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SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

*AN INTRODUCTORY PLAN FOR THE*

**CIVIC CENTER**

**SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING**

# AN INTRODUCTORY PLAN FOR THE CIVIC CENTER

A preliminary plan indicating a possible form for future expansion of the Civic Center of San Francisco

June 1953

SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
100 Larkin Street . Civic Center . San Francisco 2





CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

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

June 17, 1953

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The City Planning Commission  
The Honorable Elmer E. Robinson, Mayor  
The Board of Supervisors

Gentlemen:

The City Planning Commission on May 22, 1952 directed me to advance the study of the Civic Center problem as far as feasible during the 1952-53 fiscal year with regular staff help. This report is submitted in response to that directive.

Presented in this report for your consideration are certain broad aspects of the problem of growth and change in the Civic Center, and a suggested form for expansion. Also indicated are suggested next steps towards the preparation, adoption, and execution of a soundly conceived precise plan for future development in the Civic Center.

Very truly yours,

*Paul Oppermann*  
Paul Oppermann  
Director of Planning

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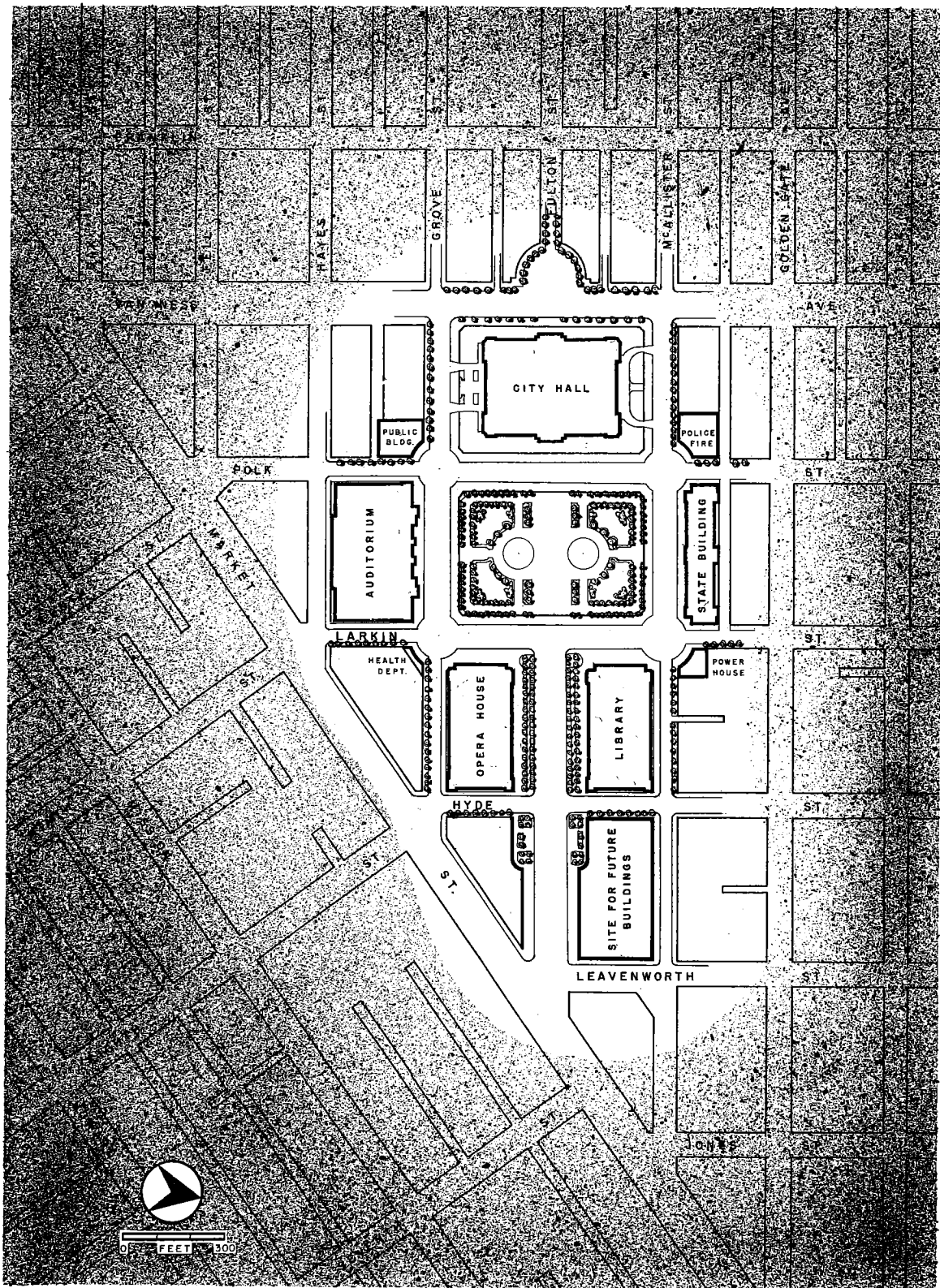
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*not correct date, Apr 25 60 1911 or later*

# 1911 PLAN FOR CIVIC CENTER

1

MAP

## INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

There can be little doubt that significant new facilities are going to be added to the San Francisco Civic Center. Hardly a day goes by that some new proposal for this area is not discussed by the Board of Supervisors or by the municipal, state and federal agencies located there. The pressure and circumstances that create change are at work; the need for added space, the need for new facilities, the problems created by traffic, and the problems created by dispersed and inconveniently located governmental facilities all demand solution, and all require that decisive steps be taken.

The problem, for which a suggested solution is attempted here, is how this inevitable change is going to take place and how it should take place. How is new development to be related to all that has been done before? What direction, physically and esthetically, should this new development take? What are the essential economic and social requirements of this new development? To answer these questions requires some understanding of what has gone before, of what exists now, and of what may occur in the future. To aid in that understanding is, in part, the purpose of this report.

This report presents and describes a plan which is intended only to indicate a possible form for future expansion. Much more detailed study and refinement is necessary to achieve a generally acceptable and tested plan. The preparation and adoption of such a precise plan, however, might be the ounce of foresight that may save San Francisco many tons of regret and many dollars of public expenditure. This saving cannot be claimed for the preliminary type of plan presented here, for it is meant simply to introduce an idea and to elicit public opinion. But this preliminary plan does show the type of thinking that must be done if haphazard construction and great dissatisfaction are not to follow. It may give rise to intelligent discussion and bring forth suggested alternatives; and if the time is ripe, as it seems to be now, it may result in constructive action.

No matter how much the final result may differ from the point of departure, the production of a definite plan will be aided by the presentation of introductory ideas. If San Francisco is further stimulated to move toward a definite plan for the new Civic Center, this report will have served its primary purpose.

## I. WHAT WE HAVE: THE EXISTING CIVIC CENTER

The existing Civic Center was built on the basis of a plan prepared in 1911. A decision was made necessary at that time because the Panama-Pacific International Exposition was to be held in 1915. The post-earthquake city could scarcely serve as host to the nation and the world with an ugly hole where its administrative center should have been.

An \$8,800,000 Civic Center Bond Issue was passed in 1912 providing for a new City Hall and for the acquisition of additional property in the Civic Center area for other public buildings. The area designated was bounded by Market Street, Golden Gate Avenue, Van Ness Avenue and Hayes Street. A plan was prepared for the city by John Galen Howard, Frederick Meyer and John Reid, which for the greater part has been carried out (See Plate 1). The City Hall, designed by Arthur Brown, Jr., and John Bakewell, Jr., was begun in 1913 and occupied in December of 1915. Other buildings in the Civic Center -- the Civic Auditorium, the Library, the State and Federal buildings, the Opera House and the Veterans Memorial Building, and the Health Center Building -- were added over a period spanning the years 1914 (Civic Auditorium) to 1933 (Health Center Building and Federal Building).

