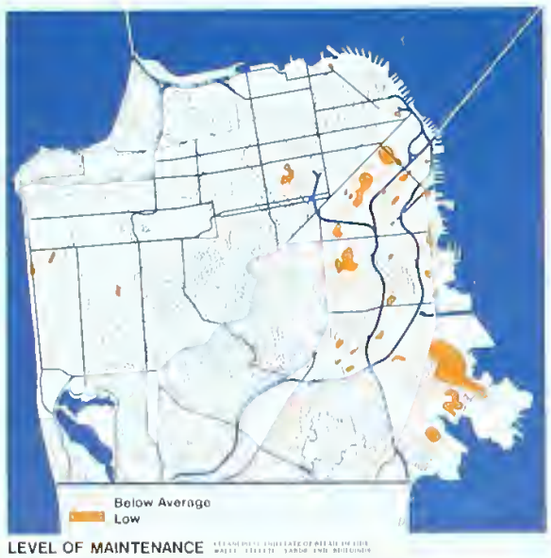
Human Needs

The people of San Francisco are the city's reason for being and its hope for the future. Most residents live in areas that can be characterized as distinct neighborhoods, and the quality of these neighborhoods has a strong effect upon their personal outlook. Neighborhood quality is of overriding importance to the individual, since the most basic human needs must be satisfied close to home. The long-term future of the city's entire physical environment may also depend upon good neighborhoods, because only when they find satisfaction in their own areas can residents freely turn their attention to matters affecting the larger community.

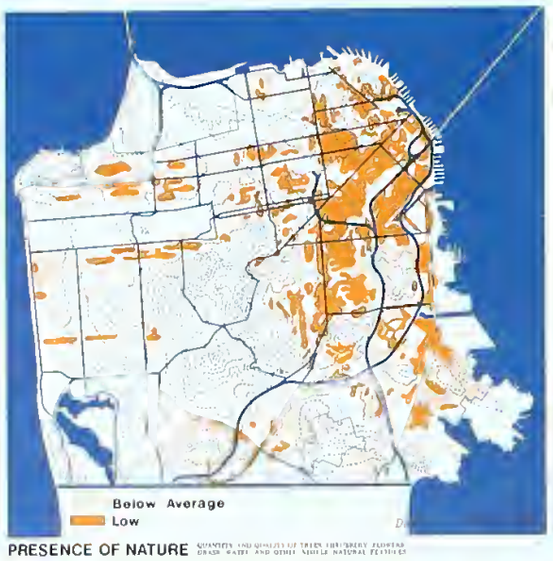
There is no great difference of opinion as to what makes a neighborhood a good place to live from an urban design standpoint: people wish to have a tolerable and comfortable living environment, safe and free from stress, and the elements that make up such an environment are easily described. People also wish to know that their neighborhoods will be guarded against physical deterioration, and that any elements they consider deficient are likely to be improved. Because neighborhood quality is defined in the residents' own terms, the neighborhood environment will be better if residents participate in the planning of local improvements.

Studies show that the outstanding concerns of people today in their neighborhood environment are matters of health and safety. Traffic is the leading issue, with automobiles moving through residential areas in large volumes and at high speeds, producing noise and pollutants

TWENTY-FOUR HOUR TRAFFIC FLOW ON PRINCIPAL STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

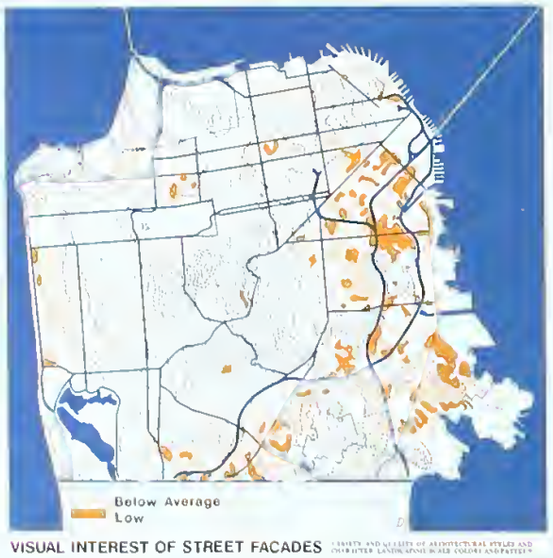


LEVEL OF MAINTENANCE



PRESENCE OF NATURE

DISTANCE TO OPEN SPACE



VISUAL INTEREST OF STREET FACADES

and putting pedestrians in constant danger. With each increase in traffic the streets become less a part of the living environment and more a world of their own. Residents find the streets unsafe and unpleasant, and try to shut them out.

The quality of neighborhood maintenance is also of major concern. A sense of pride and satisfaction requires that all parts of the local environment be well maintained: streets, parks, public buildings, neighbors' properties, and especially one's own house and yard. When the area is well kept and has visual qualities that distinguish it from other areas, a resident has a feeling of neighborhood that gives him a sense of being at home though he may be a block or more from his dwelling.

Another element of good neighborhoods is the presence of open space and recreation opportunities. The most satisfying recreation space is close by and visible, with a feeling of nature and a variety of facilities for all age groups. Such recreation space may be found on private properties, in neighborhood parks, along the sidewalks and in undeveloped street areas. On a citywide scale, larger recreation facilities that require travel away from home provide an even greater variety of opportunities. On this larger scale, the shoreline of San Francisco Bay has a potential that is not fully used.

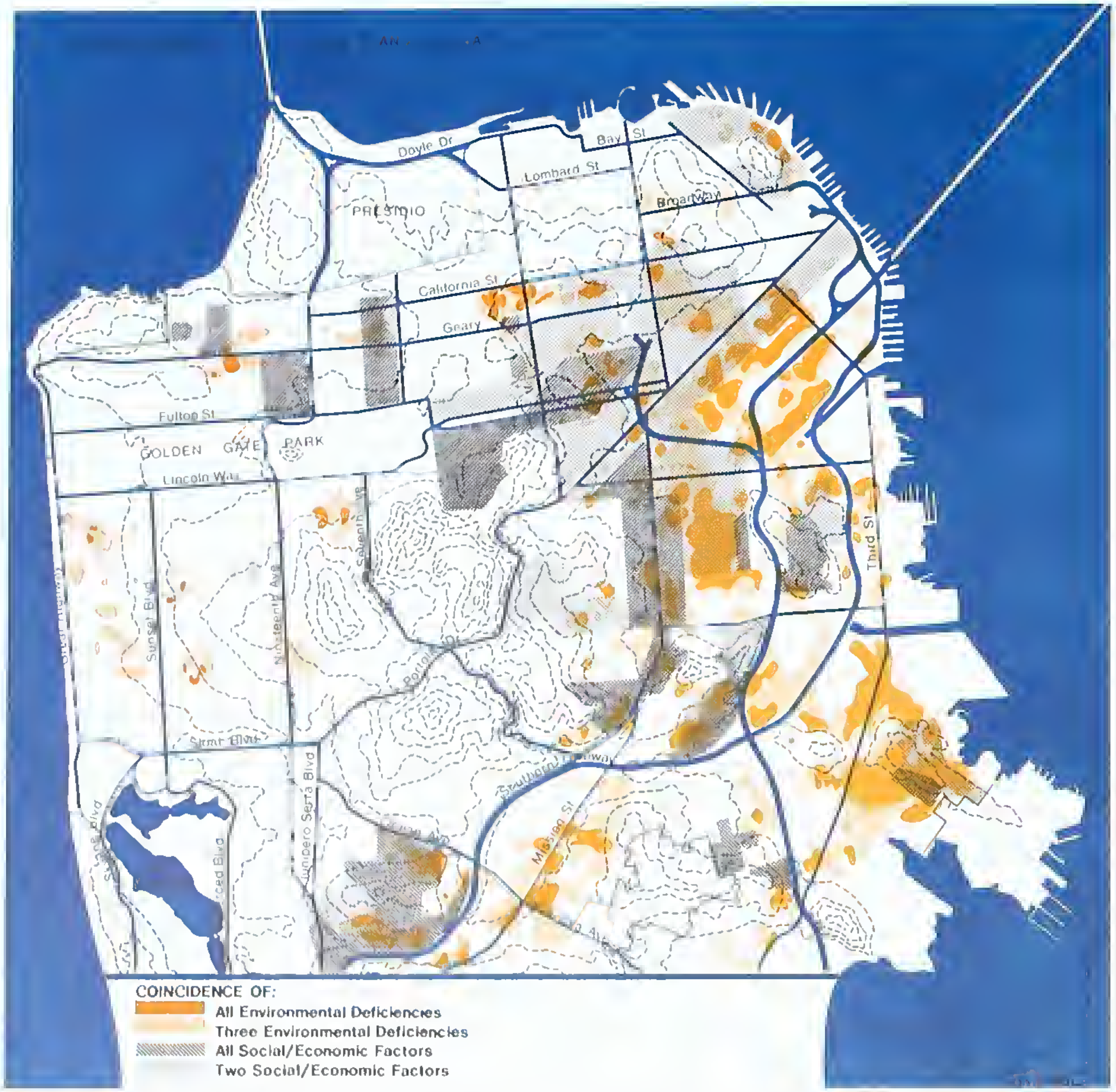
There are many other elements that can bring amenity to the neighborhood environment. Planting in streets and yards, well designed and well cared for, adds immeasurably to the

HIGH HOUSING TURNOVER AND AVERAGE TO LOW INCOME

visual quality of an area, softening and complementing the hard appearance of pavement and buildings. Continuous building facades and generous sidewalks with interesting details establish a pleasant mood for the pedestrian. Freedom from the clutter of open parking lots, large signs and overhead wires can also make the difference between an agreeable living environment and one that is disquieting or even blighted.

With respect to the many improvements in environment that can be made by public and private actions, the needs of the city's neighborhoods are by no means uniform. Some neighborhoods have serious deficiencies in one or more elements affecting neighborhood quality, while others are more for-

SOCIAL INDICATORS OF ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS



COINCIDENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEFICIENCIES AND SOCIAL/ECONOMIC FACTORS

[illegible] combines the information presented in the maps on pages [illegible] and [illegible].

tunate. Some neighborhoods have greater needs because their residents live in conditions of greater density, or because the residents include more children and older people who tend to live within a smaller world in which the resources close at hand are the most important. People of low income, too, especially renters who have little direct role in maintaining their own physical environment, have special needs that characterize certain neighborhoods where the danger of physical decline is already very apparent.

These differences in neighborhoods point up the need to establish priorities in the programs that will stabilize and improve the local environment. Where serious physical deficiencies already exist, and where the density, age and economic status of residents indicate special needs, the neighborhoods require immediate and continuing assistance. Of equal importance, however, are many other areas that may be on the verge of physical decline. These other areas require priority because the residents' fear of change may contribute as much as any other factor to real deterioration, and such fear can be overcome by visible efforts to stabilize the neighborhood. Once lost, the existing resources in any neighborhood can be restored only through great expense and dislocation. The programs relating to neighborhood environment should, therefore, be designed both to hold neighborhood quality at its present levels and to improve deficient areas that do not enjoy the fine attributes of other parts of San Francisco.

Objective 4

IMPROVEMENT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT TO INCREASE PERSONAL SAFETY, COMFORT, PRIDE AND OPPORTUNITY.

San Francisco draws much of its strength and vitality from the quality of its neighborhoods. Many of these neighborhoods offer a pleasant environment to residents of the city, while others have experienced physical decline and still others have never enjoyed some of the amenities common to the city as a whole. Measures must be taken to stabilize and improve the health and safety of the local environment, the psychological feeling of neighborhood, the opportunities for recreation and other fulfilling activities, and the small-scale visual qualities that make the city a comfortable and often exciting place in which to live.

Fundamental Principles for Neighborhood Environment

These fundamental principles and their illustrations reflect the needs and characteristics with which this Plan is concerned, and describe measurable and critical urban design relationships in the neighborhood environment.

1

The livability, amenity and character of residential areas are greatly enhanced by trees, more so than by any other single element.

2

In areas where houses have no front yards, a sense of nature can be provided by planting in the sidewalk area.

COMMENT: Front yards (setbacks) are not required in many parts of the city. This results in rows of buildings adjacent to the sidewalk. At times it creates a pleasing sense of enclosure; but the result can be rather bleak and monotonous when the street is unrelieved by landscaping or the buildings lack visual interest. A few large trees or other street landscaping can add a needed sense of nature and variety.

a

b

c

d

e

3

The use of appropriate plant material, and careful consideration of environmental factors in the design of landscaping and open space, contribute to a neighborhood's identity and improve its environmental quality.

COMMENT (a): Areas of poor environmental quality can often be improved by the addition of benches, trees, shrubs, and textured paving. A "vest pocket" park in a dead-end service court in Chinatown is one potential form for such improvement.

COMMENT (b): Landscaping can screen residences from commercial or industrial activities, such as by reducing the glare of lights at gas stations and parking lots.

COMMENT (c): Windbreaks can make open spaces more pleasant and usable in windy areas. The sunning area at Phelan State Beach is a good example.

COMMENT (d): A consistent and attractive neighborhood landscaping theme can be established, such as the flowering street trees on Edgewood Avenue.

COMMENT (e): Open space that contains facilities desired by the residents, and that is designed when possible with local participation, is more likely to be used and cared for by local residents.

a

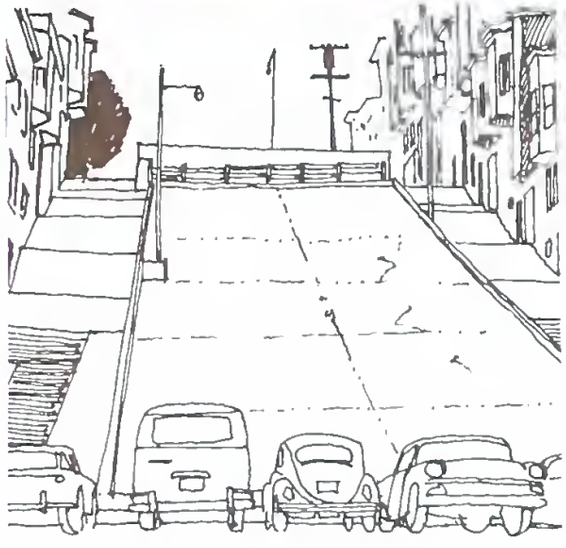
b

4

Open space and landscaping can give neighborhoods an identity, a visual focus and a center for activity.

COMMENT (a): Dolores Street has a special identity because its median is consistently planted with large, distinctive palm trees.

COMMENT (b): Mission Park and Washington Square are examples of open spaces that are both centers for activity and features giving identity to the surrounding area.



5

Street rights-of-way on hills too steep for cars or not needed for traffic are useless for people if covered with concrete. They can be modified to provide useful and attractive open space.

6

Wide, generous sidewalk areas provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and pedestrian amenities.

A: Portions of wide sidewalks can be turned into children's play areas, and sitting areas for adults.

B: In intensive shopping areas, wide sidewalks allow free pedestrian movement, and provide room for benches for resting and shelters for transit patrons.

7

Interesting details in the design of street furniture, paving and other features in pedestrian areas can increase the amenity and character of streets.

