

Introducing the Bay Area Metro Center...
Where the Region Comes Together.





Welcome to the Bay Area Metro Center.

Behind the nondescript facade of a historic workhorse government building...

In the heart of an emerging transportation-rich district...

An outmoded and largely vacant space has been repurposed and reinvented...

Creating a vibrant new center for regional collaboration.

On Earth Day in 2010, four high-profile regional agencies joined forces to launch a new initiative to create a more livable, sustainable Bay Area in the face of population and traffic growth, economic uncertainties, and serious environmental threats.

The partners in this game-changing campaign are the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District), the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Covering transportation and housing, land use and open space, air quality and climate change – and the health of our defining natural feature, the great San Francisco Bay – these four agencies are working hard to build a Bay Area that not only will survive the challenges ahead, but will thrive and remain a formidable contender in the ever more competitive global marketplace.

The collaboration responds to a state mandate, Senate Bill 375, which requires California's metro areas to take aggressive action to promote sustainable travel and growth patterns and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The effort also builds on a long history of homegrown public policy advances designed to preserve and enhance the region's bountiful natural assets and unique quality of life.

As one of their first orders of business, the regional agencies embarked on something both concretely physical and symbolic: a joint headquarters for their activities at 375 Beale Street in downtown San Francisco's burgeoning Rincon Hill neighborhood. Blossoming in the shell of a largely vacant government building built in the 1940s, our new headquarters brings the regional agencies' offices under one roof to foster even greater collaboration and achieve significant operational efficiencies as well.

With a new look inside and out and a new name – the Bay Area Metro Center – the facility serves as a forum where public officials, stakeholders and staff can address climate change and other pressing public policy issues in a comprehensive way.

LOOKING BACK

In a dynamic, urban landscape, few buildings meet the needs of a changing society, and many must make way for new structures. An exception, 375 Beale Street has survived and been adapted from a major military supply depot to a Marine Corps dormitory to a regional U.S. Postal Service facility and now, after a period of near vacancy, has morphed again – into the home for four major Bay Area regional agencies.



Corbis/Edith Heid

HQ for “North Pole” Mail
As a regional postal center for many years, the building met a special need every year for letters addressed to Santa Claus. Many of the hand-scribbled letters were answered by San Francisco volunteers, saying Santa would do his best; some volunteers actually fulfilled children’s wish lists.

A Building of Many Uses

While the structure has adapted to a variety of government uses for the military, U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Mint and U.S. Treasury, its mid-20th century style – represented by clean, horizontal lines and lack of ornamentation – has remained largely intact over the last 70 years.



Kingmond Young



Reviving “Dead” Letters

In the 1960s, the building became a regional U.S. Post Office center, eventually handling over 10 million undeliverable dead letters and parcels per year. Before giving up on delivery, however, qualified postal workers opened unaddressed or misaddressed mail to look for addresses inside.

Moulin Studios Archives



Workhorse Neighbors

Between 1933 and 1943, two important structures were built in record time to fill vital needs – the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and its neighbor, the building now known as 375 Beale. Both are notable for their no-nonsense, “workhorse” functionality and lasting durability, and their proximity to each other provided a strong symbiosis of warehouse activities and easy transportation access.



Corbis

Women Report for Duty

During World War II, members of the U.S. Marine Corps Women’s Reserve reported for duty to the San Francisco military complex that included a supply depot at this building. With a motto of “Free a Marine to Fight,” they performed jobs from typing, posting records and drafting blueprints to driving tractors and installing radios in tanks.

Kingmond Young



Special Delivery

During the Vietnam War, the facility served as a main hub for mail delivery to U.S. soldiers. Some 115,000 pounds of mail per day were sorted, loaded into huge plastic “igloos” and rushed to San Francisco International Airport for flights across the Pacific.