The auditorium cost \$1,300,000 and was built with funds provided by the Panama-Pacific Exposition Company. At the close of the exposition the building and land reverted to the city without added cost, although an additional amount of money was spent by the City to face the building with granite.

The Public Library was built on the site of the old City Hall, "The City Hall Reservation of 1870," and was completed in 1917 at a cost of \$1,100,000. The War Memorial Group cost \$6,125,000 and was built on land acquired by public subscription in 1919 and 1920. The buildings were financed by a bond issue approved in 1932. The State Building and the Federal Building were both built on sites donated by the City.

The Civic Center plan prepared by the consulting architects, Howard, Meyer and Reid, was not as extensive as the present existing development. In the plan an opera house was placed in the vacant property called Marshall Square opposite the library and facing the Plaza. Buildings placed in the plan at the four corners of the Plaza have not been realized except the Health Center Building at Polk and Grove Streets. The existing power house conforms to the plan in position but should occupy its entire lot to balance the other corners. No development other than a semicircular place at the end of Fulton Street was indicated in the plan west of Van Ness Avenue where the War Memorial group now stands.



All this was planned just before the large-scale production and use of the automobile -- the machine that was destined to create the greatest change in cities and in theories of urban development since the abandonment of defensive walls.

### The Concept of the 1911 Plan

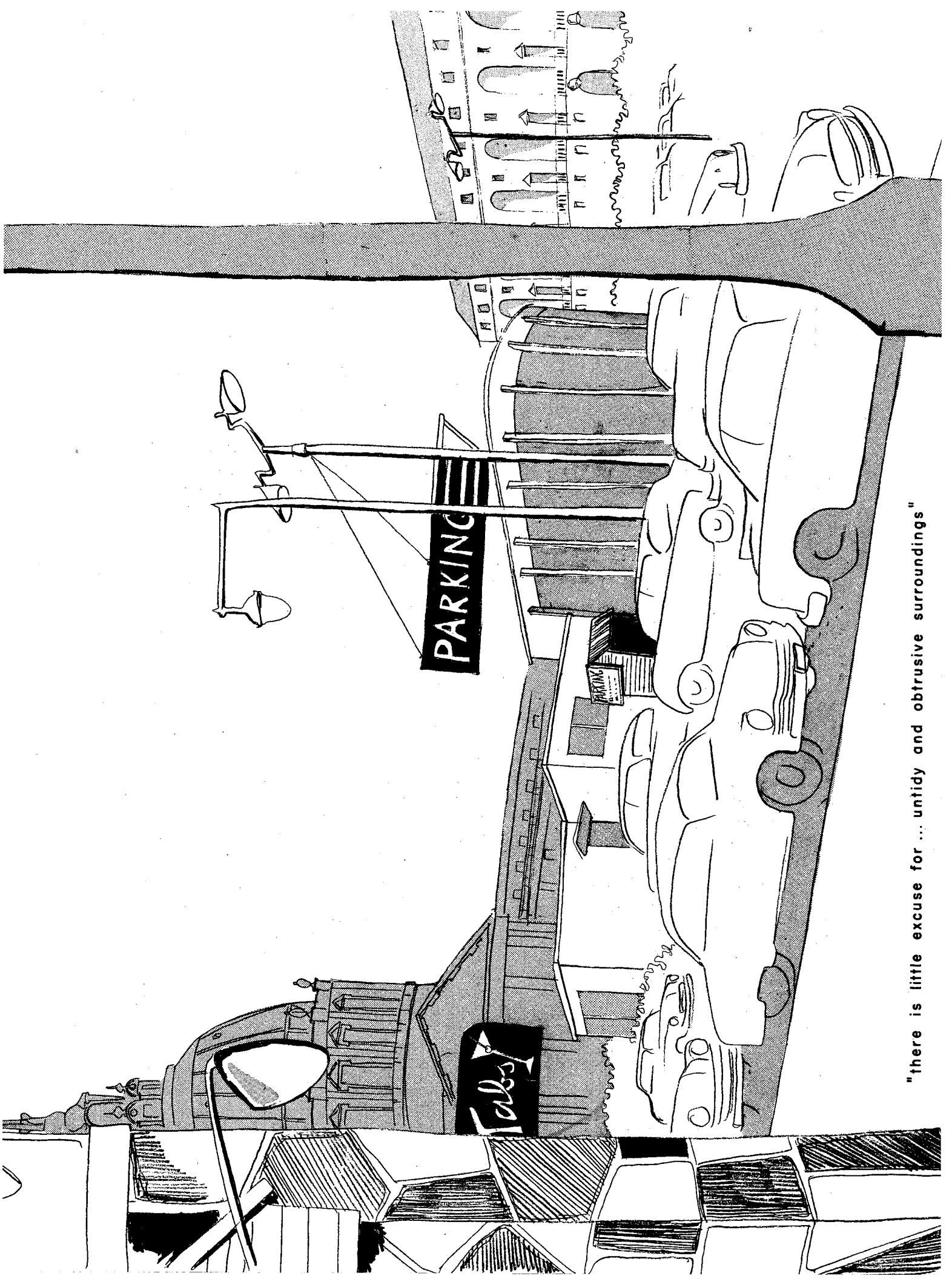
The Civic Center was built at a time when the search for a native architectural style had hardly begun. It was built at a time when the greatest achievement in civic reconstruction, the opening of the boulevards of Paris by Haussmann, was still fresh and accepted uncritically as the model for all civic building endeavors.

The 1911 plan, stated most simply, consists of a number of handsome monumental buildings grouped around an open plaza and approached at one side by a wide boulevard two blocks in length. The buildings, their balanced arrangement and the neat, geometrical planting in the plaza all spring from and are adaptations of French Renaissance themes and styles.

A formal composition of this sort demands the utmost control of all its component elements: architecture, planting, surface embellishments and surroundings. It is meant to be an expression of authority, civic authority in this case. It is intended to impress and overawe.

One may well ask why this particular style was used, not only here but everywhere in the nation at the time, to house the democratic institutions of local, state and federal government. Here informality, an absence of total authority and a tradition of laissez-faire particularly strong in San Francisco would seem to suggest a different kind of treatment, a style somewhat less paradoxical. In answer one can cite the very strong reaction, sweeping the nation at the time, to the ugliness and chaos of fast-growing American cities and the fact that no indigenous style of governmental architecture had developed since Jefferson was the nation's most influential planner, architect and politician.

Although no one contemplates tearing down the existing palatial structures of the Civic Center, the question arises, when new buildings and extensions are found necessary, whether rigid conformity to an already too rigid development is a proper solution to the problem. If there is one thing that the 1911 plan lacks it is provision for changing and adaptable space.



"there is little excuse for ... untidy and obtrusive surroundings"

On the basis of functional requirements too, the Civic Center is subject to criticism. Palaces and office buildings offer two distinctly different architectural problems. American architects have made brilliant solutions to the latter problem, but no one has ever solved the problem of making a suitable office building out of a palace or a building that looks like a palace. The City Hall is quite effective as a showplace, as a place to receive important people in a dignified setting. But as a place for carrying out the routine official activities of municipal government it leaves much to be desired. For one thing, it cannot be enlarged without destroying its architectural integrity. The same may be said of the Federal Building and the Civic Auditorium. To all intents and purposes these buildings are static, and the space they contain is not always arranged to benefit those working in the buildings or those who visit them on business.