8

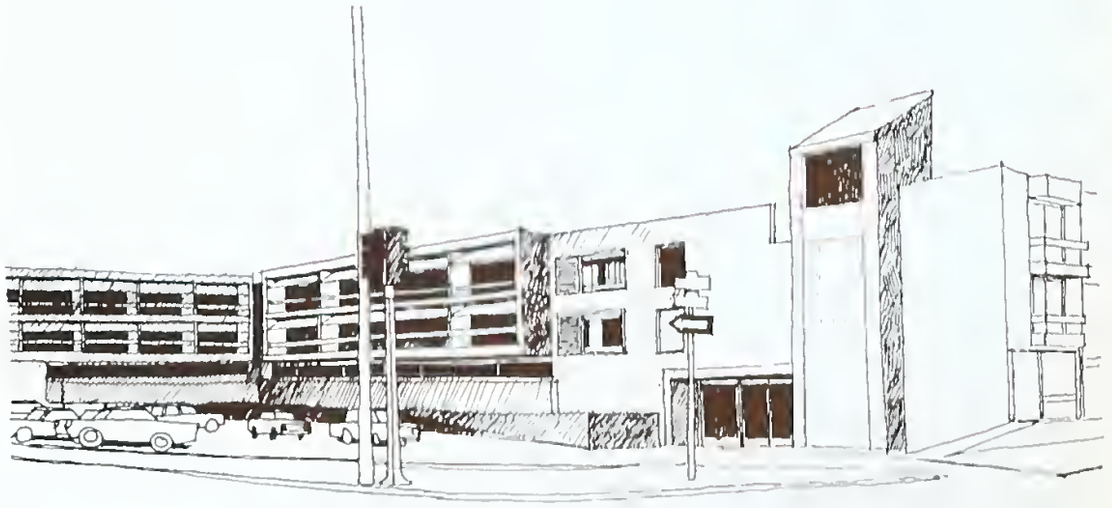
Wide streets can be narrowed at the intersections and landscaped to provide sitting areas and visual amenity.

9

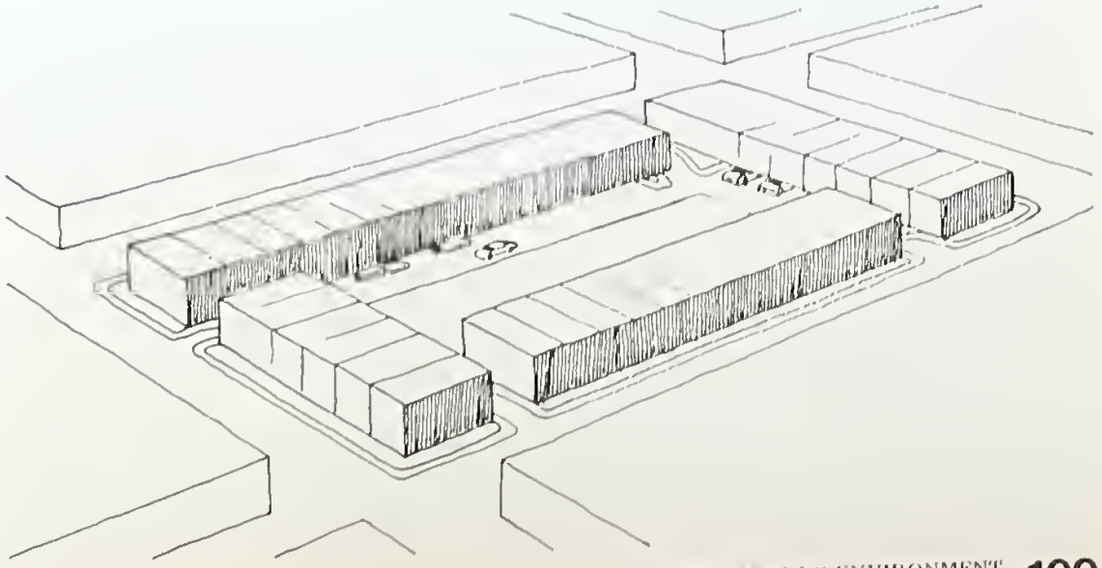
Open, unlandscaped parking areas are dull and unattractive, and generally have a deleterious effect upon their surroundings.

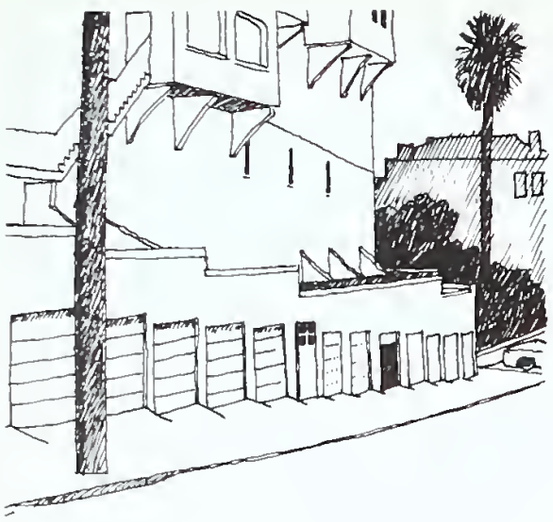
A: Parking lots next to the street, such as those for supermarkets and diners, detract from street life and impair definition of street space. Placement of buildings adjacent to the street, with the parking behind, can improve this condition.

B: Parking lots along the street in housing developments neither define the street nor contribute visual interest.



C: Parking under buildings or in an inside court allows the building to help define the street and avoids the blighting visual effects of an exposed parking lot.

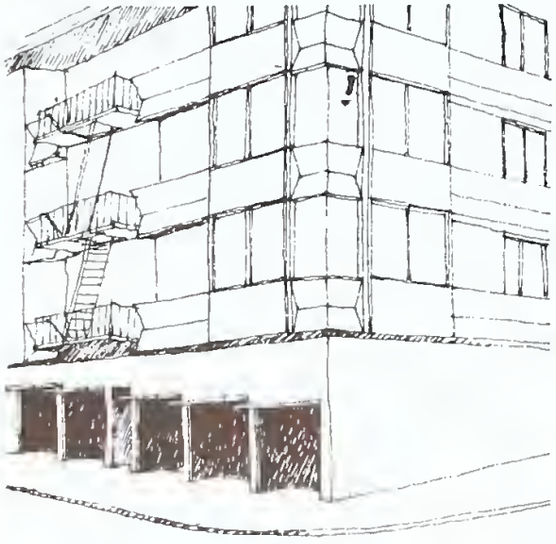




10

Parking garages lack visual interest if they have extensive rows of doors, blank walls or exposed vehicles. Extensive curb cuts prevent planting and other enhancement of the street, eliminate curb-side parking and are potentially dangerous to pedestrians.

A: Arcades create some visual interest where long garage facades or multiple driveways cannot be avoided.



B: Restricting entry and exit points minimizes curb cuts.

C: A basement garage one-half level down brings the building closer to street level and increases visual interest for pedestrians.

D: The inclusion of stores at ground level maintains continuity of pedestrian activity on what would otherwise be a sterile street frontage of parking garages in a commercial area.

11

Fast and heavy traffic on residential streets makes them unattractive for pedestrian activities, and generates irritating dirt and noise.

COMMENT: Widening of residential streets or making them one-way can increase traffic-carrying capacity at the expense of the environment for fronting residences.

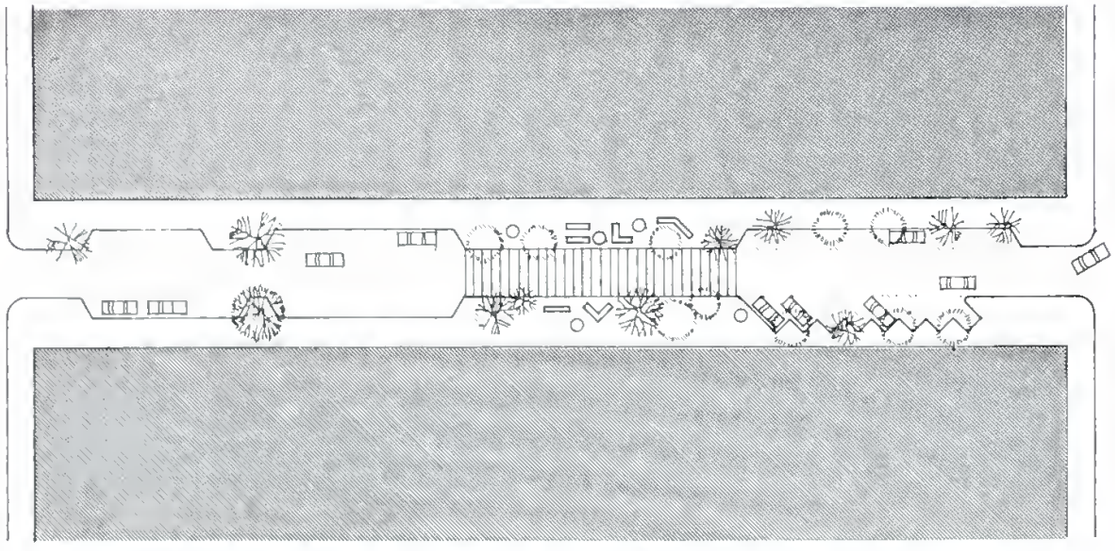
12

Excessive speeds and amounts of traffic in residential neighborhoods can be reduced by a variety of design techniques, including narrowing of streets or intersections, landscaping, diversion of traffic and closing of streets.

A: Visually narrow street spaces assist in reducing the speed of traffic. Most drivers tend to reduce speed in confined spaces, since confinement narrows the field of vision and creates a sense of rapid movement.

B: Diversion of cars from a straight path in a residential neighborhood is an effective way of discouraging through traffic.

C: Modifying long, wide, straight sections of street eliminates the opportunity or temptation for vehicles to speed.



13

Intensive landscaping, walls and other screening devices can insulate residential and pedestrian areas from the adverse effects of heavily used trafficways.

A: Buffer planting can effectively screen adjacent residences from heavy traffic.

B: Park areas and smaller open spaces can be protected from the noise and sight of traffic if well screened by berms, changes in level, and landscaped barriers.

C: Even small-scale landscaping can ameliorate the effect of heavy traffic on adjacent areas.

14

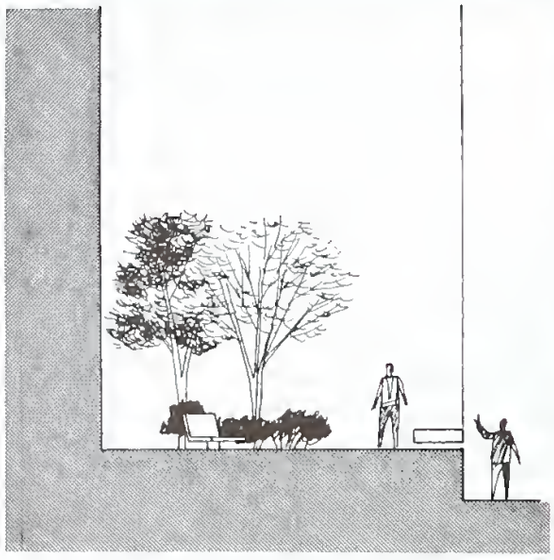
Separation of pedestrian and vehicle movement eliminates conflicts and contributes to pedestrian comfort.

Pedestrians and vehicles can be separated by creating separate levels or by prohibiting traffic from certain streets.

15

In the design of new pedestrian areas, changes of level can add greatly to interest and amenity if a reasonable relationship between levels is maintained.

Most important is the visual connection between levels, which enhances the experience of being on one level through awareness of the other level(s).



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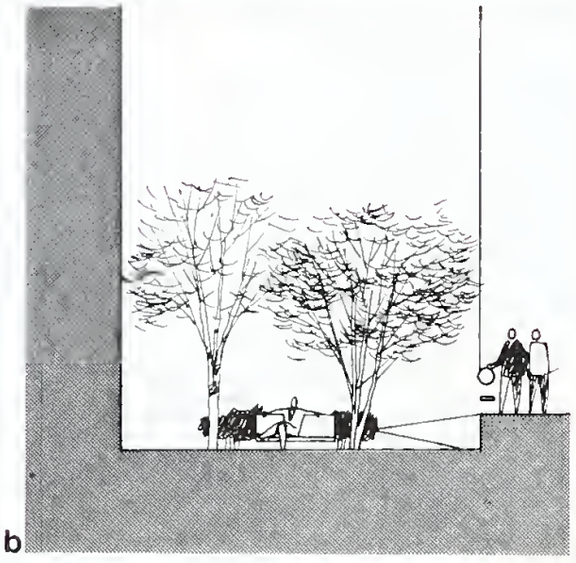


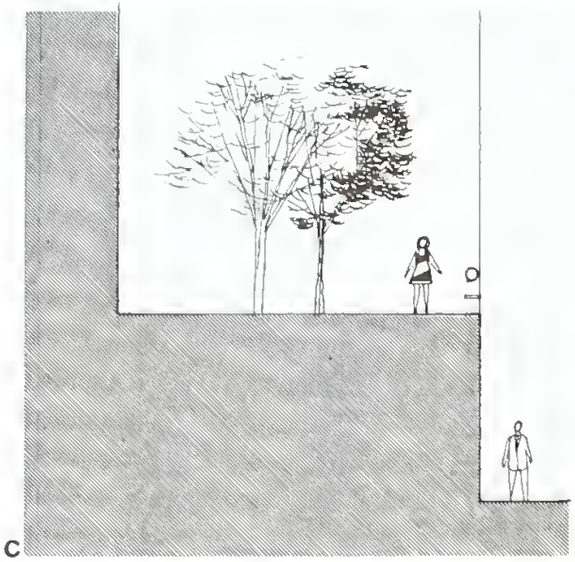
b

COMMENT (a): A space slightly above street level gives a sense of overlook and advantage to its occupants, while the passerby retains visual connection and interest.

COMMENT (b): A space slightly below street level gives a sense of intimacy and enclosure to its occupants, as well as a sense of overlook and advantage for the passerby on the sidewalk.

COMMENT (c): A space too far above street level loses visual contact with the street.

COMMENT (d): A small space too far below street level is uncomfortable to its occupants and suitable only as a place of movement or access.



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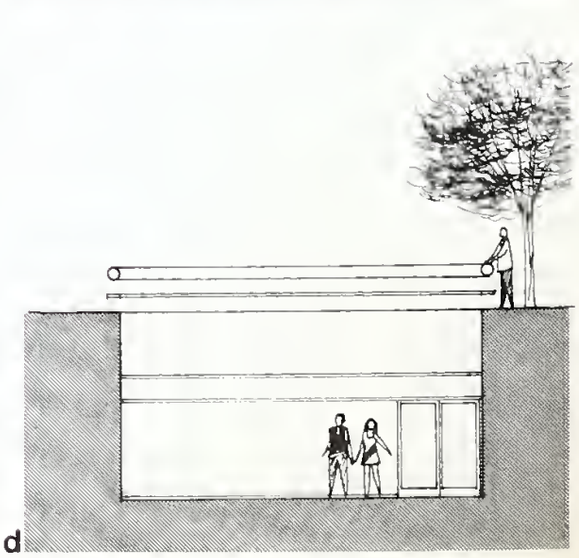

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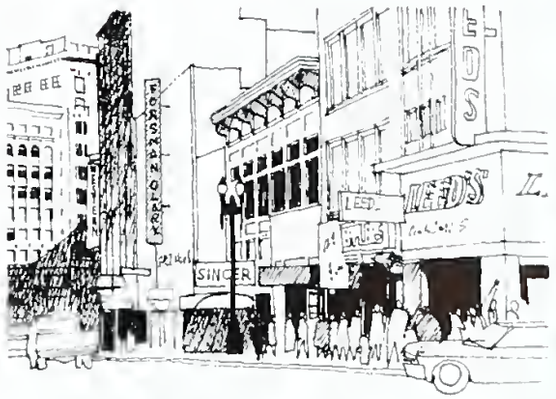
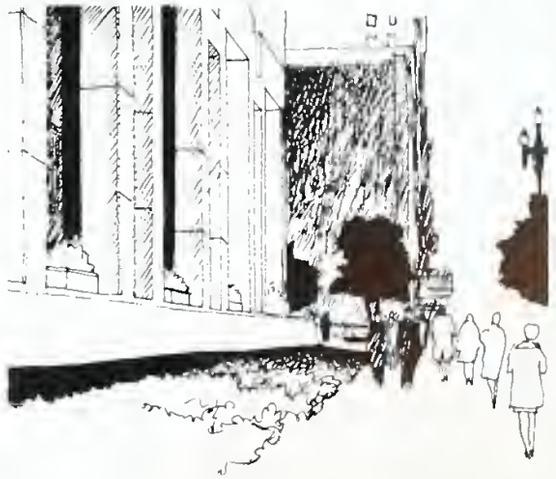


A

A



B

C

16

Continuity of interest and activities at ground level in commercial buildings adjacent to pedestrian ways creates rich street life and enhances pedestrian experiences.