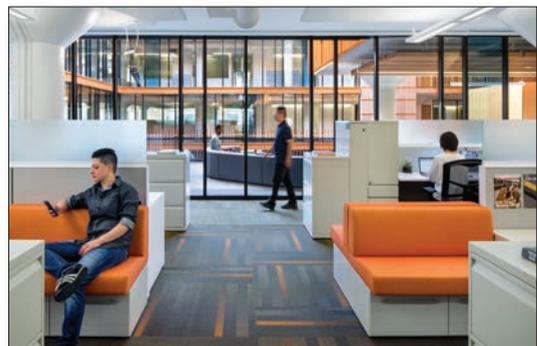
United States Postal Service

Meeting Wartime Needs

Completed in 1943, this sturdy, capacious warehouse with its vast, open floor plans (shown here) served the needs of the U.S. military through three wars – World War II and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts – providing a vital supply link for American soldiers in the Pacific.

PRESERVING & REINVENTING

Regional leaders re-envisioned the historic eight-story building at the intersection of Beale and Folsom streets as a contemporary and environmentally friendly facility that reflects the missions of the Bay Area agencies who call it home, and that will become an asset to a neighborhood that is also undergoing transformation. Investing in this existing structure rather than new development represents a prime example of adaptive reuse – something the regional agencies have been championing for years.



David Wakely Photography

New Ways to Work

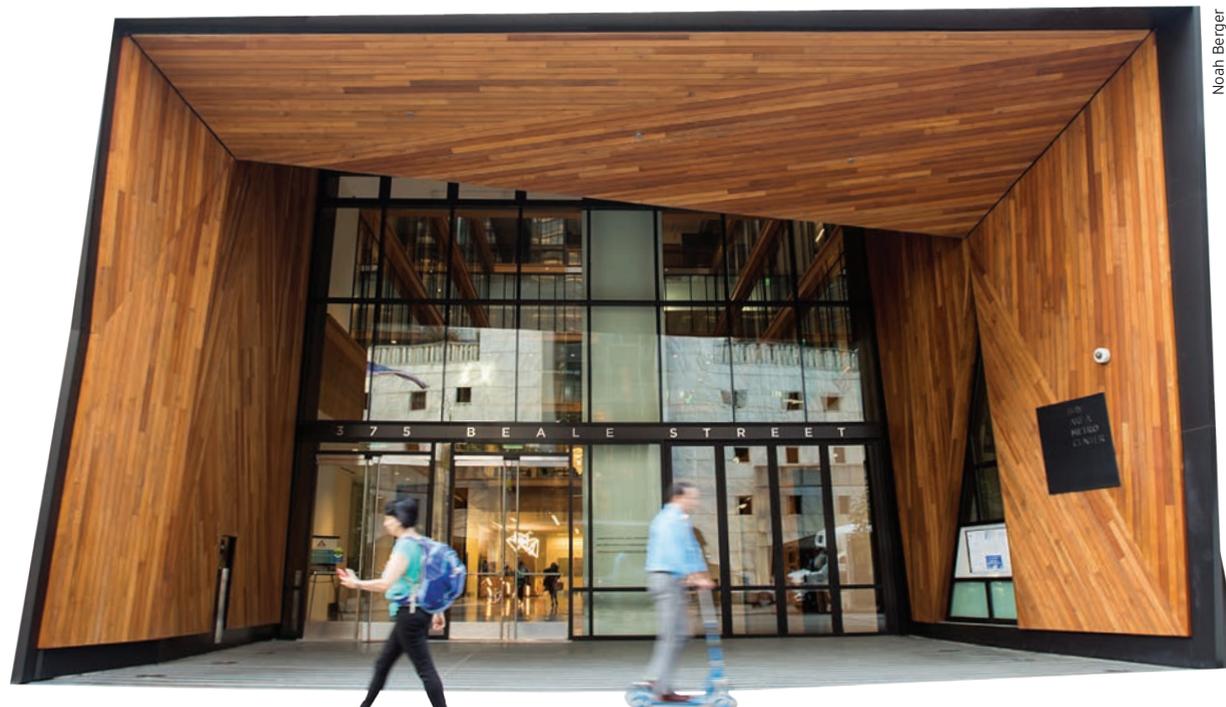
Isolating workers in enclosed individual offices is old school; new concepts of work environments call for more open and flexible floor plans that foster communication and collaboration.