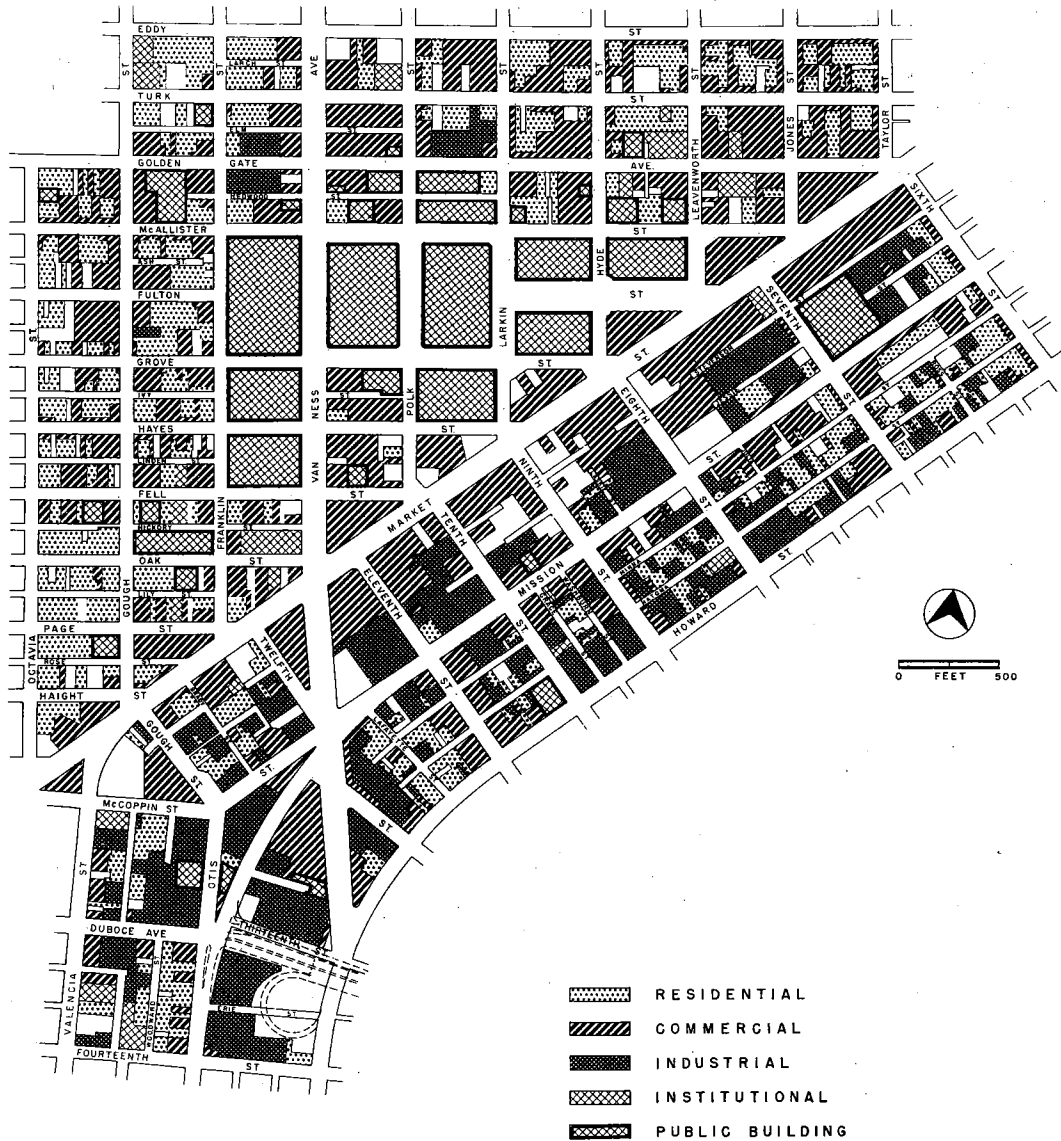
A further difficulty arises out of the fact that this group of buildings was set down on a gridiron street pattern which very severely limits the size of the building areas, and, what is worse, allows a stream of traffic to flow across every part of the area. The buildings, rather than forming at all times an harmonious group, more often seem to be separated by noisy streams of traffic or glistening lines of parked cars. One cannot criticize the original designers for not taking traffic into account but the allocation of so much space for streets, especially at a time when the exigencies of traffic were in no way so great as now, has resulted in a tremendous loss in intimacy and scale.

Since the effect of the design was considered more important than such utilitarian matters as economy of materials, construction methods, convenience and comfort there is little excuse for having allowed the whole Civic Center to be seriously damaged by untidy and obtrusive surroundings. This is not to suggest that control of adjacent private property could have been exercised then any more easily than it can now, and the criticism is made in full knowledge that the original plan has not been entirely filled out. The fact is, however, that under the best of circumstances the Center as planned was not sufficiently insulated. The acquisition of a very large amount of surrounding land was then and still is out of the question; and the absolute control of the adjacent frontages is neither possible nor probably desirable. But the gaps in the present Center made by straight streets and open lots destroy the sense of splendid isolation that this style of formal design requires.

In these circumstances it would seem that the style selected was a vulnerable one considering its own requirements and the difficulty of fulfilling them in a typical American city where economics has so much to do with the development of private property.

## Summary

To sum up, then, it can be said of the existing Civic Center that, taken individually, its buildings are handsome and exceptionally faithful reproductions of a style of monumental architecture. The style adopted, while partially fulfilling the purpose of creating a dignified setting for government activity, is not particularly well suited to the operations housed in the center. The over-all effect of the buildings is reduced by an excessive amount of street area and the interruption of traffic. The buildings themselves are not easily subject to expansion. And, finally, the center is not sufficiently insulated from its surroundings.