A: Stores contribute both visual interest and activity to the street in downtown and district shopping areas and are the principal generators of street life.

B: Office lobbies usually lack interest for the passerby, and they can detract from a good shopping environment.

C: Major office buildings contribute more to street life if they have commercial activity at ground level.

17

Arcades provide continuous covered access to buildings and greatly increase pedestrian comfort in inclement weather.

18

Alleys and small streets which are usable as part of the general network of pedestrian and service ways are potential areas of activity and interest.

COMMENT: Large new projects that provide mid-block pedestrian and service shortcuts similar to those that now exist would continue and improve upon a workable pattern.

19

Planting and paving treatment in alleys, coupled with active uses in the adjacent buildings, form, in effect, a commercial promenade.

COMMENT: The intimate pedestrian scale offers a welcome contrast to the wider streets around.

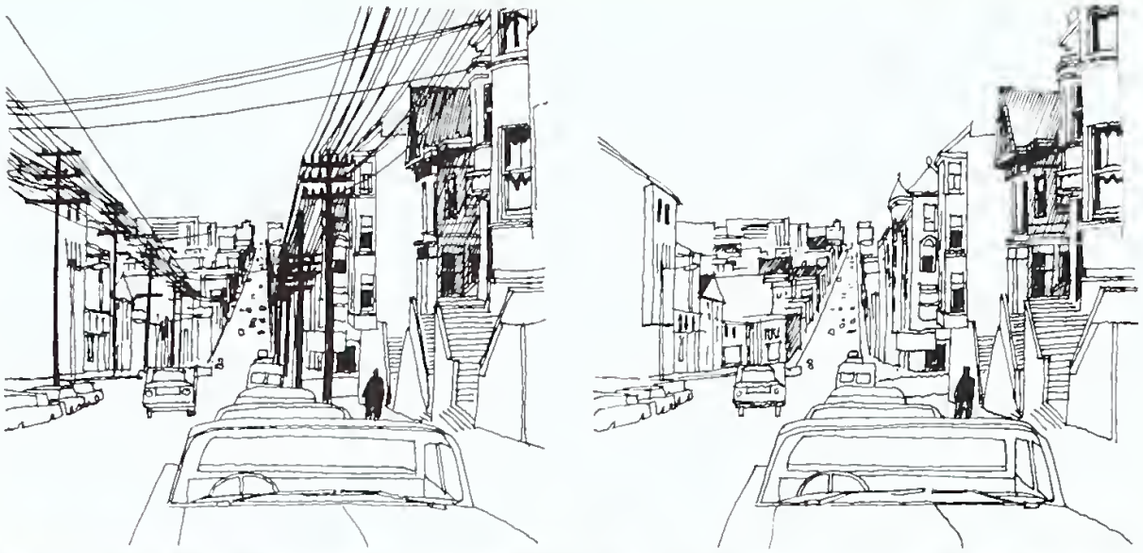
20

Dignified and well-maintained signs designed with respect for the scale and character of the street can enhance commercial areas.

When signs do not relate to the area, when they reach excessive size, and when they feature blatant and discordant designs, they reflect poorly upon the overall quality of a commercial area.

21

Pedestrian scale can be achieved at the base of large vertical building surfaces by the use of arcades, emphasis of horizontal divisions, texture and other architectural details.



22

The undergrounding of overhead utility wires enhances the appearance of streets and neighborhoods.

23

Attractive and well-maintained public buildings, streets and parks can stimulate private improvements.

24

Public buildings can contribute to neighborhood appearance if they are well-designed, attractively painted and generously landscaped.

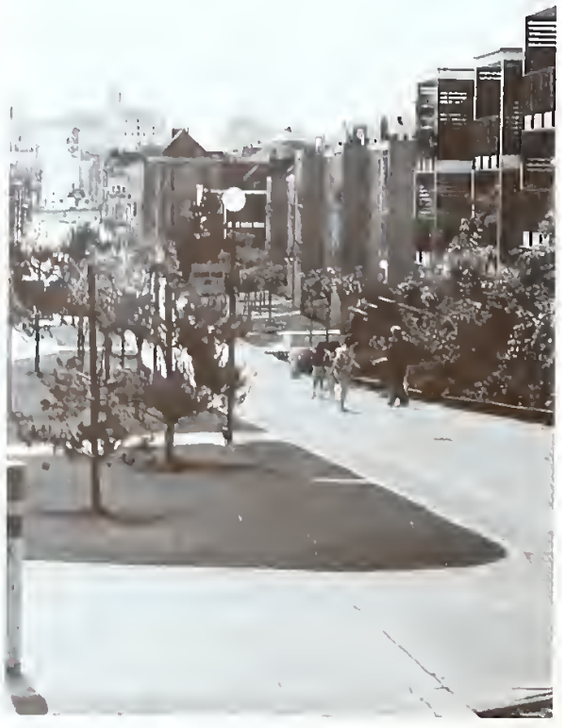
COMMENT (a): Chain link fencing used around many school grounds is unattractive. The growing of ivy on such fencing can ameliorate its effect somewhat.

COMMENT (b): Lack of landscaping and total asphalting make school playgrounds a negative rather than a positive feature in many neighborhoods.

COMMENT (c): Use of bright and lively colors in painting drab public buildings could enhance many neighborhoods.

25

Parks on hillsides can be developed for sitting areas with views, and for unusual recreational facilities that take advantage of the hill, such as a long slide for children.



26

Private lands that are landscaped or developed as open space contribute to the visual and recreational resources of the city.

COMMENT (a): Private landscaping efforts have improved the visual quality of many San Francisco neighborhoods.

COMMENT (b): As the city becomes increasingly built up and acquisition of public open space more difficult, privately developed open spaces become more important. Open spaces at the Crown-Zellerbach Building and St. Francis Square are good examples of such private development.

27

Improved and diverse means of transportation can increase the value and use of parks.

The ease with which pedestrians and motorists locate parks can be increased by improved signs or special roadway treatment.

28

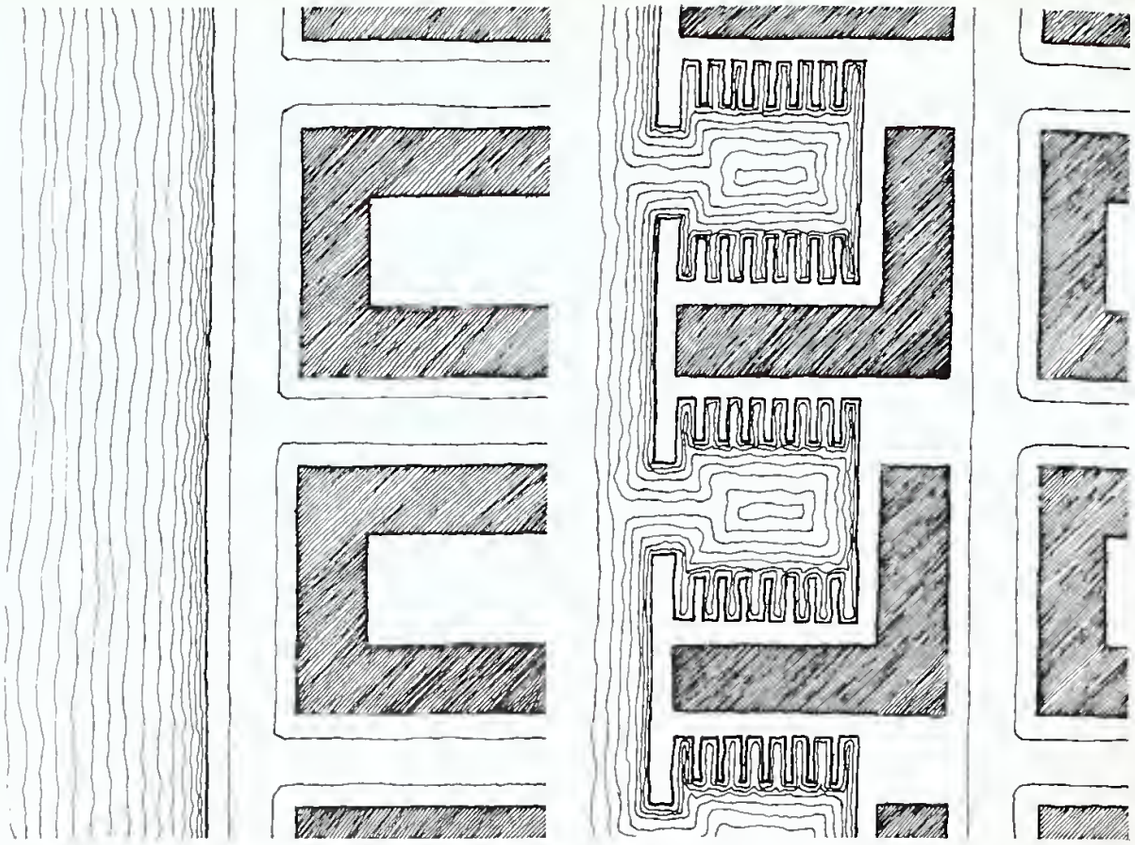
If auto traffic and parking in parks are discouraged, recreational use can be increased.

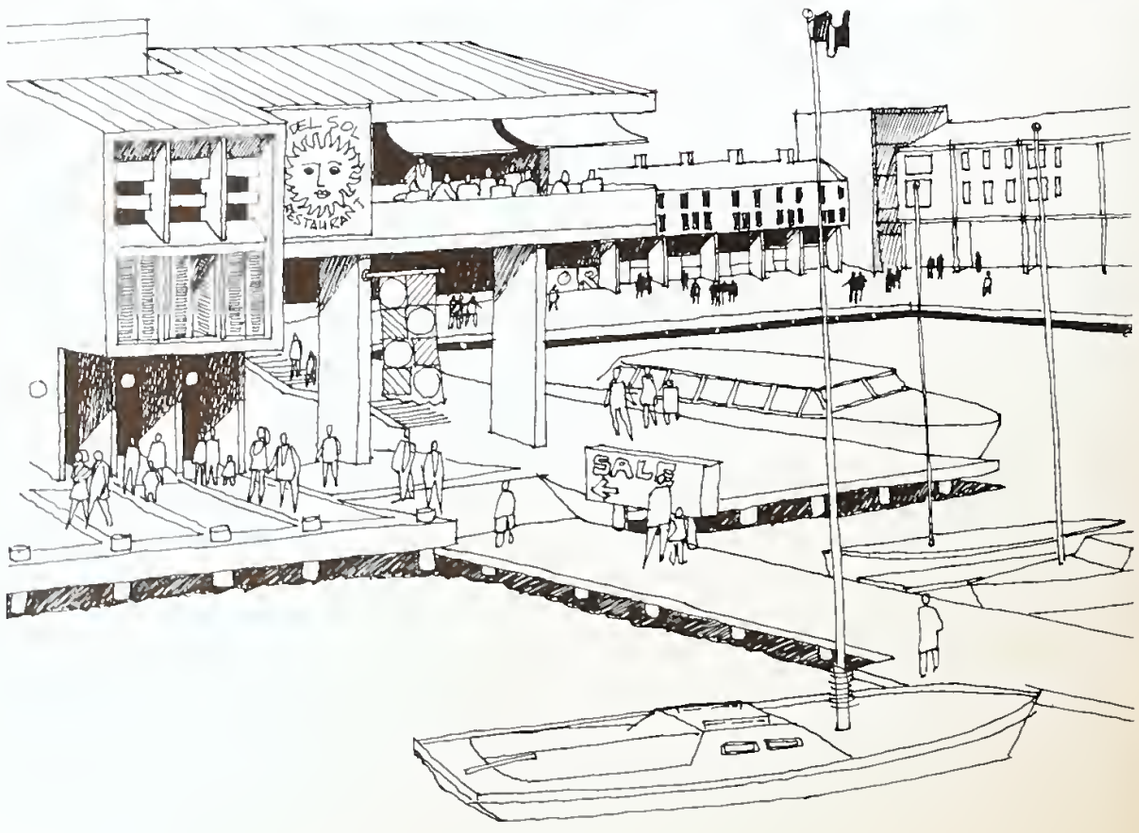
COMMENT: A large park such as Golden Gate Park can be made more usable by a special transportation system that links various facilities and encourages motorists to leave their vehicles outside the park or in peripheral parking areas.

29

Waterfront development that maximizes the interface between land and water increases the opportunities for public access to the water's edge.

A: Finger piers create a greater variety of possible ways to experience the water and the city.





B: Commercial and residential uses oriented toward the water and designed to create varied public spaces can add visual interest to the waterfront.

30

Open space along the water provides opportunities for maximum public use of the waterfront.

31

Street rights-of-way carried through to the water allow views directly to the waterfront and provide a sense of contact with the water.