David Wakely Photography

Airy Atrium

To bring natural light into the massive, 64,000-square-foot floor plate – and reduce energy costs – architects carved an eight-story atrium into the center of the building, topping it with a lightweight “pillow” skylight made of transparent plastic sheeting filled with air. At the street level, the atrium is the centerpiece of an expansive lobby destined to become an indoor crossroads for the four regional agencies occupying the building. Above the lobby, the atrium is lined with glass panels that create a contemporary stained-glass effect.



Noah Berger

New Entrance, New Address

The plan for transforming the building formerly known as 390 Main Street into the regional agency headquarters called for relocating the front entrance to the opposite side of the building to take advantage of streetscape improvements and create a more inviting and accessible entryway. The new address – 375 Beale Street – pays tribute to Senate Bill 375, landmark 2008 state legislation that charted a path toward sustainability and dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



Noah Berger

Thinking Outside the Box

Two features help to break up the building’s boxy exterior and enliven the work space: a top-floor terrace overlooking the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge that has become a favorite lunch spot for staff, and a three-story cut-out for a Ginkgo tree.

Blake Marvin Photography



Common Agendas

The upper floors of the building house the partner agencies’ staff, who are intermingled rather than grouped by agency. As another way of breaking down barriers, the design emphasizes informal gathering spaces conducive to casual interactions on the partner agencies’ common agendas.



Peter Beeler

Second Life for Historic Wood

In a nod to the neighborhood’s past, the Bay Area Metro Center makes ample use of wood from 40-foot-long Douglas fir logs that served as pilings for the old Transbay Terminal, which was demolished to make way for a modern new facility. Full of character from 70 years of sitting below the water line, this salvaged wood has been incorporated into the first floor lobby security desk and the board room dais and wall paneling, as well as the coffee bars and lobby paneling on the partner agencies’ office floors.

SERVING THE REGION

The Bay Area Metro Center is the new home for some 600 staff members of the four partner regional agencies, but it's also much more. It is intended as a public forum where issues can be aired and solutions discussed, a neighborhood and regional resource, and a place where the public can connect with the agencies and access their services.



Noah Berger

Library: Information for the Asking

The place to research transportation, demographics, planning topics, economic trends and much more is the new MTC-ABAG library, located on the 7th floor of the Bay Area Metro Center and available to visitors by appointment. With over 15,000 books, periodicals, reports – and four daily newspapers – the library is a goldmine of information. The catalog can be accessed remotely through the MTC website.

Gathering Spaces

Branching off the first-floor lobby – itself an inviting public space – are a pair of spacious multi-purpose rooms available to the partner agencies for meetings and events. Across the lobby is a formal, auditorium-style board room that is shared by the partner agencies.



Kingmond Young



Noah Berger



Noah Berger

Tracking Air Quality

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's new state-of-the-art lab will perform over 25,000 air quality analyses per year on samples collected from monitoring stations, manufacturing facilities, dry cleaners and the like across the nine Bay Area counties to determine compliance with air quality standards and regulations – also performing analyses for other air quality organizations. Information from the region's air monitoring network is used to develop models and examine long-term air quality trends.

Coffee, Clipper®, Commute Help and More

Ada's Café and The Hub will be co-located in a ground floor storefront at 375 Beale, providing the public with one-stop access to products and services offered by the regional agencies located at the Bay Area Metro Center, all in a cozy café that serves gourmet coffee drinks and fresh breakfast and lunch options. Visitors will be able to get a FasTrak® toll tag, load cash value and passes onto a Clipper® transit fare card, apply for an air quality permit, find the best Bay Area bus route or buy a boxed set of San Francisco Bay Trail maps, among many other options. Ada's Café is a Palo Alto-based nonprofit dedicated to hiring and training people with disabilities.