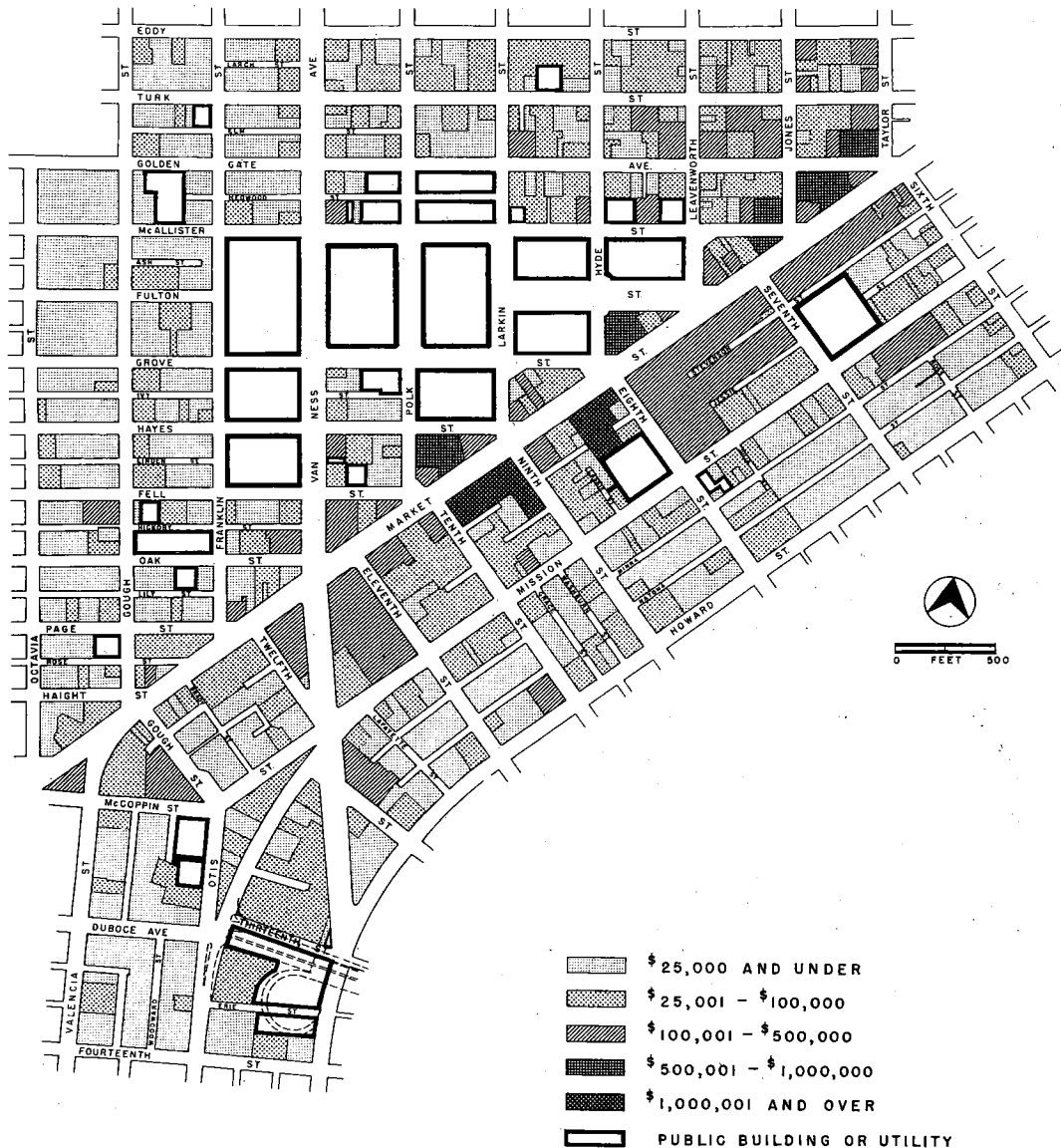


CIVIC CENTER STUDY AREA

EXISTING LAND USE

2

MAP



## CIVIC CENTER STUDY AREA

# TOTAL ASSESSED VALUATIONS

3

MAP

## II. AN ANALYSIS OF THE CIVIC CENTER STUDY AREA

For this report an area was designated for the purposes of gathering, studying, and comparing data. This "Civic Center Study Area" includes considerably more land than is presently occupied, or will be occupied, by buildings of a public nature organized in a unified center. Such a larger area is desirable however for making comparisons and considering alternatives.

The area so designated falls within the boundary made by the following streets: from Market Street, north on Taylor Street, west on Eddy Street, south on Gough Street, west on Golden Gate Avenue, south on Octavia Street, east on McCoppin Street, south on Valencia Street, east on 14th Street, north on South Van Ness Avenue, east on Howard Street and north on Sixth Street to Market Street. (See Plate 2 and 3.)

### Topography and Subsoil

The Civic Center is built over a part of the Hayes Valley underground drainage system which extends from the vicinity of Presidio Avenue and California Street easterly to the extensive former swamp areas along the original bay shore line. Thus, the entire Civic Center Area is built over swamp material consisting of dried peat layers which have become relatively solid and stable. Bedrock lies approximately 100 to 150 feet below the surface of the Civic Center Area. The area is generally flat, tilting slightly upward to the west. To the northwest the land rises rapidly to the intersection of Gough and Eddy Streets, where it is 140 feet above sea level.

### Land Use and Building Types

The pattern of existing land use in the Civic Center Study Area is an extremely varied one (See Plate 2). To the south, along Mission and Howard Streets, service and light manufacturing industries are concentrated together with wholesale commercial and some residential development. The northern part of the area, between Market Street, Van Ness Avenue and Eddy Street contains high-density residential buildings, both hotels and apartment houses, and a number of institutional uses not directly connected with the Civic Center, such as churches, union headquarters, and lodge buildings. There is also a wide variety of commercial activities mostly connected with automobile sales and repair, and a small amount of light industrial development. To the west beyond Van Ness Avenue, there is a mixture of residential, commercial and light industrial uses.

Commercial activity along Market Street in the Civic Center area is limited for the most part to rather small retail enterprises and eating and entertainment facilities including bars and motion picture theatres.

The area north of Mission Street and east of Van Ness Avenue lies within the Fire District and thus contains no frame buildings of a permanent nature. Brick and concrete buildings are found in abundance and privately owned steel frame structures are relatively numerous in the vicinity of Market Street. Except for two temporary structures, all the buildings of the Civic Center are of steel frame construction. West of Van Ness Avenue and South of Mission Street there are numerous frame buildings and only very scattered examples of steel frame construction. Brick and concrete buildings and metal sheds are fairly common in both areas.

There are a great number of open lot uses in the vicinity of the Civic Center. Most of these consist of parking lots, used car lots, and gasoline stations, a typical development on the periphery of a heavily built-over downtown area. Large, privately owned buildings such as the Merchandise Mart and the Hotel Whitcomb are separated by equally large and, in many cases, unsightly gaps. Many of these open lot uses may be considered temporary, depending on how the parking and transit problems of the city are solved, but it is these areas in particular that contribute to the scrappy appearance of the area surrounding the Civic Center.

#### Condition of Residential Buildings

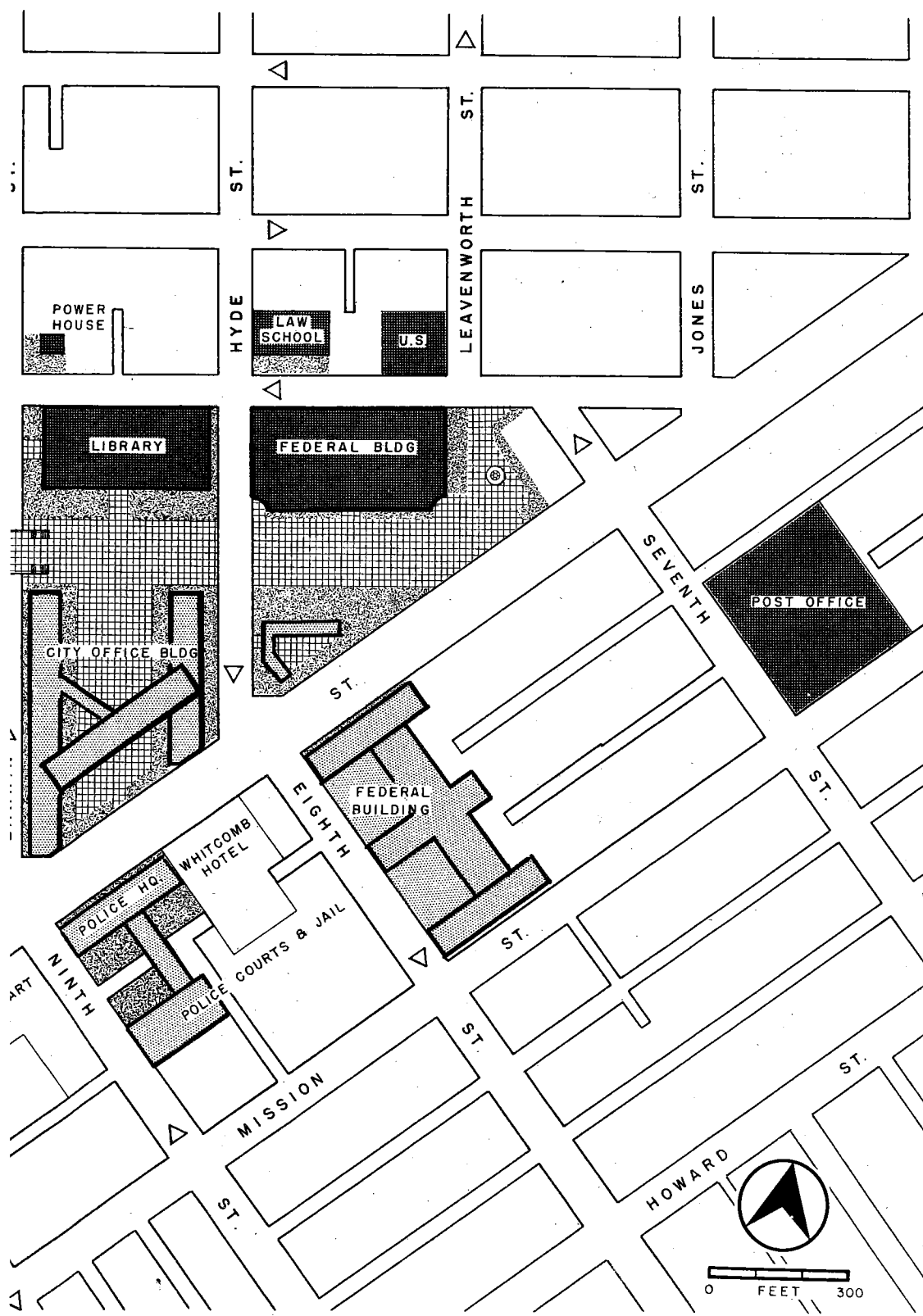
With few exceptions, residential areas surrounding the Civic Center show evidences of blight or deterioration. Findings based on a study made by the Department of City Planning in 1949 show the most serious evidences of blight in the area between Mission and Howard Streets, where residential structures on narrow alleys are interspersed with industrial uses; between Valencia and Mission Streets; and in certain blocks bordering Turk Street and Golden Gate Avenue west of Van Ness Avenue. The hotel and apartment house district north and east of the Civic Center shows the fewest signs of obsolescence.