Policies for Neighborhood Environment

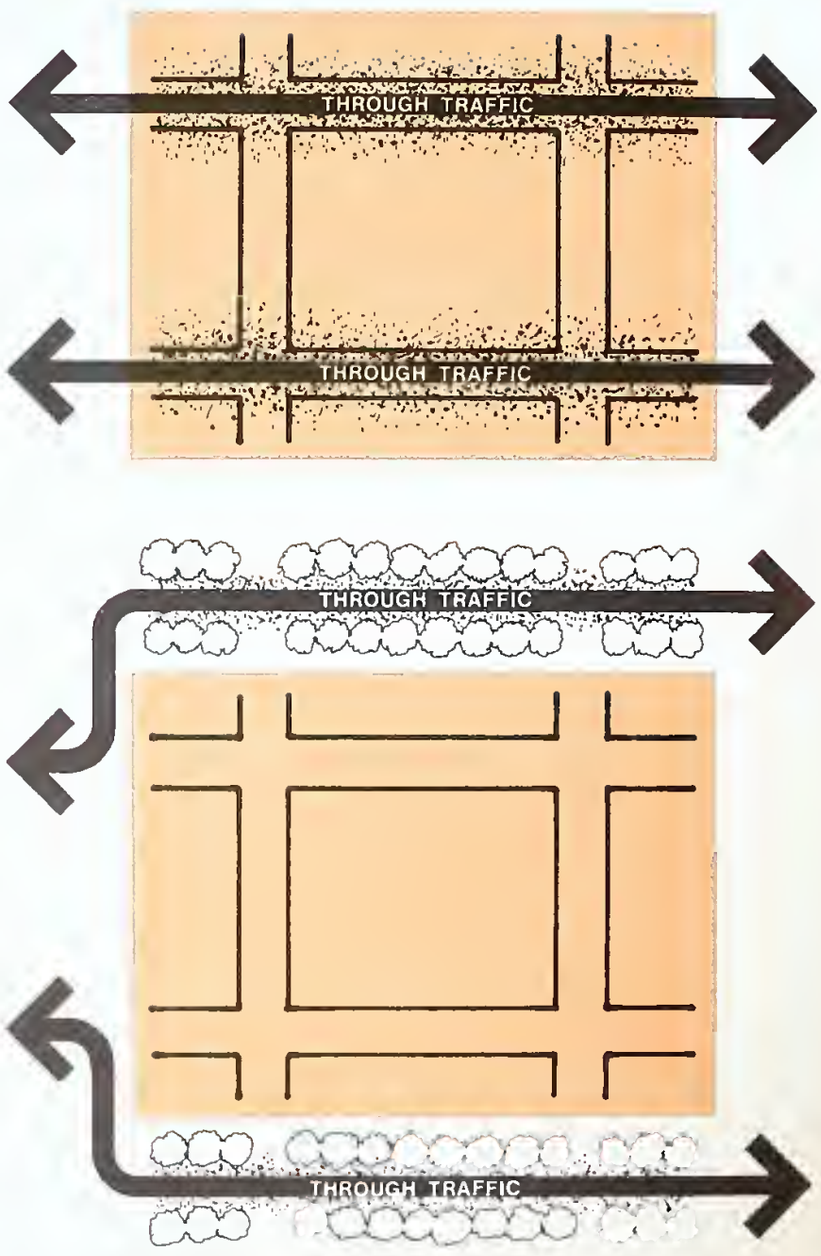
Health and Safety

Policy 1

Protect residential areas from the noise, pollution and physical danger of excessive traffic.

In order to reduce the hazards and discomfort of traffic in residential neighborhoods, a plan for protected residential areas should be put into effect. Such a plan is intended to prevent or discourage heavy, fast and through traffic from using residential streets, and to put such traffic on arterial streets where the impact upon residential areas will be less disruptive. Although development of further traffic-carrying capacity on some arterials may be warranted, the local streets should remain as they are or have their capacity reduced.

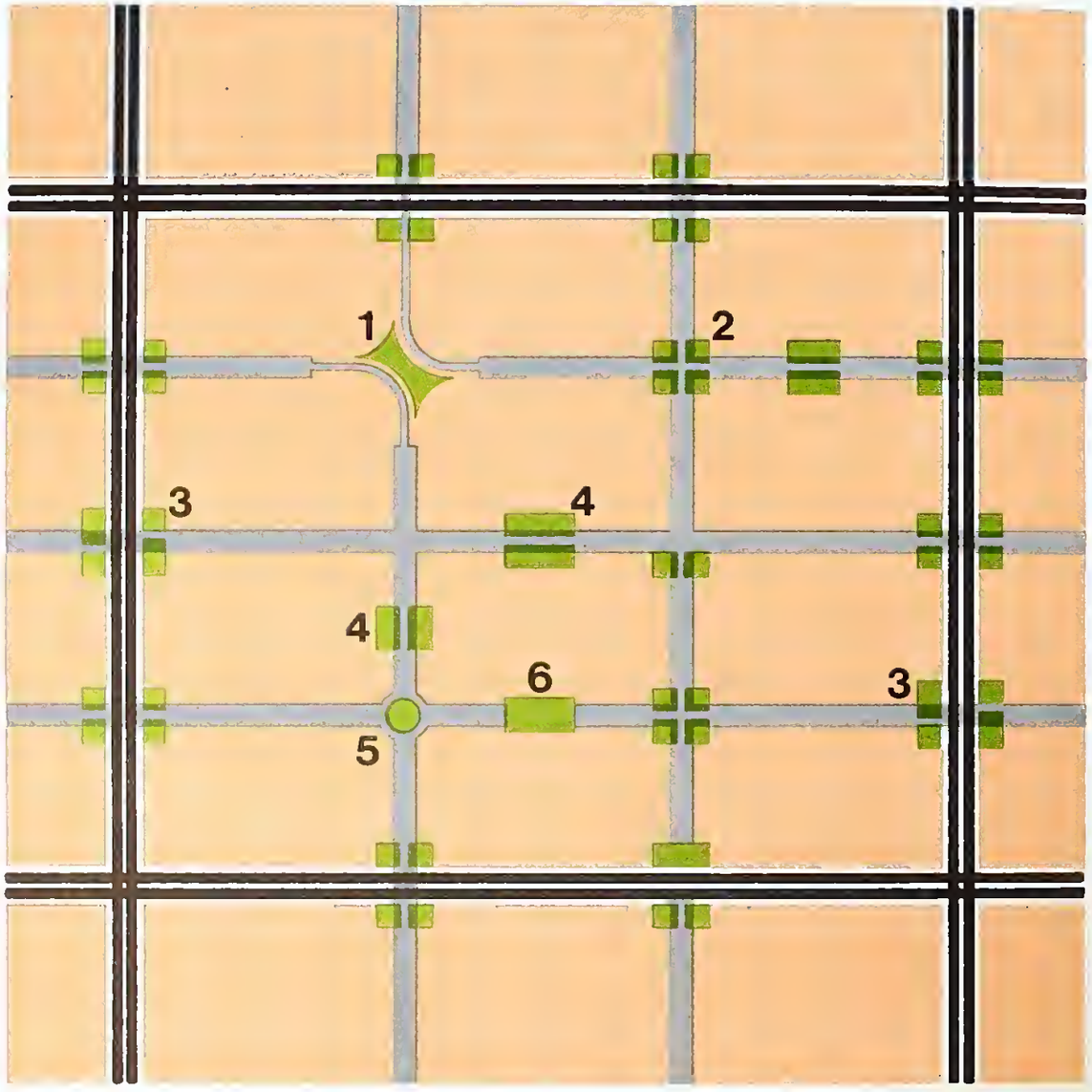
The speed and volume of traffic on protected streets should be limited by all practical means. Such means include making streets discontinuous to divert traffic from a straight path, narrowing streets and intersections, creating the appearance of narrowness through landscaping and other improvements, and prohibiting access from arterial streets by signs and barriers. Such changes in streets should be so designed that they will not limit the access of vehicles for police and fire protection and other emergency purposes in the protected areas. The total effect of these changes in residential streets should be to give the dominant position to residential qualities and pedestrians rather than to vehicles.

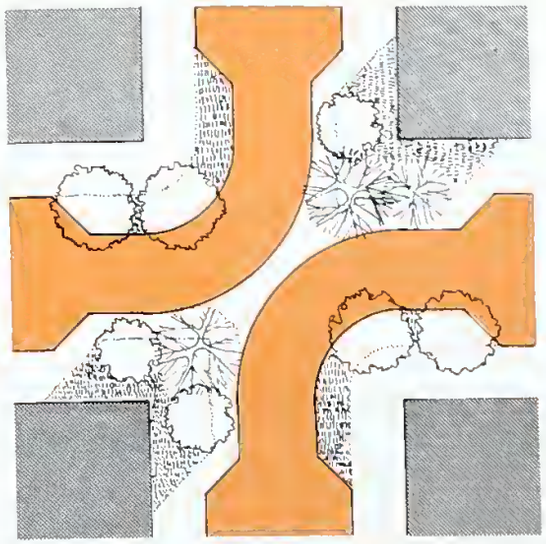


PLAN FOR PROTECTED RESIDENTIAL AREAS

PLAN FOR PROTECTED RESIDENTIAL AREAS: Detailed Illustrations

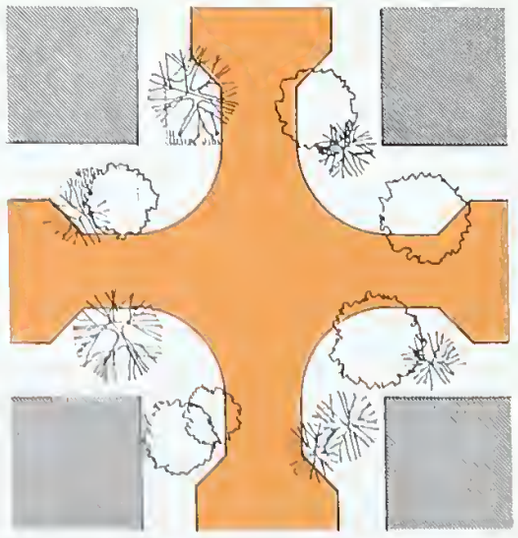
These two pages illustrate some of the means by which the speed and volume of traffic can be reduced on residential streets. The designs shown are simple prototypes. When used in combination and adapted to specific streets, such methods can significantly discourage heavy, fast and through traffic and divert vehicles to arterial streets. In many cases, too, these designs can improve the visual quality of residential neighborhoods and provide usable open space for landscaping, playgrounds and sitting areas.

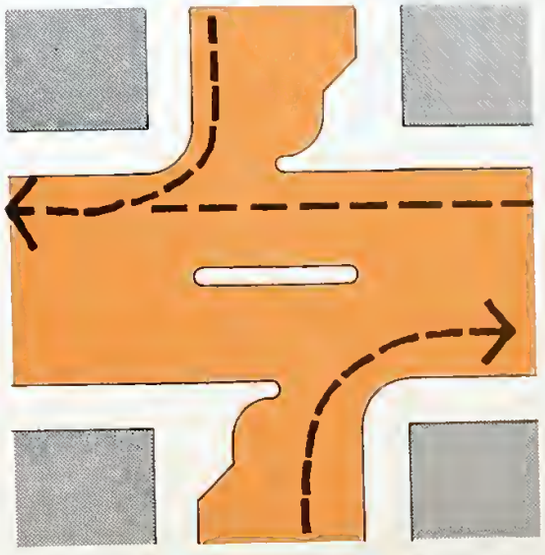




1 Diverters at intersections to prevent traffic from following a straight and through path.

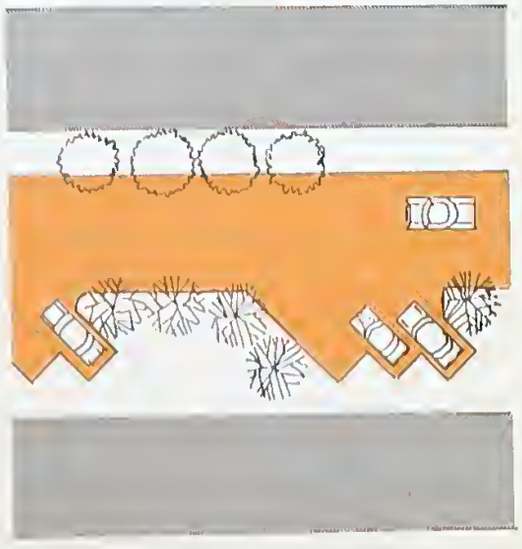
2 Narrowing of the pavement at intersections to slow traffic, reduce the length of crosswalks and increase the caution of drivers.

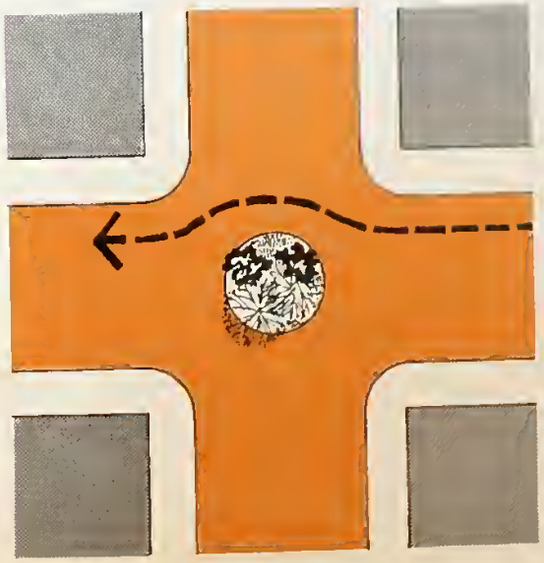




3 Controlled access to and from arterial streets that makes the local streets discontinuous.

4 Narrowing of the roadway without loss of parking spaces by alternating of landscaped areas with diagonal parking.





5 Highly visible landscaped islands to slow traffic at intersections.

6 Closing of a small section of street to traffic, with access still provided for emergency vehicles.

Policy 2

Provide buffering for residential properties when heavy traffic cannot be avoided.

When arterials and other streets having heavy traffic must go through residential areas, steps should be taken to screen dwellings from the noise, fumes and other adverse effects of traffic. Heavy landscaping at the sides of streets and in center islands may provide an effective barrier, as can walls, differences in elevation and the setting back of dwellings from the roadways.

Dwellings along streets with heavy traffic should, where possible, have the main orientation of their living space and access away from the traffic. In some cases further measures such as soundproofing may be required. Businesses and industries that attract or produce heavy traffic, such as service stations and trucking terminals, should be screened from nearby residential areas. Screening should be provided, as well, for all open parking lots within or adjacent to residential areas. All of the aforementioned considerations should apply to recreation areas as well as to dwellings.

Policy 3

Provide adequate lighting in public areas.

In order to reduce the hazards of traffic at night, and to provide security from crime and other dangers, public areas should have adequate lighting. Although the need for lighting is general, special attention should be given to crosswalks and to pathways in parks and around public buildings. Care should be taken to shield the glare of any such lighting from residential properties.

Policy 4

Design walkways and parking facilities to minimize danger to pedestrians.

Pedestrian walkways should be sharply delineated from traffic areas, and set apart where possible to provide a separate circulation system. Where necessary and practical, the separation should include landscaping and other barriers, and walkways should pass through the interiors of blocks. Walkways that cross streets should have pavement markings and good sight distances for motorists and pedestrians.

Driveways across sidewalks should be kept to a practical minimum, with control maintained over the number and width of curb cuts. Barriers should be installed along parking lots to avoid encroachments on sidewalks, with adequate sight distances maintained at driveways. Truck loading should occur on private property rather than in roadways or on sidewalks, and sidewalk elevators should be discouraged. Residential parking should be as close as possible to the dwellings served, with adequate lighting along the walking route from the parking to the dwellings.

Feeling of Neighborhood

Policy 5

Provide adequate maintenance for public areas.

In view of the importance attached to the cleaning, paving and other maintenance of streets as an index of neighborhood upkeep, and as a stimulant to private improvements, these types of programs should be carried on continuously and effectively.

The same degree of maintenance should be accorded to parks, buildings and other public facilities. In both the initial design and the upkeep of these facilities, the image of government and of its role in the community should be made attractive and inviting. Special attention should be given to the landscaping of public buildings.

Policy 6

Emphasize the importance of local centers providing commercial and government services.

Local centers for shopping, government services and congregation of people should stand out in their areas. Landscaping, distinctive pavement and other features will help to emphasize these centers. Along shopping streets pedestrian interest should be maintained by continuous store frontages. Government services for the local area, such as offices and libraries, should occupy the same center as the commercial activities.

Policy 7

Encourage and assist in voluntary programs for neighborhood improvement.

Neighborhood participation in programs for the physical improvement of residential and shopping areas assures an additional measure of pride and satisfaction in the results, and helps to stimulate continuous maintenance of the improvements. Such stimulation of neighborhood interest may make unnecessary more drastic action for upgrading of the area at some future time.