Noah Berger



Noah Berger

Bay Area FasTrak® Lives Here

Customer service, account management and payment processing for the Bay Area FasTrak® electronic toll collection system operate from the second floor of the Bay Area Metro Center. FasTrak® is managed by the Bay Area Toll Authority, an MTC affiliate.



CallTrans / Sze Lei Leong

Window on the World of Traffic Operations

At the first-floor Regional Operations Center – or the ROC – operators will monitor MTC's growing network of Express Lanes via a real-time traffic map and live video feeds visible to the public through a large window. During a regional emergency, the ROC will function as a command center where MTC staff can manage and coordinate transportation assets with regional partners.

A LIVELY, TRANSIT-RICH LOCATION

The excitement surrounding the new regional agency headquarters at 375 Beale Street in San Francisco is amplified by the vibe of Rincon Hill, a transit-rich neighborhood that is enjoying a comeback after several decades of decline and relative obscurity.



Noah Berger

The Bay Area Metro Center today

Rincon Hill on the Rise

In the 19th century, Rincon Hill was one of San Francisco's most fashionable residential districts. But its popularity waned after a major road project carved up the neighborhood, and what poor planning didn't destroy, the 1906 earthquake did. Eventually, industrial uses gained a foothold. Then, in the 1990s, planners began to re-envision this forgotten corner of the city as a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use downtown neighborhood. Rincon Hill today epitomizes urban living, with several striking residential highrises – and even a dog park in the shadow of the Bay Bridge approach.

Transit Smorgasbord

Another plus for the Bay Area Metro Center's location is its proximity to a smorgasbord of public transit options that make it easy for staff, policy board members and the public to access the facility from the far corners of the region. The site sits a half block away from the Transbay Temporary Terminal, which is served by six intercity bus systems, not to mention numerous San Francisco Muni lines. BART and Caltrain are within walking distance, as is the San Francisco Ferry Terminal.



Noah Berger

The Transbay Temporary Terminal

Grand Central Station of the West

The Metro Center's block borders the Transbay District, where work is progressing on the stunning new Transbay Transit Center, the future terminus for intercity buses, Caltrain and the state's high-speed rail line. Highway access is also convenient, with the west approach to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge just a few blocks away.

Artist's rendering of the Transbay Transit Center



Kingmond Young

Blake Marvin Photography



BAY
AREA
METRO
CENTER

Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Partner Agencies



Association of Bay Area Governments

Bay Area Metro Center
Suite 700
415-820-7900
www.abag.ca.gov

The official council of governments for the San Francisco Bay Area, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) works to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among the region's nine counties and 101 cities and towns and to provide innovative and cost-effective solutions to their common problems.



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

Bay Area Metro Center
Suite 600
415-749-5000
www.baaqmd.gov

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District or BAAQMD) is entrusted with regulating stationary sources of air pollution in the nine counties that surround the San Francisco Bay. The mission of the Air District is to protect and improve public health, air quality and the global climate.



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

Bay Area Metro Center
Suite 800
415-778-6700
www.mtc.ca.gov

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) plans, finances and coordinates transportation in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, with the goals of improving connectivity, promoting sustainability and equity, and protecting the environment and the health of the region's infrastructure.



Bay Conservation and Development Commission

455 Golden Gate Avenue
10th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-352-3600
www.bcdc.ca.gov

The Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) was created to protect and enhance San Francisco Bay and to encourage responsible use of this regional treasure. BCDC also leads the Bay Area's ongoing regional effort to address the impacts of rising sea levels on shoreline communities and assets.

Relocating to the Bay Area
Metro Center in 2017

About the Cover:

Bay Area Metro Center Exemplifies Repurpose and Reuse

This photo captures a side view of the zigzagging "communicating" stairway that is suspended in the upper reaches of the airy atrium, tying together the four top floors. Not only is the Bay Area Metro Center as a whole a prime example of adaptive reuse, since it involved the repurposing of a structure dating back to the 1940s, but also, the interior stairs' wooden treads are made from Douglas fir bumpers salvaged during the demolition of the post office once housed in the building.

Blake Marvin Photography