#### Assessed Values of Land and Improvements

In general, the assessed values in the Civic Center Study Area, both for land and buildings, fall into relatively low categories west of Seventh Street and Leavenworth Street. (See Plate 3.) The vast majority of buildings have a total assessment of less than \$100,000 and only two buildings, the Merchandise Mart and the Hotel Whitcomb, are assessed over \$1,000,000 for buildings and land. Of a total of six properties that are assessed between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 four are located east of Leavenworth Street.



S A N   F R A N C I S C O   D E P A R T



P L A N

EXISTING BUILDINGS  
 PROPOSED BUILDINGS

4  
MAP

ENT OF CITY PLANNING

### One-Way Streets and Transit Routes

The pattern of existing and approved one-way streets in the study area tends to route the major amount of traffic around rather than through the Civic Center. South-to-west traffic is provided for along Ninth and Hayes Streets. In the opposite direction, Fell and Tenth Streets provide for movement from west to south. South-to-north traffic will move along Seventh and Leavenworth Streets, and north-to-south traffic will use Hyde and Eighth Streets. West of Van Ness Avenue, north-south movement is provided for on Gough and Franklin Streets to Market Street only. Major east-west traffic, west of Market Street will move along Turk Street and Golden Gate Avenue. Polk Street will be a one-way street southbound from Grove Street to Market Street, and Larkin Street will be northbound from Market Street to Grove Street and again north of McAllister Street.

Transit lines cross the present Civic Center on McAllister Street, Hayes Street, Van Ness Avenue and Larkin Street. The one-way street plan requires the rearrangement of some of these routes.

Underground utility installations occupy most of the sub-surface street area with the exception of those portions of Fulton and Grove Streets between Market and Larkin Streets.

A proposed extension of the Central Freeway will be located west of the War Memorial group, passing close to the Civic Center at Franklin and McAllister Streets, creating a boundary to new development in this direction.

### Summary

A planned expansion of the Civic Center will be able to take advantage of comparatively low-value development in the area surrounding the Center. However, past experience has sufficiently demonstrated that the type and character of private development in the area will not be greatly affected or changed by the Civic Center facilities. The surrounding area is a service area supplementing the more intense downtown development and its place in the local economy is at least historically substantiated. Therefore the Civic Center should be so planned as to provide its own setting without dependence on the "appropriate" development of surrounding areas. This can be done through the careful placement of new public buildings and open areas.

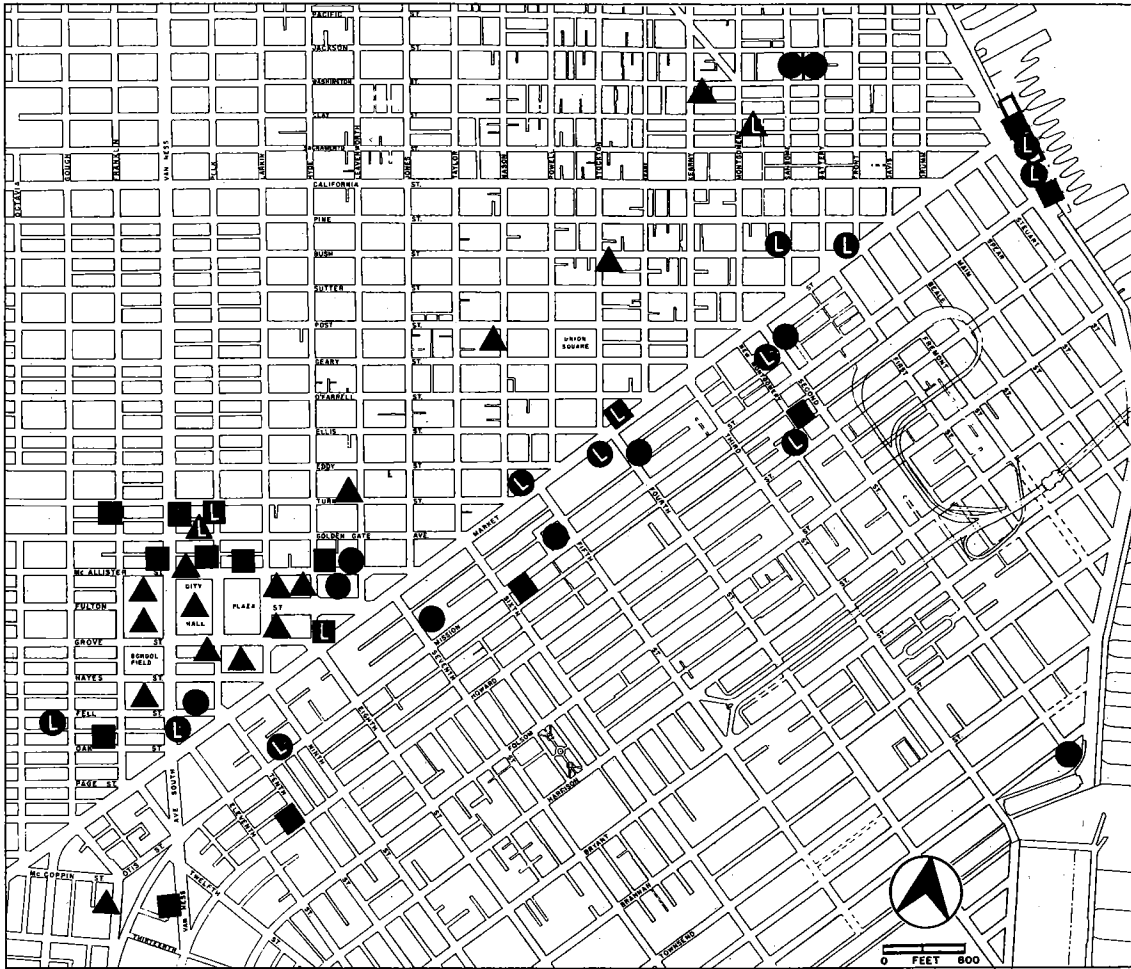
The present site is ideally located in the over-all pattern of the city and in relation to transit facilities. The development of proposed new transit and traffic facilities will make the present location even more accessible from every part of the city and the Bay Area as a whole.

### III. NECESSITY FOR AN EXPANDED CIVIC CENTER

Since the close of the second world war, there has been a constant pressure exerted towards expanding the facilities of the Civic Center. Two separate sources of this pressure may be distinguished: the first is the shortage of space in the existing Civic Center buildings, particularly in the City Hall, and the second stems from the scattering of governmental functions outside the Civic Center, which has proved inconvenient and uneconomical. These problems involve not only the agencies of municipal government, but state and federal governmental agencies as well. (See Plate 5).

