

# Neighborhood Transit Centers

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## The Concept

### Summary

It is necessary to maintain existing auto-service/parking uses located in San Francisco's mixed-use neighborhoods. If maintained, existing uses would evolve to meet the increasing demand for neighborhood-based, multi-modal transportation options. Such options include car-share and bike share facilities and electric vehicle recharge stations that reduce vehicle ownership, VMT, and GHG emissions. Once the existing uses are lost, this 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation use option is lost forever.

Each center would serve its respective neighborhood with off-street parking (monthly and short-term), electric vehicle recharging, car-share and bike-share pick-up/drop-off services, para-transit pick-up/drop-off, and transit kiosk information (local and regional), all located typically near existing transit connections. These individual NTCs could be integrated into existing plans and networks of bike routes and pedestrian walks that maximize the aesthetic and historic values of the City, extending the reality of biking and walking as trip modes. Residents and tourists alike would conveniently be able to match trip type to appropriate trip mode, thereby realizing a true, transit-first, multi-modal transportation system.

### Detail

In post-1906-earthquake San Francisco, few had automobiles; homes and apartment buildings were built without garages. In the early 1910's and 1920's the need for neighborhood auto service and parking facilities became evident and 300+ facilities were built throughout the City. They took their look from the other massive transportation services structures of the day – train stations.

Today 130+/- of the original 300 facilities are still in operation, well integrated into their neighborhoods, most continuing to meet the auto servicing and parking needs of residents, visitors, customers and tourists in their communities. In addition, there are newer neighborhood parking/auto service uses. Today, there is an opportunity to move these facilities into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and still allow them to provide transportation-related services to their neighborhoods as they have for over a century in some cases.

The goal is to retain their existing use as neighborhood parking facilities, preserve their capacity to respond to the increasing market demand and allow them to evolve into an integrated citywide network of 21<sup>st</sup> century neighborhood-serving transit centers. NTCs would include some or all of the following multi-modal transit services depending on neighborhood, structure, demand, interests of owner-operators:

- 1) Electric vehicle charging and storage (ultimately from renewables)
- 2) Car share pick-up and storage
- 3) Bike-share pick-up and storage (from/to any of the centers)

- 4) Private bike storage
- 5) Short-term parking for neighborhood commercial establishments, particularly in the evening.
- 6) Transit kiosk services (information, fast pass purchases, local & regional transit trip planning)
- 7) Neighborhood senior para transit
- 8) Off-street parking, monthly for residents.
- 9) Optional: green roof/public open space.

NTCs, in combination with traditional car rental, taxis, and transit, would meet all of the trip needs of a neighborhood. They would provide easy access to the right mode for the trip. Add an internet-connected café and a shop selling stamps and magazines, and you create a 21st century neighborhood transportation hub connected to the larger network via pedestrian and bike routes emphasizing scenic and historic values.

By creating the local infrastructure of a multimodal transit system, NTCs amplify and extend the value of transit investment and system functionality. As an added benefit, the increase in mode choice at the neighborhood level reduces vehicle ownership, VMTs, and GHG emissions. Thus, NTCs become a critical component of climate action planning.