Programs that can make use of both voluntary work and government assistance include street tree planting and development of small parks and other recreation facilities. Where possible, significant public improvements in street areas should be accompanied by financial and design assistance to property owners under programs such as the Federally Assisted Code Enforcement Program which assure the coordinated upgrading of an entire neighborhood.

Opportunity for Recreation

Policy 8

Provide convenient access to a variety of recreation opportunities.

As many types of recreation space as possible should be provided in the city, in order to serve all age groups and interests. Some recreation space should be within walking distance of every dwelling, and in more densely developed areas some sitting and play space should be available in nearly every block. The more visible the recreation space is in each neighborhood, the more it will be appreciated and used.

Recreation space at a greater distance should be easily accessible by marked driving routes, and where possible by separated walkways and bicycle paths. Larger recreation areas should be highly visible. San Francisco Bay is included among the major recreation resources of the city, and visual and physical access to the Bay should be increased, with a maximum interface of land and water made available in new developments having public access.

All possible means of providing recreation facilities should be explored. Some historic buildings and their sites have such a potential. Many commercial areas have a semi-recreational aspect, and this aspect should be recognized and strengthened. Where possible, new facilities such as parking garages in more intensively developed parts of the city should have recreation space placed above them.

Policy 9

Maximize the use of recreation areas for recreation purposes.

Parks provide their greatest service to the community when they bring a sense of nature to city residents. Recreation facilities suited to each park and its neighborhood should be installed and maintained, while facilities not primarily intended for recreation or not requiring a park location should be placed outside the park system.

Automobile traffic in parks should be minimized, and where possible means of transportation other than automobiles should be provided in larger parks. Automobile parking should occur at the edges of parks, preferably outside the park boundaries. Parking lots and other visually distracting uses should be screened from the areas devoted to recreation.

Policy 10

Encourage or require the provision of recreation space in private development.

As the city grows more intensive, much of the new area for recreation will have to be provided on private property, whether for individual developments or for the public at large. This recreation space may be of many types.

Recreation space should be provided in large developments, especially in areas of high population and building density. In the downtown area, well-designed plazas with public access and good exposure to sunlight serve this function. In apartment developments, some of the recreation needs of the occupants should be satisfied on the site itself, if necessary by joint use of space by several properties in the block. New developments along the shoreline of the Bay should whenever possible provide recreation space or general public access to the Bay.

Policy 11

Make use of street space and other unused public areas for recreation.

Walking along neighborhood streets is the most common form of recreation. The usefulness of streets for this purpose can in many cases be improved by widening of sidewalks and installation of simple improvements such as benches and landscaping. Such improvements can often be put in place without narrowing of traffic lanes by use of parking bays with widening of sidewalks at the intersections and at other points unsuitable for parking.

Streets that have roadways wider than necessary, and streets that are not developed for traffic because of their steepness, provide exceptional opportunities for recreation. These areas can be developed with playgrounds, sitting areas, viewpoints and landscaping that make them neighborhood assets and increase the opportunities for recreation close to the residents' homes.

Visual Amenity

Policy 12

Install, promote and maintain landscaping in public and private areas.

Trees and other landscaping are a recurring theme in these policies, for they add to nearly any city environment. Both public and private efforts in the installation and maintenance of landscaping should be increased.

In residential areas, side yards and setbacks provide the best opportunities for landscaping visible in public areas. If no such space exists, then trees should be placed in the sidewalk area, preferably in the ground. Care should be taken to select species of trees suitable to each location. The most visible points, such as street intersections, should be given special attention.

Other unused opportunities for landscaping exist on exposed banks, usually along roadways. Where it is feasible, these should be planted and maintained by the public or private owners of the land. Portions of parks that are unlandscaped should also be considered for new planting, especially when the areas are visible from nearby neighborhoods.

Policy 13

Improve pedestrian areas by providing human scale and interest.

In addition to landscaping, other features along the streets add to the comfort and interest of pedestrians. Sidewalk paving and furnishings, if designed in a unified way, make walking more pleasurable. Gentle changes in level have the same effect. In commercial areas, continuous and well-appointed shop windows and arcades are invitations to movement. Little-used alleys can be improved as walkways, and new promenades put through blocks in new development. Greater comfort should also be provided at transit stops, where benches and shelters can be placed on sidewalks and on private property.

Policy 14

Remove and obscure distracting and cluttering elements.

No other element in the street environment is more disrupting than exposed parking. Parking lots and open parking decks break the building facades and stand as large voids in visual interest. Exposed vehicles clutter the pedestrian's view and reduce the sidewalk to a narrow corridor between rows of automobiles. Parking should, wherever possible, be placed beneath or behind buildings or else screened from view by landscaping, walls or fences. The screening should be designed to restore to the street some of the visual interest that has been taken away by the removal of buildings.

Signs are another leading cause of street clutter. Where signs are large, garish and clashing they lose their value as identification or advertising and merely offend the viewer. Often these signs are overhanging or otherwise unrelated to the physical qualities of the buildings on which they are placed. Signs have an important place in an urban environment, but they should be controlled in their size and location.

Other clutter is produced by elements placed in the street areas. The undergrounding of overhead wires should continue at the most

rapid pace possible, with the goal the complete elimination of such wires within a foreseeable period of time. Every other element in street areas, including public signs, should be examined with a view toward improvement of design and elimination of unnecessary elements.

Policy 15

Protect the livability and character of residential properties from the intrusion of incompatible new buildings.

Whatever steps are taken in the street areas, they may be lost in the changed atmosphere produced by new buildings. Human scale can be retained if new buildings, even large ones, avoid the appearance of massiveness by maintaining established building lines and providing human scale at their lower levels through use of texture and details. If the ground level of existing buildings in the area is devoted to shops, then new buildings should avoid breaking the continuity of retail space.

In residential areas of lower density, the established form of development is protected by limitations on coverage and requirements for yards and front setbacks. These standards assure provision of open space with new buildings and maintenance of sunlight and views. Such standards, and others that contribute to the livability and character of residential neighborhoods, should be safeguarded and strengthened.

THE FUTURE

This Urban Design Plan for San Francisco has been developed with the conviction that quality in the urban environment is an important and growing concern in this great city. The people of San Francisco have taken a leadership role among the citizens of the country in balancing conservation and change through new safeguards for cherished attributes of their city's character. This Plan is intended to reflect the people's needs and to consolidate future efforts to protect and improve the physical makeup of the city. As new needs and concerns arise in later years, this Plan will be added to and revised in the continuing process of comprehensive planning.


7AM-6PM
SCHOOL

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The preceding Urban Design Plan establishes a framework within which the San Francisco community can preserve that which is good in the present environment, enhance that which could be better, guide or control that which is new so that it will be compatible with the old and with the city's traditions, and improve the environment where it is deficient in the qualities for which San Francisco is so well noted.

The Plan is a system of common reference points to enlist community agreement on courses of action with respect to urban design. It seeks to resolve the conflicts that arise from the pressures of growth and change. The Plan will not serve its purposes, however, unless there are means to carry it out and public will to see that the means are used.

Just as there has been no overall plan in the past to define quality in the San Francisco environment, there has been no overall implementation system, no authorized hierarchy of standards and procedures to be used in questions affecting urban design. Such a system is both difficult to establish and difficult to adapt to new pressures and changing needs.

General Approach

"Implementation" means the connecting up of plans with actual practice in development and preservation. There is a great range of implementation devices, in terms of scope of application, duration of time and degree of formality. Devices must be chosen that will he most appropriate and most feasible for each part of the Plan.

A general approach to implementation, and a description of available means of implementation, are contained in Preliminary Report No. 7 of the Urban Design Study. In its general approach, that report put forth the following premises:

1. Effective, long-term solutions to urban design problems do not come from repeated confrontations over development proposals. The emphasis should be upon evolving solutions by use of the best design talents, and upon the making of decisions through a rational choice among the available alternatives with all significant urban design values taken into account.

2. To establish a climate for such solutions and decisions, there must be widespread agreement on points or terms of reference before a given development project is either designed or announced. These terms of reference must be defined by public planning to which the community is committed.

3. In order that such planning may have real meaning, there must be early and continuous involvement of urban design professionals who express the public's point of view, in all significant projects affecting the physical development of the city. It is critical that this involvement be timely if it is to he effective and persuasive.

4. These urban design professionals, and others who seek solutions or make decisions affecting urban design, will be able to respond to the public's interest in a better city only if there is citizen discussion of the major issues, citywide and in each neighborhood. Participation of the whole community will lead to sounder courses of action in the long run, and will ease the frustration that inevitably results from non-participation.

Processes

The general approach just described is dependent upon *processes* in planning, in project review and in decision making. Taken in a very broad sense, the approach means that there must be a "planning-development process" that includes all the elements of the city affected by planning and development, both public and private. This process proceeds from the setting of overall objectives and policies to the final execution of projects without any break in the chain of planning and decision making. The concept of such a process is extremely challenging, but it is essential to the working out of a comprehensive plan with real community significance.

In the current work toward revision of San Francisco's comprehensive plan — the total Master Plan — several other elements have an especially close relationship to this Urban Design Plan:

- The RESIDENCE element has reached an advanced stage, and is concerned, among other things, with housing quality and the viability of residential neighborhoods.

- The TRANSPORTATION element, also well advanced, includes designation of functions for each city street, and achievement of balance among all the forms of transportation.

- Also being developed is the RECREATION element, which will deal in detail with policies for serving all recreation needs.

- At a later time the COMMERCE element will recommend development policies for downtown and other commercial areas of the city.

These elements, and others less closely related to urban design, will be affected by this Urban Design Plan and will reflect its policies.

Although revision of the city's entire comprehensive plan in all its elements will permit the best possible assessment of the effects of any suggested development action, total revision need not and should not take place before the policies of any one element such as this Urban Design Plan are implemented. The time period for total revision is too great and the immediate issues too urgent to warrant such a delay.

Organization

Effective processes require *organization*, which means primarily the organization of the City government to carry out its responsibilities effectively and in a responsive manner. Although organization is the business of the whole government, in matters of planning and especially urban design the Department of City Planning and the City Planning Commission are cast in a central role for the making of policy and the outlining of programs to carry it out. Revision of the Charter might clarify this role in some respects, but the present Charter quite clearly establishes the coordinating responsibilities of the planning function in City government.

Education

Thorough processes and strong organization will not be fully used without community *education* in matters of urban design. Planning is itself an educational experience, for it helps to highlight the urban design issues and to outline the available alternatives for both the general public and their representatives in government. Among all the means of education, open meetings in the community are the most effective in encouraging a free exchange of ideas.

Detailed Planning

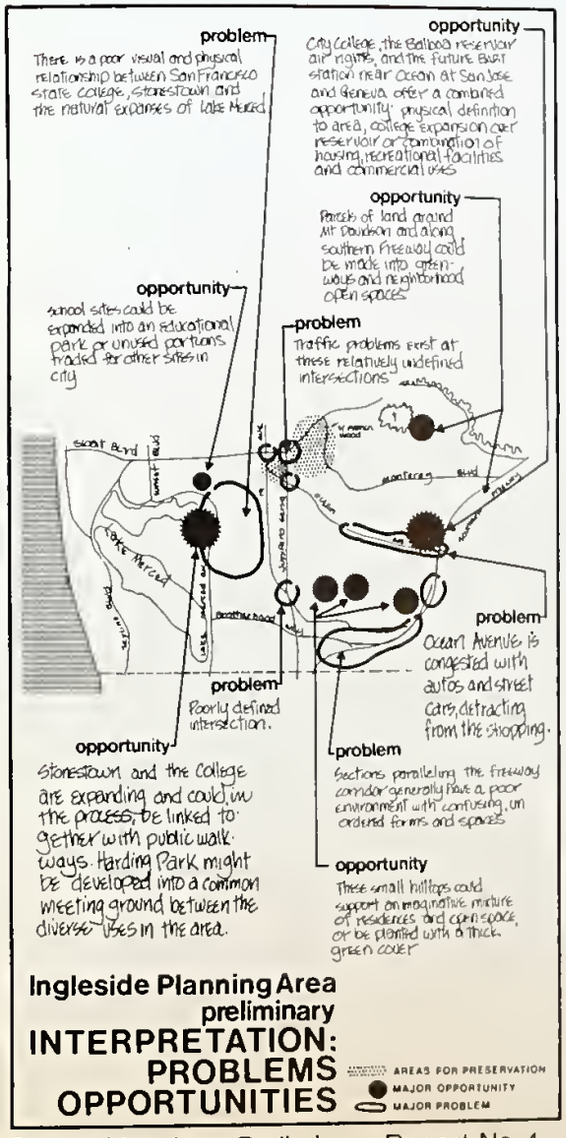
In bringing The Urban Design Plan to bear in a specific situation, further planning at a more detailed level will often be required. Such refinement can take a number of forms, among which are:

- AREA PLANNING, at a district or neighborhood level, in which the special problems and opportunities of one part of the city are identified, and the principles and policies of The Urban Design Plan are applied in improvements and regulations applicable to that area. Area plans may include quite specific designs for improvements, especially at neighborhood centers. Certain area plans, if sufficiently refined with the participation of the people of the area, can be adopted as part of the Master Plan, as was done in the case of the South Bayshore Plan.

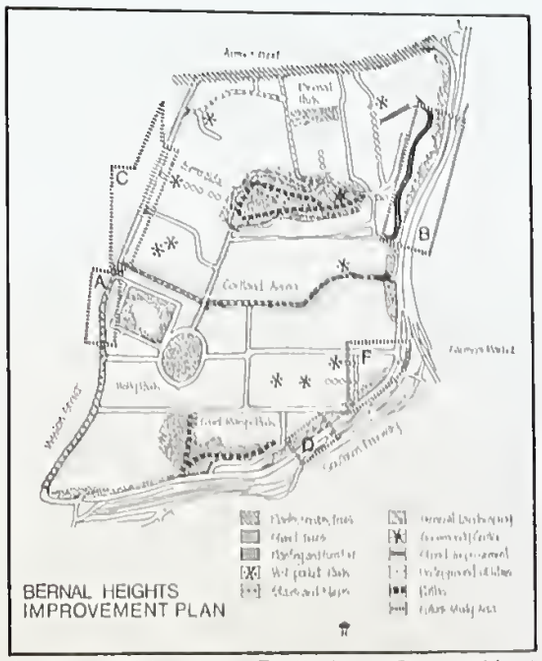
- DESIGN PROTOTYPES for improvements that might be carried out in any part of the city. These could include various kinds of traffic diverters, treatments for sidewalks and their furnishings, methods of landscaping, and the like. In deciding upon improvements for specific areas, the area residents and the government agencies responsible for the work could select from among the prototypes already carefully designed, or could adapt these designs to the special needs of the area.

- DEMONSTRATIONS, which apply the prototypes or other designs to a single location where an improvement is actually constructed by an operating agency. Such demonstrations show how a landscaping project, a parking area or some other improvement will appear when it is completed, show what its benefits will be for the area, help to estimate its costs for other locations, and permit refinements in the design if the project is to be repeated in another neighborhood.

- PROJECT REVIEW, meaning the review of plans for buildings and other projects proposed by either a government agency or a private party, in order to determine the urban design implications of those plans and recommend any changes that will bring the plans into closer conformity with The Urban Design Plan. The first step in review should occur at an early stage, before expenditures and other commitments have reached a point at which modifications may be difficult. In some cases, for more significant projects, special urban design terms of reference should be drawn up at the outset of the project, based upon the principles and policies of The Urban Design Plan and any other plans that may exist for the area in question.