In the meantime several departments and agencies have indicated an intention to construct new buildings in the Civic Center or to add to existing buildings. Three buildings have actually been erected, in each case by a state agency, in locations close to the Center but not related to the existing development. These are the State Division of Highways Building at Oak and Franklin Streets, the State Department of Employment Building at Turk and Franklin Streets, and Hastings Law College at Hyde and McAllister Streets. Only the last of these could be considered a part of the existing governmental center. The other two, although only two blocks removed, cannot be fitted easily into an over-all scheme for an expanded Center.

Spaces that were left undeveloped in the existing Center, particularly Marshall Square and the Commerce High School Playfield, are alternately considered for practically every projected new facility. The danger is obvious: without an accepted and adopted plan for the development of the entire area, haphazard growth and continued pressure will result in considerable damage being done to the site, without really ameliorating the difficulties that have brought such pressures into being. This would be particularly true if the idea of piling an unrelated variety of functions into either of the two large and available empty sites should be carried out. The resulting building would have to be huge, and it would probably be unsightly, doing irreparable harm to the whole adjacent environment. The mistakes already made, of which the State Compensation Insurance Building is a notable example, furnish an adequate warning of how a blind acceptance of the 1911 concept may be far more damaging than would be the complete abandonment of outmoded styles and practices of site development.



- ▲ CITY OFFICES
- STATE OFFICES
- FEDERAL OFFICES
- Ⓛ INDICATES LEASED QUARTERS

# SCATTERED GOVERNMENT OFFICES

5

MAP

Happily, there has been consistent agreement that, in order to do justice to the existing development and for sound economic reasons, a careful, imaginative, and feasible plan must be worked out for the whole area. To this end a study of municipal space needs has been undertaken by the Bureau of Architecture of the Department of Public Works, and this introductory plan and appraisal of site development problems is now being presented by the Department of City Planning at the request of the Mayor and the City Planning Commission.

In the past many meetings have been held and many memoranda have been presented setting forth, in a general way, the demands for space and the types of new facilities which ought to be accommodated in an expanded Civic Center. The introductory plan presented in this report is based on the inclusion of all the proposed improvements. It must be emphasized that the plan here presented is necessarily preliminary in character and quite general in scope. The intent in presenting the plan is to suggest a direction in which the Civic Center may be developed and to invite discussion centering on one particular, but general, over-all scheme for development. It is hoped then that this will lead to preparation of a final plan for the Civic Center, based on the concurrent studies of space needs made by the Department of Public Works and on this study of the site planning problem. The development of such a plan can then be handled as an architectural problem which, indeed, it is above all else.

Since the war, the following municipal projects have been suggested for inclusion in the Civic Center: a courts building, a municipal office building, a school administration building, a convention center, a fire department headquarters building, a police department headquarters, a cultural center for art, music and drama, a new wing for the Public Library, an underground garage in the Civic Center Plaza, a central garage for city-owned vehicles, a warehouse for voting machines and for the use of the opera house. Also the state and federal governments have indicated a need for additional buildings and for centralizing facilities and agencies in this area.

There is an acute shortage of space in the City Hall, which compels several city agencies to have quarters in rented or temporary structures. In addition, there is a conflict involving the use by municipal agencies of space in the Civic Auditorium which is needed for convention facilities. There is no question as to whether the Civic Center needs to be expanded. There is only the question of what the ultimate space needs are and how these may best be arranged. While the suggestions and recommendations of this report are affected by the answer to the first part of the above question, they are directed primarily to finding an answer to the second.

## IV. INTRODUCTORY PLAN FOR THE CIVIC CENTER

The introductory plan for an expanded Civic Center, described herein, is primarily intended to give graphic expression to a number of basic ideas about the development of the area. It is hoped that at least some of these general concepts will find acceptance and will then be worked out in detail as final engineering and architectural plans are made prior to the building of new facilities. Some of these ideas represent a departure from the original scheme of development laid down in 1911. Nevertheless, they are feasible, and, in fact, grow out of the difficulties inherent in the existing pattern of development.

### Intimacy or The Grand Manner

The plan proposes the creation of a series of court-like arrangements or enclosures as the basic elements in the new development. These, in essence, are simple, comparatively self-sufficient courts around which buildings are grouped, each creating its own environment at a human scale, insulated from the areas beyond.

The departure here from the present development is fairly obvious. Around the large Plaza there are now a number of extremely competitive facades, no one of which is subordinated to the others. By grouping the new buildings into somewhat smaller and more intimate arrangements a different, complementary and less competitive atmosphere can be achieved and a more informal landscaping will be possible. The over-all effect sought is that of warmth and invitation providing contrast with the more formal existing buildings.

### Contemporary or Baroque

It would seem the rule that, when a public institution seeks to expand, it is under heavy injunction not to do violence to the existing development, and not to spend any great amount of money on luxury embellishments.

On the other hand, renaissance or baroque buildings such as those existing in the San Francisco Civic Center depend far more upon what is hung on them than what is inside them for their intended effect. Today, however, it is no longer economically feasible to build buildings for intentional display. Greco-Roman columns, pilasters, medallions, cornices and granite facing have gone out of vogue, not because of any arbitrary decision on the part of a group of architects, but because the economy of the world, of local governments and of private individuals has changed in a major way over the past thirty years.

To build a cheap imitation of the extravagant monuments of the past would be worse than doing nothing. Unfortunately, it is quite often the solution reached in similar situations where an acceptable mediocrity is apt to gain more support than an abrupt departure in favor of good development on different terms. On the other hand, given the prevailing economic situation and the services of an outstanding architectural imagination, the result will be contemporary no matter how one defines that.

#### Pedestrian vs. Automobile

In this automobile age the pedestrian has literally been pushed to the wall. The only large area in the Civic Center devoted exclusively to the use of people on foot is the Plaza and this cannot be reached from any other part of the Center without crossing a street.

The establishment of a pedestrian network has been attempted in the introductory plan. This pedestrian network would help achieve greater integration of governmental activities by providing pedestrian ways between buildings on a single level free from automobile traffic.

#### City Office Building or City Hall

Whatever symbolic value the present City Hall has or has acquired since it was constructed, its serviceability as a home for municipal functions is greatly impaired by a shortage of usable space and by the impossibility of increasing the total amount of such space in the building. There can be no doubt that the administrative offices of the City and County would be benefited by being transferred to an efficiently designed building large enough to include most of the now scattered agencies and related functions that together make up the complex machinery of municipal government.

The plan suggests the possibility of using the City Hall as a combined courts building, legislative headquarters and official reception center on formal occasions. The demand for added courts space in the City Hall and the need for space expressed by federal and state courts might most economically be answered by the conversion of this building to courts use. Furthermore, building a separate courts building rather than a municipal office building would not solve the problem of housing together all the agencies of municipal government that should be located under a single roof.



## Compactness or Sprawl

Various suggestions made in the past for enlarging the Civic Center have been alike in one respect. They overlooked the convenience to the public inherent in a compact arrangement of buildings, and recommended expansion in far reaches out Fulton Street. As for the existing Civic Center, little has been suggested beyond the filling in of some of the more unsightly gaps in order to round out the architectural composition.