### **Urgent Planning Challenge**

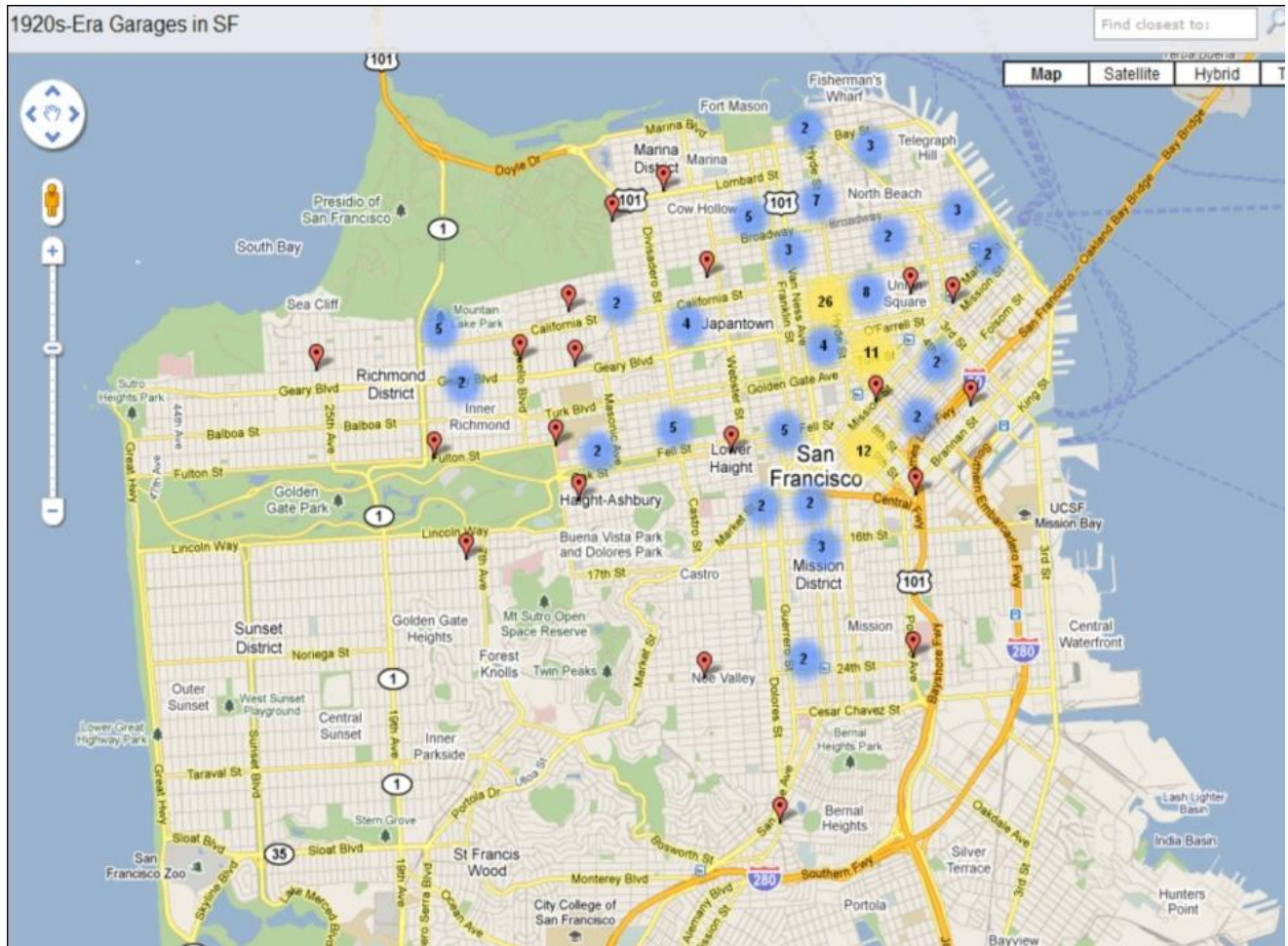
This potential citywide network of sustainable NTCs is at risk. Under the City's current land use controls, plans, and policies, existing neighborhood auto repair/parking facilities are negatively valued. The Planning Code currently allows change of use "by right" from parking to a range of private-market "higher-valued" uses, such as commercial or residential. Retaining a neighborhood parking and transportation function is viewed as anti-transit and undesirable. This current policy and practice is unintentionally undermining the City's ability to create the fully functional transit system required to meet the needs of San Francisco's 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, residents, and tourists. As a result, the possibility of realizing the unique land use value of an integrated, citywide network of NTCs will be lost forever unless the Planning Code is changed to allow existing uses to continue, thus preserving the opportunity for the 21<sup>st</sup> neighborhood-based transportation services to evolve with the market.

Such a change in the Planning Code would maintain the opportunity for the NTC uses to evolve in response to market demand. It would set the stage for the market to respond to a new economic opportunity. These neighborhood centers would develop through private investment. In addition, there are other options and actions that can be taken to stimulate and enhance a market response, such as creating a NCT Trust or a public-private partnership with existing car-share companies, etc. The SFMTA, DOE, and City CarShare have already expressed an interest in facilitating the nonprofit and operator dialogue to formulate a new partnership form and business model. There are many high-value possibilities. However, we will not capitalize on them for the larger public good of San Francisco without foresight, courage, leadership, and collaborative innovation

# Attachment 1

## 1920s-Era Historic Garages - Map

Link: <http://www.batchgeo.com/map/b01d86c4cfec6596aee61b8ed20a761c>



# Attachment 2

## 1920's-Era Historic Garages - Photos



1355\_Fulton.jpg



1550\_Union.jpg



1725\_Sacramento.jpg



1945\_Hyde.jpg



2405\_Bush.jpg



550\_Turk.jpg



712\_Filbert.jpg



818\_Leavenworth.jpg



Post/Taylor.jpg