Survey Map from Preliminary Report No. 4



Summary Map from Preliminary Report No. 2


Possible Intersection Treatment
Tenth Avenue and Cabrillo Street

Key Urban Design Inputs

In project review especially, but in other public and private design processes as well, it is important that key points be identified for review and consultation involving the public urban design professionals. Those professionals would in most cases be members of the staff of the Department of City Planning.

The input of urban design planning in these processes involves certain financial costs. It requires a commitment to a permanent urban design staff, adequate in numbers and talent to carry out its responsibilities under The Urban Design Plan. For effective work, and for adequate explanation of the urban design issues to other participants, especially to the public at large, the design input requires a variety of graphic illustrations, including three-dimensional models. Such illustrations are necessary to show what design alternatives are available, and to show the effects of the alternatives upon the rest of the city. On the part of private developers, who may have to provide some of this illustrative material, the urban design input may also result in additional costs in architectural services in order to improve the design of their projects. The same may be true where the projects are built with public funds.

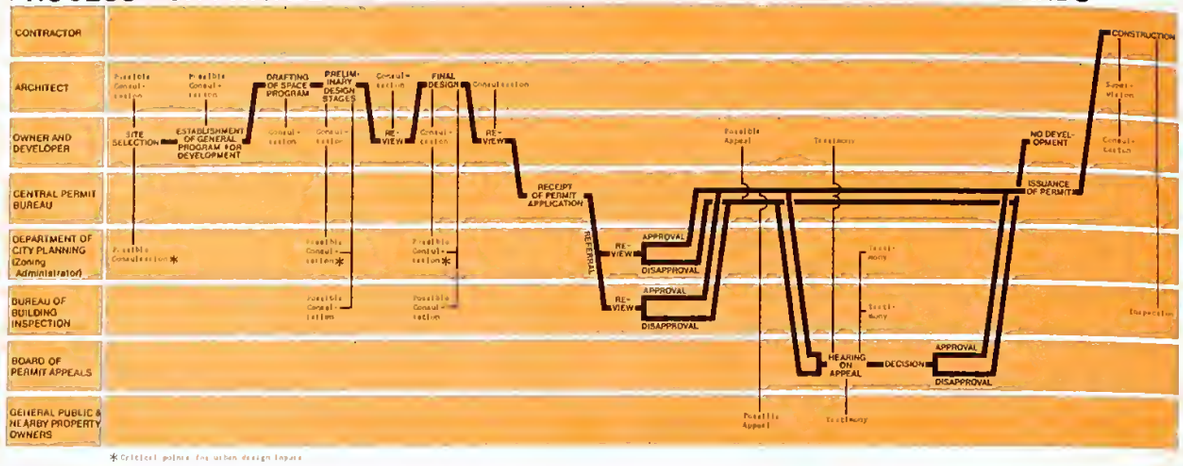
On the other hand, it is possible that the total net effect of methodical review of the urban design considerations will be a lower cost. Certainly this will be so if such review is substituted for a period of extended confrontation and redesign resulting from chaotic review and decision making. In some cases, too, the improved design solutions for either public or private projects may simply involve less expensive construction. In any event, if all public costs are considered, and the long-term effects of each project upon the city are included, any higher immediate costs that may be imposed may be regarded overall as a wise bargain.

PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND DECISION MAKING: The six diagrams shown here describe in simplified form the present sequence of events in six common proeesses leading up to development. The diagrams may be used either by following the heavy line or lines through the entire sequence; or by reading vertically to determine whieh participants are involved at each step in the proeess; or by reading horizontally to determine at which steps in the proeess one speeifie participant is involved.

It can be noted that:

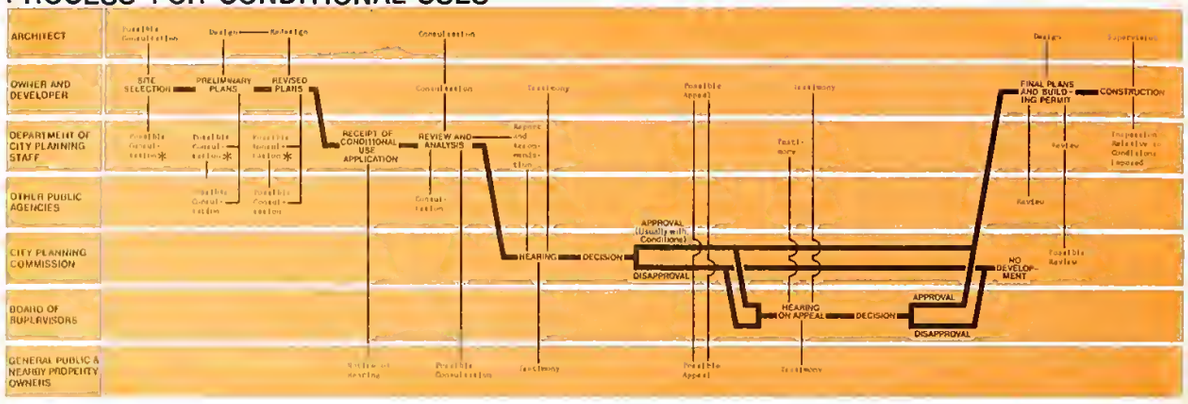
1. A "eonsultation" is usually not mandatory but depends upon cooperation and two-way communication between participants.
2. From the "eritical points for urban design inputs", it is possible to judge whether the input of urban design considerations now provided for is timely and sufficient.
3. The same can be said as to the inputs from public participation, which are represented by the bottom band on each diagram.
4. The diagrams as shown have no ambiguous lines or steps. There may be individual cases, however, in which the process is not carried out as shown. In such an event, it may be that clarification of the process for future cases will make the urban design inputs more effective.

PROCESS FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT UNDER OBJECTIVE ZONING STANDARDS



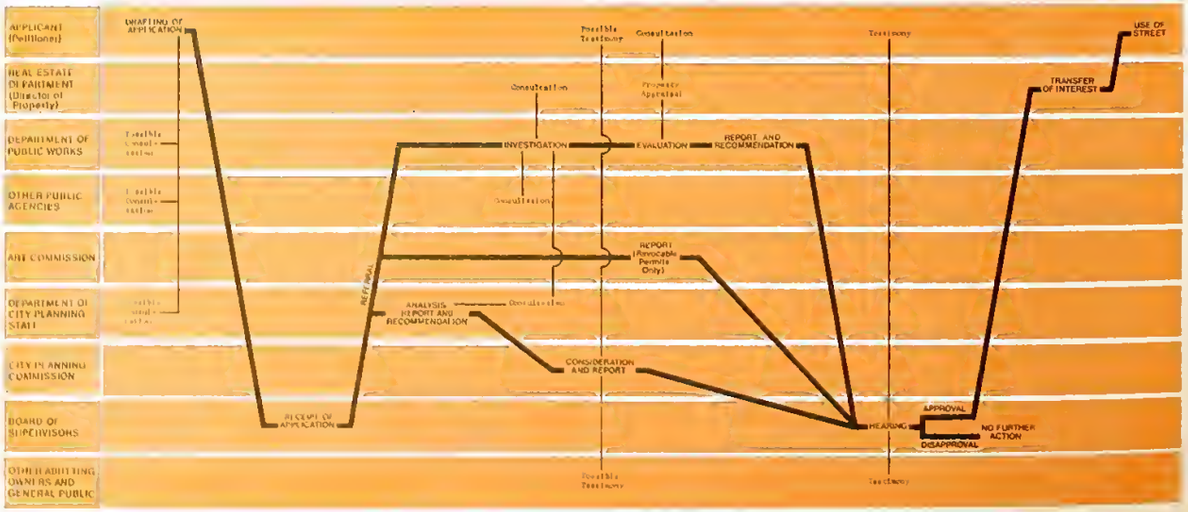
* Critical points for urban design inputs

PROCESS FOR CONDITIONAL USES

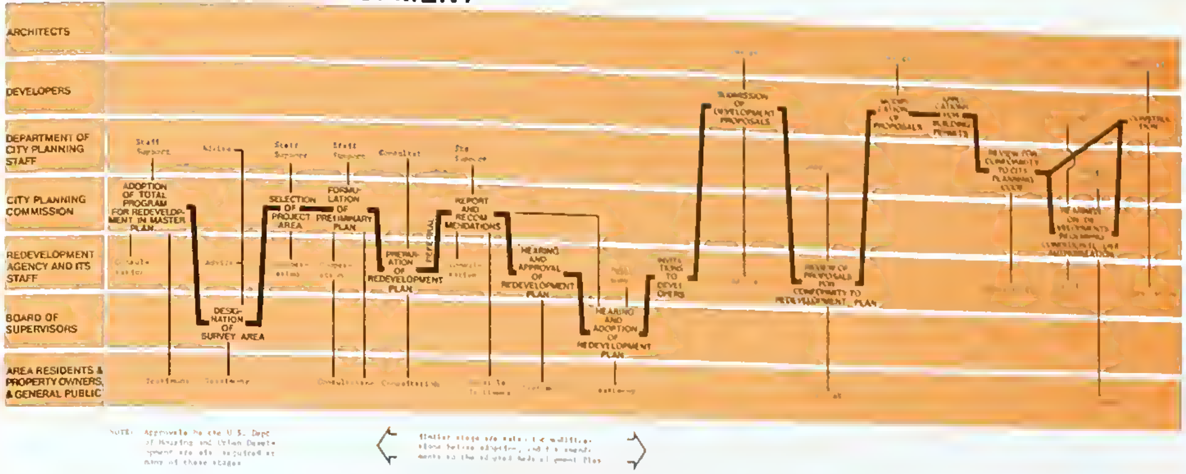


* critical points for urban design inputs

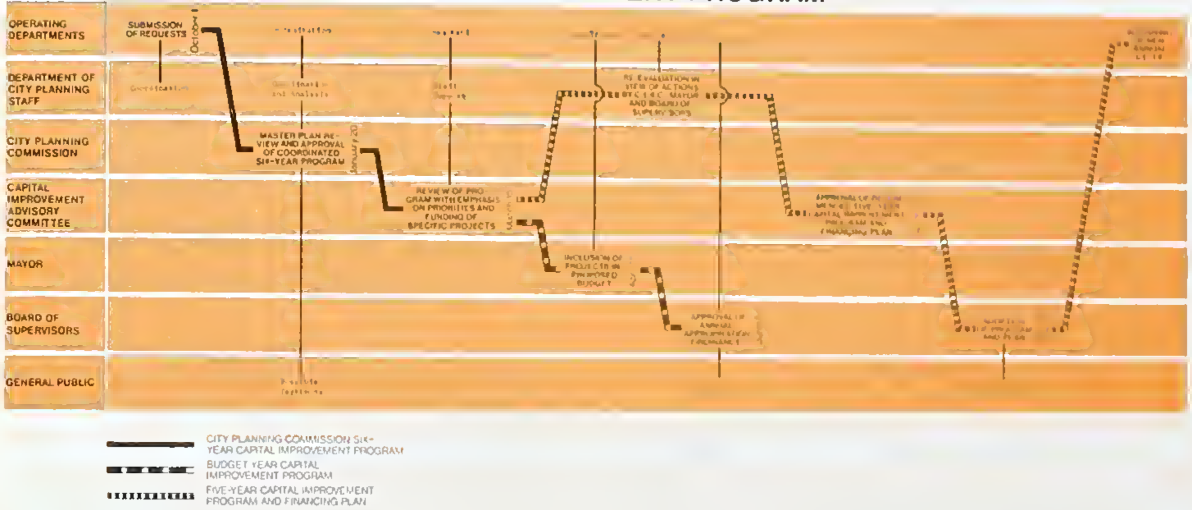
PROCESS FOR STREET VACATIONS AND REVOCABLE PERMITS



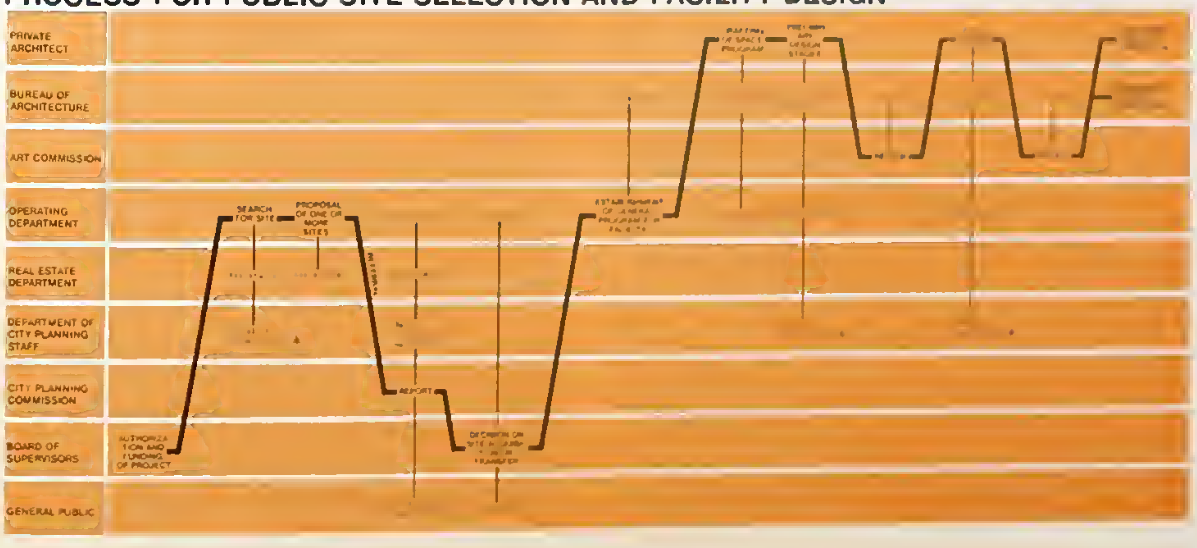
PROCESS FOR REDEVELOPMENT


ARCHITECTS
DEVELOPERS
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING STAFF
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND ITS STAFF
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AREA RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS & GENERAL PUBLIC
ADOPTION OF TOTAL PROGRAM FOR REDEVELOPMENT IN MASTER PLAN
DESIGNATION OF SURVEY AREA
SELECTION OF PROJECT AREA
FORMULATION OF PRELIMINARY PLAN
PREPARATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
HEARING AND APPROVAL OF REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
HEARING AND ADOPTION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
SUBMISSION OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

ANNUAL PROCESS FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM


OPERATING DEPARTMENTS
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING STAFF
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MAYOR
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
GENERAL PUBLIC
SUBMISSION OF REQUESTS
MASTER PLAN REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF COORDINATED SIX-YEAR PROGRAM
REVIEW OF PROGRAM WITH EMPHASIS ON PRIORITIES AND FUNDING OF SPECIFIC PROJECTS
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION SIX-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
BUDGET YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND FINANCING PLAN

PROCESS FOR PUBLIC SITE SELECTION AND FACILITY DESIGN


PRIVATE ARCHITECT
BUREAU OF ARCHITECTURE
ART COMMISSION
OPERATING DEPARTMENT
REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING STAFF
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
GENERAL PUBLIC
AUTHORIZATION AND FUNDING OF PROJECT
SEARCH FOR SITE
PROPOSAL OF ONE OR MORE SITES
REPORT

Positive Achievements

San Francisco has been fortunate, in recent years, in having many examples of projects built with superior design quality and a studied respect for the character of the city and the nature of the surrounding area. These projects contribute lasting values to the city and offer high standards for the development that follows.