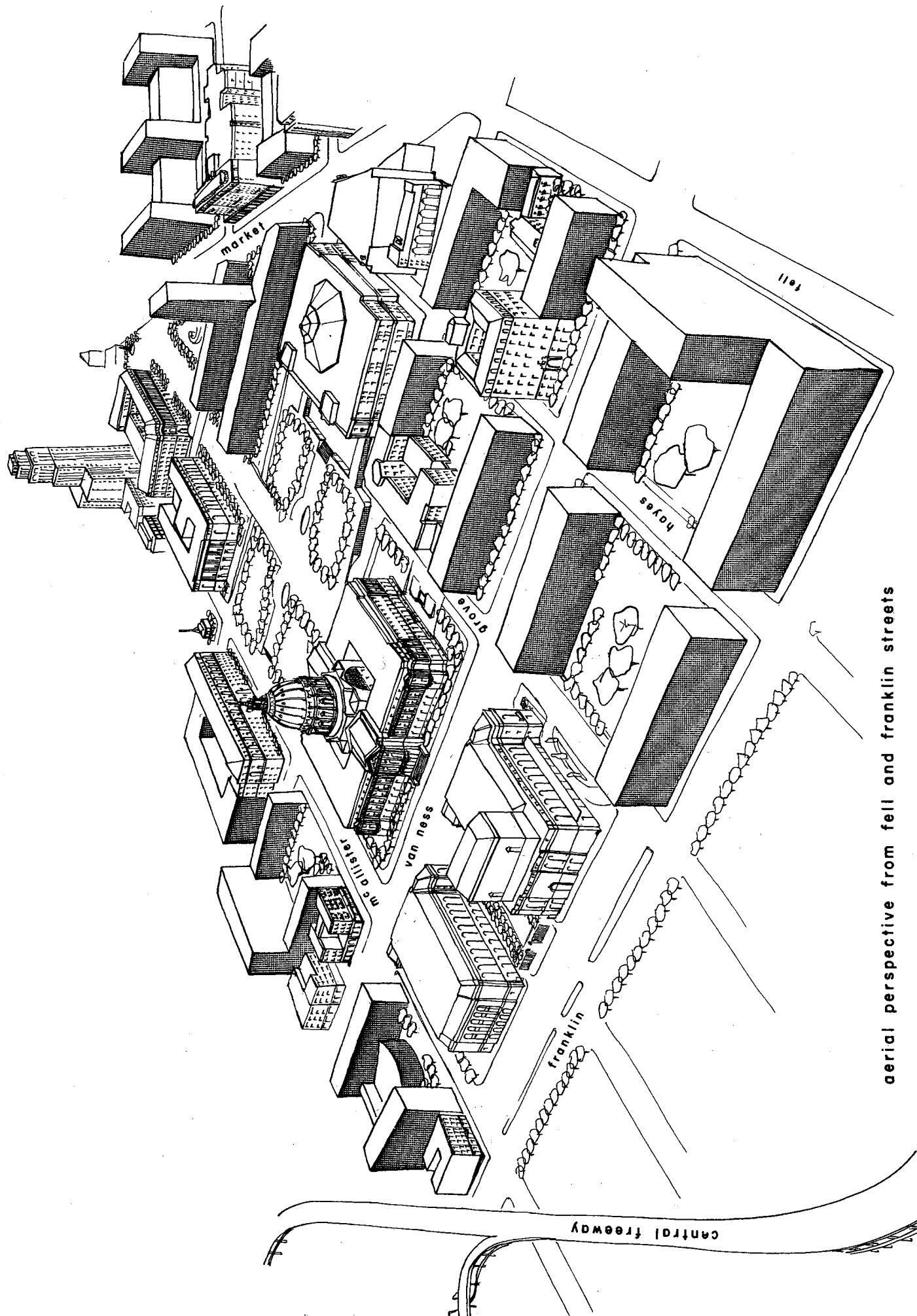
Although, in principle it may seem bolder to propose covering a large new area west of the War Memorial with public buildings, actually it does not represent a solution to the problem. It is fairly obvious, on the ground, that the buildings already west of Van Ness Avenue are somewhat cut off from the rest of the Center around the Plaza. Building new facilities west of these would not, in effect, be an extension of the Civic Center, but would result in establishing two competing centers with little or no functional relationship between them. In addition, the projected Central Freeway would also interfere with further development west of the Opera House and Veteran's Building.

To build a new and efficient plant around the existing one, however, will require the use of some lands and blocks that are slightly more expensive than those further out, particularly where the plan proposes the use of land fronting directly on Market Street. But in addition to creating a very much more efficient arrangement, there are other reasons for the suggested acquisition of land along Market Street.

The values on Market Street, as shown on Plate 3, fall off rapidly west of Leavenworth Street. In most cases, what values there are have not been created by investment, but are based upon the physical location of the property on a heavily used thoroughfare. The appearance of Market Street in general in the vicinity of the Civic Center is very poor. Taking some of this land out of private, commercial use, besides benefiting the Center by keeping it compact, may have a very beneficial effect on the remaining commercial properties. Furthermore, the acquisition of a minimum amount of land on Market Street for governmental facilities and possibly for a small park is perhaps the best way to help insulate the Center from its unattractive surroundings.

## A Description of the Plan

The introductory plan for an expanded Civic Center represents a preliminary attempt to work out the foregoing concepts on the ground, and in a practical manner. It is frankly admitted that many of the proposals and suggestions in this plan will require more detailed architectural and engineering studies to determine their ultimate feasibility. Cost studies



aerial perspective from fell and franklin streets

will also determine whether certain of the proposals should be carried out. In any case, the expansion of the Civic Center is a long-term proposal, and different parts of the plan, if found worthy of adoption, may be carried out at different times.

### Circulation Pattern

The circulatory system in the introductory plan has two distinct elements: the street system and the pedestrian network.

#### The Street System

1. Streets to be closed include Fulton Street between Market and Larkin Streets, Grove Street between Market and Polk Streets, and Leavenworth Street between Market and McAllister Streets.
2. Both Polk and Larkin Streets would be lowered in grade between McAllister and Grove Streets to provide access to underground parking facilities beneath the Plaza, and to allow for pedestrian overpasses at Fulton Street.
3. One-way streets proposed for the area are those already adopted as Part II of the Transportation Section of the Master Plan and approved by the Board of Supervisors.
4. A portion of the projected Central Freeway will pass close to the Civic Center near McAllister and Franklin Streets, creating a boundary for the development to the west.
5. Seventh Street will be extended across Market Street to join Leavenworth Street near McAllister Street as approved in the 1947 Street Improvement bond issue. This would permit the closing of Leavenworth Street between Market and McAllister Streets.

#### The Pedestrian Network

1. A pedestrian mall, adaptable for parade use, would occupy all of Fulton Street between Market and Larkin Streets.
2. The pedestrian mall would continue over Larkin and Polk Streets and link the proposed Municipal Office Building and the present City Hall.

3. The Plaza would be raised over an underground parking space and a proposed underground convention exhibition space. The Plaza would be connected to the Fulton Street Mall by a ramp and to the City Hall at the level of its Polk Street entrance.
4. Grove Street between Larkin and Polk Streets would serve as a smaller plaza at the present ground level between the Auditorium and the proposed underground exhibition area and would be connected to the Plaza by steps or a ramp.

#### Building Pattern and Open Spaces

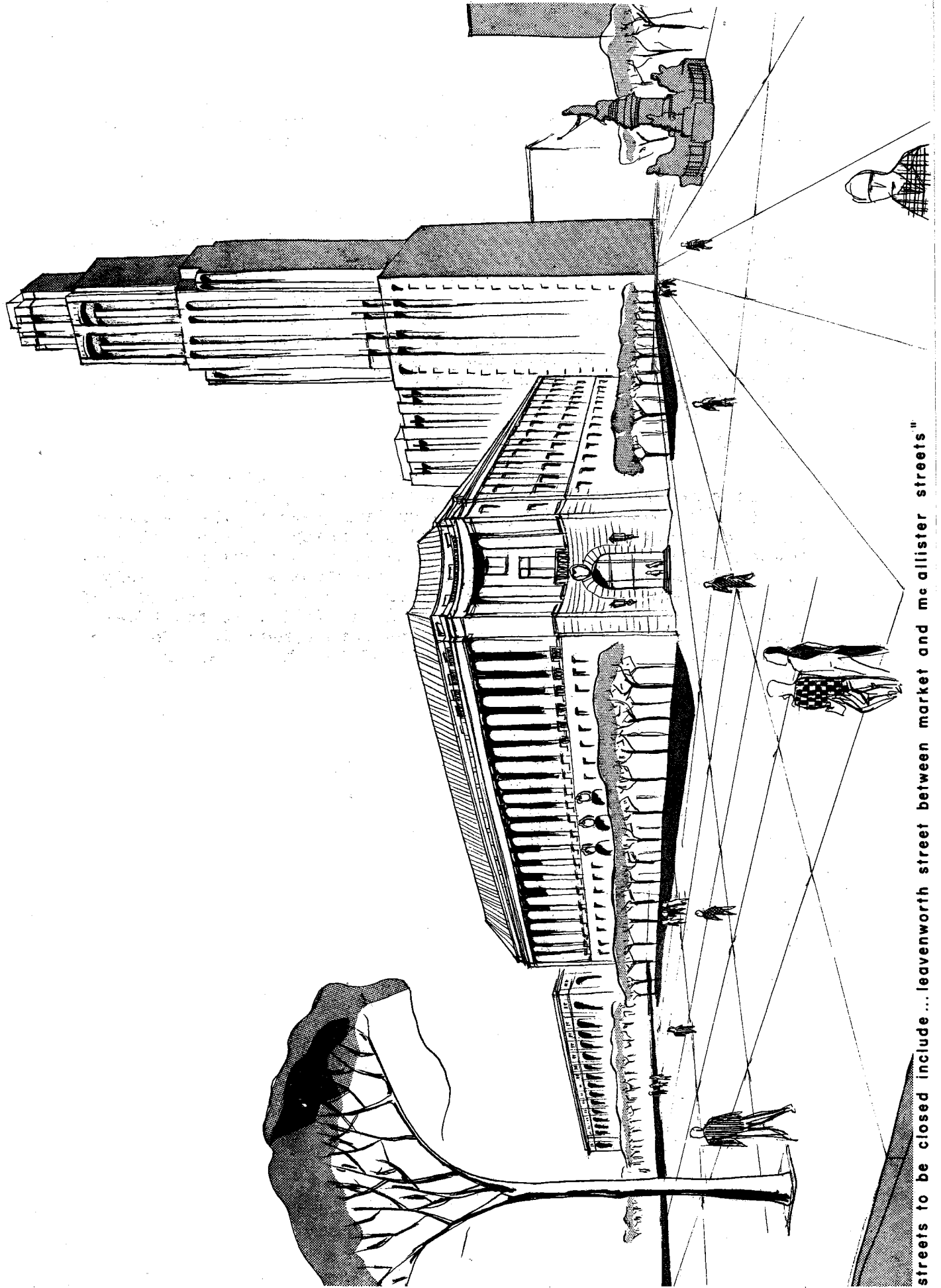
1. A Municipal Office Building is proposed for the two blocks between Fulton and Market Streets and Hyde and Larkin Streets. This would allow for a large building without excessive coverage of the ground and for a possible tall structure on the portion facing Market Street.
2. The two blocks between Grove and Fell Streets and Polk Street and Van Ness Avenue would be developed as an enclosed space or court incorporating the existing Health Center Building with additions, the existing Automobile Association Building on Van Ness Avenue and the existing U. S. Navy District Medical Office on Fell Street. Other buildings could include a new Welfare Building on Van Ness Avenue between Grove and Hayes Street, a new Convention Office and Hospitality Building on Polk Street between Hayes and Fell Streets, and possibly a building for parking at the corner of Van Ness Avenue and Fell Street.
3. The two blocks between Grove and Fell Streets west of Van Ness Avenue would be developed as another court or "close" with the southernmost block used by the Board of Education, with Fire Department Headquarters at Hayes and Franklin Streets, and possibly facilities for City archives, Opera House storage, and voting machine storage, as well as public parking in the remainder of the building area.
4. A portion of the block north of McAllister Street and west of Van Ness Avenue could be used as an Art and Drama Center in close proximity to the other cultural facilities in the War Memorial group.
5. A portion of the block east of Ninth Street and south of Market Street would be used for a Police Department Headquarters building with a new City Jail and Criminal Courts Building on Ninth Street.

6. The State Government Center will be extended to occupy portions of the block north of McAllister Street and west of Polk Street, and the remainder of the State-owned block north of McAllister Street between Polk and Larkin Streets. A new building for parking might be located at the southeast corner of Larkin Street and Golden Gate Avenue.
7. The Federal Government Center would be extended to occupy a portion of the block east of Eighth Street and south of Market Street, extending from Market Street to Mission Street.
8. If the Federal Government Center is augmented as suggested in the plan, portions of the block between Fulton Street, Market Street and Hyde Street might be developed as a park or plaza with outdoor recreation and eating facilities serving the entire Civic Center.
9. The Municipal Office Building should allow for free passage between Market Street and the Fulton Street Mall. A large court is shown between the Library and the Municipal Office Building.
10. A station in the proposed Market Street subway should be provided close to the proposed Municipal Office Building and the proposed new Federal Government Building.
11. Auditorium facilities might be expanded under the Civic Center Plaza, or to include the site occupied by the Fox Theatre or the block occupied by the Orpheum Theatre. However, consideration should also be given to the eventual development of a larger new convention hall in a location closer to the downtown hotels and retail stores.

#### Design Considerations

The new buildings shown in the sketches are not intended to represent finished designs but are drawn only to indicate the effect of buildings in the suggested locations.

The raising of the Plaza and the continuity of the Mall will create a greater sense of unity and ensemble in the Civic Center. New buildings of simple and straightforward design using interesting and contrasting materials will serve as foils to set off the more exuberant period buildings and to bring them into greater harmony. Landscaping and planting in the Civic Center should be given careful study as one of the most important means of achieving a unified spatial composition, particularly where there are different styles of architecture.



streets to be closed include...leavenworth street between market and mc allister streets"

Trees, particularly, might be allowed to grow somewhat higher and fuller and should be used to mask the Power House.

#### Land Acquisition Costs

The land and improvements required for carrying out this suggested plan for an expanded Civic Center are currently assessed at \$3,279,030, excluding land proposed for acquisition by the Federal Government, but including some land that would be acquired for State Offices. Assessed values may be assumed, for the purposes of calculation, to be about a third of the actual cost of the land and buildings to be acquired. However, the market value of such land and buildings as may be required can be ascertained only on the basis of current market prices and a careful appraisal of each property.

#### Conclusion

This plan is presented in the hope and belief that its premises and concepts may be found to correspond in some measure to the needs and desires of San Francisco as they already exist in the minds of citizens and community leaders. It is presented in the hope that it may serve as a focus for discussion and decision. Even though alternatives will inevitably be suggested, and even if such discussion as is generated leads to an entirely different solution, it is felt that the ideas presented here will be useful in the development and adoption of a sound plan to guide the future of the Civic Center.

## V. RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

In order to advance the development and expansion of the Civic Center according to a soundly conceived, capably prepared and publicly accepted plan it is recommended that the following five-point program be followed:

1. That a Technical Coordinating Committee be formed by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor comprising the Director of Planning, the Director of Public Works, the City Architect, the Director of Property, the Manager of the Parking Authority, a state and a federal representative.
2. That consulting architects and site planners be employed to prepare a detailed site plan for the Civic Center, under the direction of the Technical Coordinating Committee.
3. That a Citizen's Advisory Committee be appointed--representing the Chamber of Commerce, Down Town Association, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Real Estate Board, Planning and Housing Association, Central Council of Civic Clubs, American Institute of Architects, American Institute of Landscape Architects, American Society of Civil Engineers, Bureau of Governmental Research, Northern California General Contractors Association, Building Trades Council, and similar organizations -- to review and advise upon the work carried out by the Technical Coordinating Committee and the consulting architects and site planners.
4. That upon completion of the detailed site plan, and after review by the City Planning Commission, Chief Administrative Officer, and Mayor, and after a public hearing and review, it be adopted as a part of the Master Plan.
5. That the detailed site plan be approved and endorsed by the Board of Supervisors as the official policy of the City and County of San Francisco governing the development and expansion of the Civic Center.