These projects show that public and private design can be done sensitively and without relaxation of the established controls over development. Some would regard them as exceptional cases, because most of these projects were designed without unwavering adherence to economic considerations, and most do not represent the maximum development allowed by law.

In view of the fine design abilities available in San Francisco, these need not be exceptional cases. Nor should it be necessary always to make legal standards more restrictive in order to keep tight limits upon the expectations of developers. If the maximum allowable building will always be constructed, then the legal standards must be made very tight indeed to achieve the most basic urban design objectives, even to a point where no flexibility can remain for truly imaginative individual designs. The alternatives to such over-restriction are two: the first is a heightened awareness of the urban design issues and public values on the part of developers as well as their architects; the second is more extensive review processes for the purpose of evolving well-reasoned design solutions without unduly restrictive standards. It is probable that both these alternatives are necessary. If both should be ineffective, then it would appear that legal restrictions should be tightened.

First Unitarian Church

Friendship Village

Woodside Gardens

Anna E. Waden Branch Library

Crown-Zellerbach Plaza

Market Street Improvements (model)

Ghirardolli Square

The Cannery

Liberty Terrace

Engine Co. 43, Moscow Street
Golden Gateway Center

Community Priorities

Implementation of The Urban Design Plan requires the establishment of several kinds of priorities. Most of these priorities are made necessary by the finite supply of public funds. The financing of City improvements is increasingly difficult, and many types of funds are tied to specific purposes. Federal assistance that has permitted additional local efforts, especially the Federally Assisted Code Enforcement Program (FACE), Urban Beautification grants and Urban Renewal funds, may be reduced by new Federal policies. In view of the shortage of funds, it is especially important that the available money be used where the needs are high, and where the improvements will be highly visible and likely to have a favorable effect upon surrounding development.

In the portion of The Urban Design Plan concerning Neighborhood Environment, some of the criteria for selection of priority areas were set forth. These criteria should be considered in the Charter-required schedule of future improvements—the City's Capital Improvement Program. Other priorities in that program must be based upon the availability of certain types of funding and the urgency of one kind of improvement for public operations as compared with other kinds that are proposed. In addition, maintenance and repairs for existing facilities must take precedence over new improvements.

There are other community priorities that are not necessarily financial. They have to do with the importance to be attached to long-term preservation and improvement of the environment as compared with short-term savings or gains. It is in the essence of urban design planning that high priority should be given to the long-term effects of any public or private action.

Actions Based Upon the Plan

Adoption of The Urban Design Plan as part of the Master Plan will have a number of consequences for the City Planning Commission and the Department of City Planning. The Plan will provide guidance for formal reviews of legislative referrals, capital improvements and cases arising under the provisions of the City Planning Code. It will be a framework for area planning, prototype designs and new studies of development controls. On a less formal basis, the Plan will provide the Department staff with terms of reference for advice to developers and other City departments, and for general education on the subject matter of urban design.

The Urban Design Plan is not addressed, however, merely to the City's planning agency, or even to all agencies of the government. It is intended to provide guidance for the whole community. The following outline, although extensive, lists only some of the major actions that should be carried out, primarily by public agencies, in furtherance of each section of the Plan.

Emphasis of City Pattern

Image and Character

☐ Education programs to provide a greater understanding of the city pattern and its values.

☐ According of highest importance to the most basic elements of city pattern described in this Plan in any actions affecting views, topographic form, street layout, overall building form and other highly visible features.

☐ Legislated controls, when necessary to preserve and emphasize the major elements essential to the image and character of the city.

☐ Special consideration for viewpoints from which the city pattern is highly visible.

☐ Maintenance of, and increases in, large trees and other landscaping pursuant to the PLAN TO STRENGTHEN CITY PATTERN THROUGH VISUALLY PROMINENT LANDSCAPING, with allocation of funds to public efforts and assistance and controls where feasible to further private efforts.

Organization and Sense of Purpose

☐ Encouragement for the adoption of distinctive development themes, especially in types of landscaping, by public agencies and private improvement associations for each area of the city.

☐ Coordination of the design of street improvements and building features in district activity centers, through cooperative efforts by property owners and public agencies, and through area planning.

☐ Protection and improvement of features that establish the natural boundaries of districts, and features such as landscaped pathways that link districts, parks and other public and semi-public facilities.

Proposed Streel Improvements at West Portal Avenue

Orientation for Travel

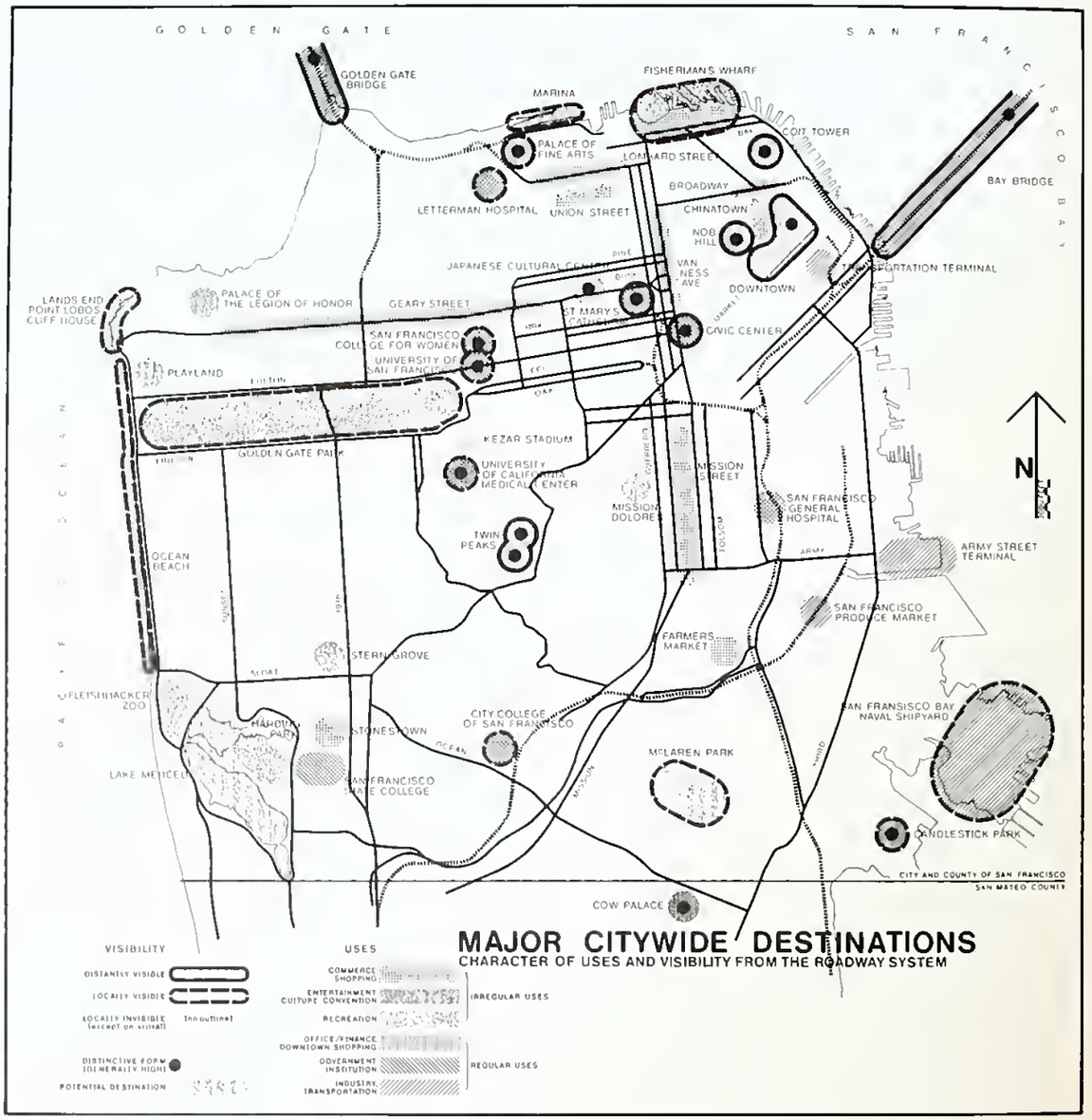
☐ Design of street changes, by the Department of Public Works in consultation with the Department of City Planning, with consideration for orienting views.

☐ Improvement of traffic channels, directional signs and other aspects of street design to increase the clarity of routes.

☐ Zoning height controls, sign regulations and other measures where necessary to protect important view corridors and major entranceways to the city and its districts.

☐ Measures by the Municipal Railway and other agencies to increase the clarity of transit routes by means of signs and design of transit stops.

☐ Carrying out of the PLAN FOR STREET LANDSCAPING AND LIGHTING in future programs for installation of landscaping and lighting systems, and by assistance to encourage expansion of existing programs for private planting of street trees.



Analysis Map from Preliminary Report No. 4

Rock Formations in Glen Canyon

Natural Areas

☐ According of high priority to programs for management and preservation of irreplaceable natural areas controlled by all levels of government and by private parties.

☐ Support for efforts to establish a Golden Gate National Recreation Area to safeguard many of these areas.

☐ Close coordination with Federal authorities as to new development in the Presidio and on other Federal properties.

☐ Exercise of careful discretion by the Recreation and Park Department in the placement and relocation of any facilities in park areas, in order to promote the recreation and open space values of these areas.

☐ Support for the basic policies of the San Francisco Bay Plan for limitation of Bay fill and assurance of beneficial use of the shoreline.

☐ Implementation of the South Bayshore Plan and Northern Waterfront Plan as they already exist in the Master Plan, and extension of these plans by study of the central waterfront and other shoreline areas to form a total system of access to the Bay and Ocean.

Richness of Past Development

☐ Greater support for the program of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, which currently exists only through extensive time given by a few volunteers and staff taken from other planning functions; further support depends upon special funding and stronger citizen interest.

☐ Establishment of a semi-public agency empowered to carry out historic preservation through advice, lending, purchase of properties and the finding of economic uses.

☐ Further attention to the opportunities for preservation of areas through designation of historic districts, with immediate action upon the Jackson Square area.

FACE Area Renovations

FACE AND REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

☐ Use of FACE, redevelopment and other assistance programs to bring about the restoration and preservation of older buildings on an area basis.

☐ Use of persuasion and advice wherever practical to avoid demolition of significant older buildings, or remodelings that would detract from their original character, and securing of competent architectural assistance in such remodelings.

☐ Encouragement for the efforts of neighborhood associations in areas of established character, and, where necessary, legislated controls such as height limits and conditional use review in those areas to further the purposes of this Plan.

Street Space

☐ Use of the detailed policies of this Plan in review of proposals for the giving up of street areas.

☐ Limitation of the degree of release of street areas, where release is warranted, in terms of the amount of space given up, the permanence of its release and the loss of public control oven the conditions of its use.

☐ Adoption of an ordinance to govern in detail the procedures, criteria and compensation to be required for proposed street vacations, revocable permits and other methods for release of street areas.

Moderation of Major New Development

Visual Harmony

☐ Maintenance of an adequate public urban design staff for timely project review, advice and education as to methods of achieving harmony in new buildings.

☐ Careful application of the downtown zoning bonus system to encourage beneficial connections and relationships in open space and circulation, with possible extension of the criteria in the bonus system through precise planning for the area.

☐ Encouragement of the best possible design submissions for public buildings and facilities, especially at prominent locations.

☐ Use of design review procedures in a positive and creative manner, primarily through extension of existing procedures rather than by imposition of new and potentially arbitrary forms of architectural control.

The Hyatt House Hotel under construction next to Union Square was designed to complement and reinforce the established scale and mood of the area. The architects (Skidmore, Owings and Merrill) met the urban design terms of reference originally established by the Department of City Planning staff with imaginative solutions, and conferred repeatedly with the staff as their plans progressed.

A lower building at the front of the site provides continuous enclosure for Union Square and does not exceed the 140-foot height limit in force to maintain the existing scale around the square. The 35-story hotel tower, at the rear of the site, approximates the height of the nearby 450 Sutter Building and contains a public observation space at its top. Pedestrian areas in the project maintain the required shopping continuity and provide strong links between Sutter and Post Streets through an arcade and a sunny plaza. Passenger loading for taxis and charter buses is accommodated in a curbside lane of Stockton Street, with required off-street loading reached through a narrow doorway on Post Street.

This development uses six of the downtown zoning bonuses (multiple building entrances, sidewalk widening, shortening of walking distance, plaza, low coverage at upper floors and observation deck), to raise the permitted floor area ratio from 10:1 to 14:1.

RELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING HEIGHT GUIDELINES TO EXISTING HEIGHT CONTROLS

Height and Bulk

☐ Enactment of height limits and other controls in areas surrounding public parks and plazas, where such controls are not already in effect, if control is necessary to preserve sunlight and building scale.

☐ Use of the URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS, and the URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR BULK OF BUILDINGS, together with any other relevant factors, in development of precise proposals for regulation of new construction. If such proposals are not made city-wide, priority should be given to hill and shoreline areas, areas with the greatest development pressures, and areas with the least present control over height and bulk.

☐ In the absence of further legislated controls, use of the Guidelines in project reviews already required by law, such as conditional use review of plans for hospitals, hotels, private universities and other uses, where the external effects of the project must be considered.

☐ Study of methods for making the Guidelines as flexible as possible in their application, in accordance with their essential purposes, through bonuses, review processes or other means.

☐ Extension of review powers, where possible, to cover public development by all levels of government.

Large Land Areas

☐ Encouragement of increased communication between developers and the public urban design professionals to make possible early

AREAS WITH LEAST RESTRICTIVE EXISTING BULK CONTROLS

and continuous review of large projects with a significant impact upon the city.

☐ Supplementing of this communication, possibly through expansion of existing Planned Unit Development provisions, to bring about mandatory reviews and hearings where such procedures are necessary to assure sufficient urban design inputs and public involvement.

☐ Enactment of legal controls where necessary to reduce the cumulative advantages of large site assembly in terms of the floor area, height and bulk permitted, and to take into account the external effects produced by exceptionally large developments.

☐ Judicious use of government powers related to development of large sites, such as sale of government land, redevelopment and vacation of streets.

☐ Study and education as to the long-term effects of continued growth in a finite urban environment.

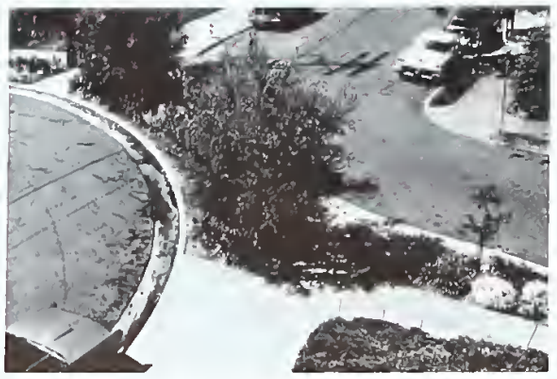
Improvement of Neighborhood Environment

Health and Safety

☐ Limitation of traffic by carrying out of the PLAN FOR PROTECTED RESIDENTIAL AREAS as opportunities are presented and as funds for detailed planning and execution are made available. Design of prototypes and demonstrations should precede more extensive application of the plan. The goal should, however, be eventual extension of this plan to all residential neighborhoods of the city.
☐ Improvement of arterial streets and installation of effective buffering systems along them where they pass through residential areas.
☐ Education of the driving public as to the ultimate physical limitations of the street system for carrying traffic, and diversion of drivers to a fast and efficient transit system.
☐ Further zoning and Department of Public Works standards and procedures for design of driveways and screening at parking lots, service stations and other traffic-oriented uses.
☐ Careful attention to the safety aspects of sidewalk lighting and walkway design.

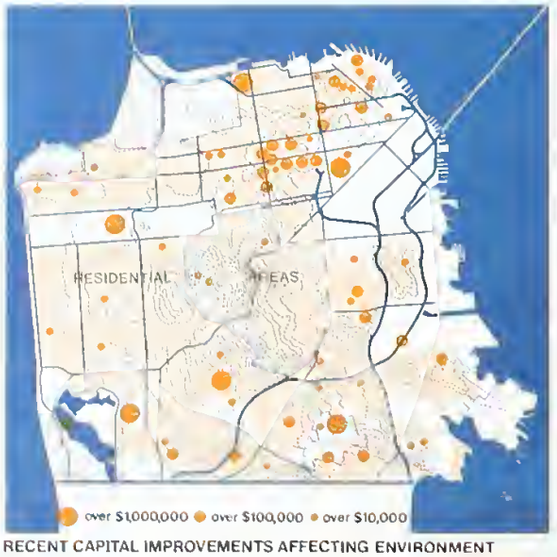
Feeling of Neighborhood

☐ Adequate budgeting of specific funds for current and preventive maintenance of streets and other public facilities.
☐ In area planning, special attention to the design of local centers and the clustering of commercial and government services.
☐ Allocation of new capital improvements to areas of high need, and to areas where the improvements will be highly visible and likely to have a favorable effect upon surrounding development.
☐ Encouragement of private neighborhood improvement efforts through financial, technical and organizing assistance, especially where programs are stimulated initially by neighborhood interest and where a coordinated public and private program such as FACE can be carried out.
☐ Recognition of private achievements through merit citations and other awards.



Diverter at Intersection

Hotaling Place in Jackson Square



RECENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AFFECTING ENVIRONMENT

Opportunity for Recreation

☐ Expansion of the capabilities of the Recreation and Park Department for planning, acquiring, improving and maintaining a variety of recreation facilities.
☐ Improvement of all means for access to recreation facilities, especially to larger parks and the Bay.
☐ Consideration of the recreation potential of historic buildings, commercial areas, and new public facilities such as parking garages which might have recreation space developed with them.

Mini-park at Prentiss and Eugenia

☐ Increases in the requirements for usable open space in private development, especially in larger developments

☐ Installation of mini-parks where sites and funds are available, with the participation of neighborhood residents.

☐ Use of street areas for recreation on existing sidewalks, on expanded sidewalks where roadways can be narrowed, and on steep streets not developed for traffic.

Existing
Esmeralda Avenue at Coleridge Street
Proposed Steps

Visual Amenity

☐ Use of all available methods for increasing landscaping in street areas, in parks, on private properties, on open banks and in other areas.

☐ Coordination of the efforts of the Department of Public Works, Municipal Railway and a variety of other agencies having jurisdiction over improvements in street areas, to bring about unified design and a maximum of amenity in these improvements, both citywide and on individual streets.

Street Improvements
at Mission Street Transit Station

☐ Reduction of clutter in and adjacent to sidewalks through tightening of parking lot standards, additional sign regulations and acceleration of the program for undergrounding of overhead wires.

☐ Retention and strengthening of zoning standards that help to safeguard features important to neighborhood character, especially the open spaces required hy coverage limitations, minimum yards and front setbacks.

The actions just listed are not all-inclusive, either for public agencies or for other organizations and individuals in the San Francisco community. This outline is, furthermore, only a brief indication of the depth of commitment and the intensity of planning and review processes required to bring The Urban Design Plan to bear upon significant issues with which the city is faced. The Plan is intended as a creative document with which the people of San Francisco can move forward, with the assistance of their government, to assure retention of the timeless qualities of their great urban environment.

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Effect of THE URBAN DESIGN PLAN Upon the Earlier MASTER PLAN and the CITY PLANNING CODE

The Master Plan previously in effect in San Francisco for the most part contains only occasional and indirect references to the subject matter treated in this Urban Design Plan. Nevertheless, to the extent that any statements in the earlier Master Plan might conflict with The Urban Design Plan, either directly or by inference, those statements are deemed to be superseded by this Plan.

The Urban Design Plan is intended to supplement the planning background that assists in specific application of the provisions of the City Planning Code. The Plan is not deemed, however, to supersede or negate any explicit existing provision of the City Planning Code, and no change in the substance of the City Planning Code can occur unless and until it is accomplished by specific legislation adopted in the manner required for ordinances. ■

APPENDIX: Study Method

The two-year Urban Design Study was carried out in three phases:

First, a study format was described, available information was gathered and organized, and preliminary objectives were drawn up to guide the Study.

Second, new information was developed and analyzed, in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of existing urban design elements and resources in the city, the needs and desires of the city's people, and what measures can and should be taken to preserve and improve the urban design character of the city and its districts. In this phase, the work of the Department of City Planning was supplemented by specific investigations of private consultants.

Third, on the basis of the previous information and analysis, and in response to the needs and concerns expressed in the community, preliminary urban design plans were developed at citywide, district and sub-neighborhood levels. These plans were then re-evaluated and synthesized to form The Urban Design Plan proposed in this report.

At each step in the Study, Preliminary Reports were published in 400 to 500 copies each, and distributed to neighborhood and business organizations, elected officials, City departments, private design professionals and other members of the community. Other reports were printed in smaller quantities as working documents. The heavy reliance upon building of the Study through printed reports had three basic purposes: 1) to permit public responses which could contribute to revision of the published material and give guidance for later steps in the Study; 2) to assemble the work of the Study in an organized fashion and make it available to the various participants; and 3) to allow retention of the detailed information and analysis of the Study for future use in the continuing program of urban design planning in San Francisco. The reports and their content may be summarized as follows.

PRELIMINARY REPORT NO. 1: BACKGROUND (Department staff)

Described the current challenges to the city presented by growth and deterioration, and outlined the proposed format of the Urban Design Study.

Set forth, in sketch form, available information as to topography, major elements of the city's physical makeup, climate, existing building types and height controls, the boundaries of districts and neighborhoods, property maintenance, improvement programs, historic buildings and areas, and public ownerships. Included a glossary of urban design terms.

●

PRELIMINARY REPORT NO. 2: EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES (Department staff)

Extracted from all existing plans and studies of public and private agencies the material which established scattered official or unofficial policies relating to urban design. Covered studies and plans at both citywide and district levels, including the existing San Francisco Master Plan, the San Francisco Bay Plan, transportation plans, previous district and sub-neighborhood plans of the Department, redevelopment project plans and plans drawn by neighborhood associations.

Analyzed the criteria and policies expressed in these plans and studies, together with existing development controls contained in legislation, to provide a preliminary statement as to the significance of these resources in dealing with urban design concerns in the city.

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PRELIMINARY REPORT NO. 3: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES (Department staff and the Urban Design Advisory Committee)

Set forth, on a tentative basis, a series of goals, objectives and policies that would help to guide the work of the Study. Included 24 policies arranged under the headings of safe, clean and comfortable environment; design basis for individual orientation; variety of pleasing environments suitable for individual needs; and development harmonious with the city's significant views and natural setting.

Relied upon previous expressions of public opinion, surveys conducted in the Study, and especially the discussions of the Urban Design Advisory Committee. This Committee, representing citizen groups, design professions and government agencies, met monthly throughout the Study, in meetings open to the public, and reviewed and commented upon the work.

Report No. 3 included a questionnaire asking for comments on the tentative goals, objectives and policies.

PRELIMINARY REPORT NO. 4: EXISTING FORM AND IMAGE

Followed four approaches in identifying and evaluating important urban design attributes of the city:

1. QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT (Department staff). Evaluated every block in the city to provide a summary of the environmental strengths and deficiencies of each area. Nine factors were rated in each block: quality of maintenance, quality of view, visual interest of street facade, block variation, distance to public open space, presence of nature, compatibility of traffic, clarity of local image, and micro-climate.

2. INTERNAL PATTERN AND IMAGE (Department staff). For the city as a whole, and for each of its districts, recorded the important elements that permit a person at pedestrian level to orient himself and to perceive the pattern or organization of the city and its districts and neighborhoods. Concentrated upon focal points, landmarks and views; patterns of activity and movement; and strong physical form elements such as large buildings and areas of distinct architectural character. Also outlined the outstanding urban design problems and opportunities in each district.

3. ROAD ENVIRONMENT (Consultant and Department staff). Examined the city as it is seen in both short- and long-range views from a moving vehicle on arterial roadways. On an overall basis, measured the visibility of major destinations and city form elements, and described the roadway character and frequency of route information. For each section of roadway, evaluated visual quality in terms of such factors as maintenance, order and clarity of route.

4. EXTERNAL FORM AND IMAGE (Consultant). Analyzed, through photographic presentations, the broad panoramic views of the city, primarily from high viewpoints within the city. Identified strong form-giving elements and areas in these views, such as natural shoreline and prominent tree stands, and marked areas of negative character and individual buildings disrupting the surrounding development pattern. Discussed methods of emphasizing the pattern of the city and its districts through preservation of the natural base and strengthening of building forms and landscaping. Two working reports were prepared by the consultant in this survey.

●

OPEN SPACE STUDY (Consultant)

Two working reports analyzed recreation and open space needs and opportunities. The first recorded and interpreted interviews with 770 visitors to six parks of diverse types in various neighborhoods, inquiring as to ways in which the parks are used and as to changes desired. The ten-minute interviews asked 33 questions, covering the visitor's background, his method of getting to the park, the frequency and duration of his visits, his activities in the park, and the types of changes he would like to see made in park facilities.

The second working report recommended principles and methods for improvement of existing recreation and open space facilities, and for acquisition and development of new facilities, in order to meet the needs of residents in all areas of the city.

●

STREET LIVABILITY STUDY (Consultant and Department staff)

A widely distributed working report covered the findings of interviews with residents along three separate city blocks representing light, moderate and heavy traffic conditions, in order to determine the effects of traffic volumes upon the attitudes and patterns of life of the residents. Included 84 interviews in depth, asking 150 questions and often taking an hour or more. Open-ended responses were sought to questions covering length of residence on the street, satisfaction with the area, observations on traffic conditions and their effects, social patterns on the street and degree of neighborliness, and perception of features in the street environment. Responses for the three different street conditions were compared.

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PRELIMINARY REPORT NO. 5: URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES (Consultant and Department staff)

Presented, in words and sketches, certain fundamental rules that govern the measurable and critical urban design relationships among elements in the city's environment. Organized these principles in three sections with cumulative effect: 1) streets, and the qualities of pavement, sidewalks and furnishings; 2) relationships of the streets to building facades; and 3) relationships among street patterns, building masses and topography. These principles, together with those in other reports, were later re-evaluated and newly organized for inclusion in The Urban Design Plan.

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PRELIMINARY REPORT NO. 6: SOCIAL RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY (Consultant)

Reported the results and implications of interviews with residents in 13 survey areas carefully selected to be representative of a cross-section of neighborhoods of various social characteristics, including areas with differing mixtures of rentals and home ownership. In each area, ten households were interviewed in a sample block, with 40 questions requiring up to an hour. Questions covered satisfaction with the area, trends perceived in the area, access to various community facilities, the types of features desired in the local environment, and public improvements that might be suggested.

Interpreted the survey results in relation to possible courses of action for neighborhood improvement, and priorities to be given to various types of neighborhoods. The consultant also prepared seven working reports further analyzing the interview data, neighborhood characteristics, economic trends related to social needs and the physical environment, and approaches to setting of public priorities. Some of this work was also to be used as background by the consultant in a separate project describing methods proposed for use in social planning in San Francisco.

●

PRELIMINARY REPORT NO. 7: IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES (Department staff)

Described a framework and various means for implementing the proposals being developed in the Urban Design Study, concentrating upon the best ways or alternatives for doing things rather than the substance of the Plan. Discussed the composite nature of existing urban design planning and implementation devices, and emphasized the need for a unified planning-development process, effective government organization and community education in urban design.

Reviewed the various means of implementation, organized under headings of 1) private development (including zoning and other formal and informal controls); 2) streets (including street improvements and vacation or other release of streets); and 3) other public development (including setting of priorities, site selection and facility design).

●

DISTRICT AND SUB-NEIGHBORHOOD STUDIES (Department staff and consultants)

Throughout most of the period of the Urban Design Study, studies were being conducted concerning the special needs and opportunities in areas of the city at the district and sub-neighborhood levels. Much of this work is contained in Preliminary Report No. 4, especially in the portion on Internal Pattern and Image which discusses 12 of the major planning districts of the city in turn. The other three planning districts — Downtown, South Bayshore and Bernal Heights — were the subject of other recent studies by the Department.

Two of the planning districts, and five sub-neighborhood areas, were chosen as representative areas for more detailed urban design studies that would demonstrate area planning methods. The results of those studies were presented in sketch form in working reports. The seven studies were:

1. DIVISADERO STREET SUB-NEIGHBORHOOD: Working with the Divisadero Street Area Association and an economic consultant (PACT), proposed methods for improvement of a prototype four-block section of a declining commercial street.

2. HAIGHT-ASHBURY SUB-NEIGHBORHOOD: Proposed possible improvements at the southeast corner of Golden Gate Park and on adjacent streets to increase the design quality of this area in anticipation of a FACE program.

3. RICHMOND SUB-NEIGHBORHOOD Again anticipating a FACE program, proposed street improvements in a 28-block area to divert through traffic and provide amenities in the right-of-way

4. SOUTH BAYSHORE SUB-NEIGHBORHOOD: Refining a proposal of the South Bayshore Plan for this Model Neighborhood area, developed a design for improvements at the activity center in the vicinity of the South San Francisco Opera House.

5. WEST PARKSIDE SUB-NEIGHBORHOOD: In response to community interest, suggested methods of establishing a more distinctive neighborhood image through landscaping and other changes in streets, community facilities and shopping areas.

6. SOUTH OF MARKET DISTRICT: Over a large area, studied the possibilities for building form, access and prototype block development. For the Southern Pacific property east of Townsend and Seventh Streets, studied alternative types of air rights development.

7. SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT: For the district between the Bayshore and Southern Freeways and the County line, a study by a consultant outlined design potentials of 13 sub-areas, developed a schematic design concept for the district, and made proposals for open space and community facilities.

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PRELIMINARY REPORT NO. 8: CITYWIDE URBAN DESIGN PLANS (Department staff)

Described, on a preliminary basis, the major components proposed to be combined and re-ordered to form The Urban Design Plan. Set forth principles, policies and mapped plans and guidelines relating to open space and landscaping; street environment in residential areas; clarity of routes on arterial streets; the public values in retention of street space; and height and bulk of buildings.

Publication of Preliminary Report No. 8 in October 1970 afforded a three month period for public comments to assist in revisions before completion of the Plan. A questionnaire distributed with all copies of Report No. 8 brought a preponderance of responses to the effect that the policies and guidelines were reasonable as proposed. With respect to each portion of the report, however, a significant number of responses stated that there should be more restriction than that proposed, and in the case of the guidelines for building height and bulk a majority felt that greater restriction was called for. A number of the responses made other specific comments upon the proposals.

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RE-EVALUATION AND SYNTHESIS (Department staff)

In preparation of The Urban Design Plan contained in this report, the Department staff reviewed all the reports and other materials previously prepared in the Study, as well as the opinions and responses given at public meetings, through questionnaires and by other means. The earlier materials were reorganized, supplemented and re-expressed to form the unified Plan to be proposed for adoption.■

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