Draft Gateway Master Plan

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO GATEWAY STUDY

PREPARED FOR

City of South San Francisco

July 1, 2013

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urban design
landscape architecture
community outreach

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Refer to map on page 4 for locations.

INTRODUCTION I

Background

The City of South San Francisco (SSF) is a community full of history and character, defined by a variety of cultures, neighborhoods, and emerging and historic businesses enterprises. The City's location - just south of San Francisco and surrounded by a number of other communities including Colma, San Bruno, Daly City, Brisbane, and Pacifica -6means that there are a lot of access points into the City. As the City developed and grew from it's incorporation in 1908 to present day, so did the identifying features of the City at these access points and within the City itself. Among the most well known and visible features of the City is historic Sign Hill - the "The Industrial City" sign. Other identifying gateway features emerged over the years including the "The Birthplace of Biotechnology" sign on East Grand Avenue, the more traditional wood median sign entering the City on El Camino Real from the south, and the low retaining wall on the west side of El Camino Real as you approach Colma and Daly City.

With the number of access points into the City, combined with the lack of a unifying theme or character amongst its gateway feature, the City determined that they needed to develop a "gateway" master plan.

Purpose

This Master Plan will serve as a roadmap for the design and construction of all future "gateway" features. The intent of the master plan is to take the character and culture of the City and it's existing features and unify them into a complementary design theme for all gateways into the City. The plan addresses gateways at major roads, including the 101 freeway, the 280 freeway, and El Camino Real, as well as other locations such as at Skyline Blvd. and Mission Road. The plan also recommends a framework for design, materials, plant palette, approximate size, and location of each gateway.

Overview

The recommendations outlined in this master plan are meant to provide the City with a tool for prioritizing the various proposed gateway improvements based on existing conditions, cost, and importance. Based on the City's priorities, funding sources would be pursued or funds would be set aside from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

This report outlines the process that the City went through to identify the gateway locations, develop project goals, evaluate design alternatives, and finally summarize the implementation strategy.

The master plan addresses the following:
- the site setting and gateway locations,
- the design development, including project goals and the role that the advisory committee played throughout the planning process,
- the design process, including the initial rough concepts and how they progressed to the final designs, and
- what the strategies for implementation are.

11. Location: 101 Exit to S. Airport Blvd.
Cross Streets: S. Airport Blvd. and 101 Off Ramp

Refer to map on page 4 for locations.

Regional Map

NTS

Regional Context

The City of South San Francisco is located in San Mateo County a few miles south of San Francisco at the northern edge of the Peninsula between the San Francisco Bay, San Bruno Mountain, and the Coastal Range. The total area of the City consists of 30.2 square miles, with 9.1 of those square miles being land (according to the United States Census Bureau). The population of 63,632 people (per the 2010 census) is made up of mostly working class families and consists of a variety of age groups and ethnicities, including Hispanic, White, and Asian. There are also a number of emerging technology companies based out of South San Francisco, such as Genentech, and more traditional companies, such as See's Candies.

With the City's close proximity to the San Francisco International Airport and access to two major freeways, the 101 and 280, the City is a very convenient and centrally located place to live with a lot of business traffic, both foreign and domestic, coming to or passing through the City everyday.

Gateway Locations

The City initially identified ten (10) potential gateway locations. Based upon input from the Advisory Committee, created for the specific reason of developing a gateway master plan, some locations were changed, relocated, or added to the list. Twelve (12) potential gateway locations were agreed upon and include the following:

- north bound El Camino Real
- south bound El Camino Real
- north bound 280 off ramp at Avalon Drive
- north bound 280 off ramp at Westborough Blvd.
- Mission Road at McLellan Drive
- Junipero Serra Blvd. at Hickey Blvd.
- Skyline Blvd. at Westborough Blvd.
- Airport Blvd. at Sister Cities Blvd.
- north bound 101 off ramp for Grand Ave.
- Airport Blvd. at Grand Ave.
- north bound 101 off ramp for Oyster Point Blvd.
- north bound off ramp for South Airport Blvd.

As each location presents a different situation with different conditions and jurisdictions, project goals and a program for achieving those goals were developed.

Opposite page. Regional Map

Below. Project Area Map

Project Area

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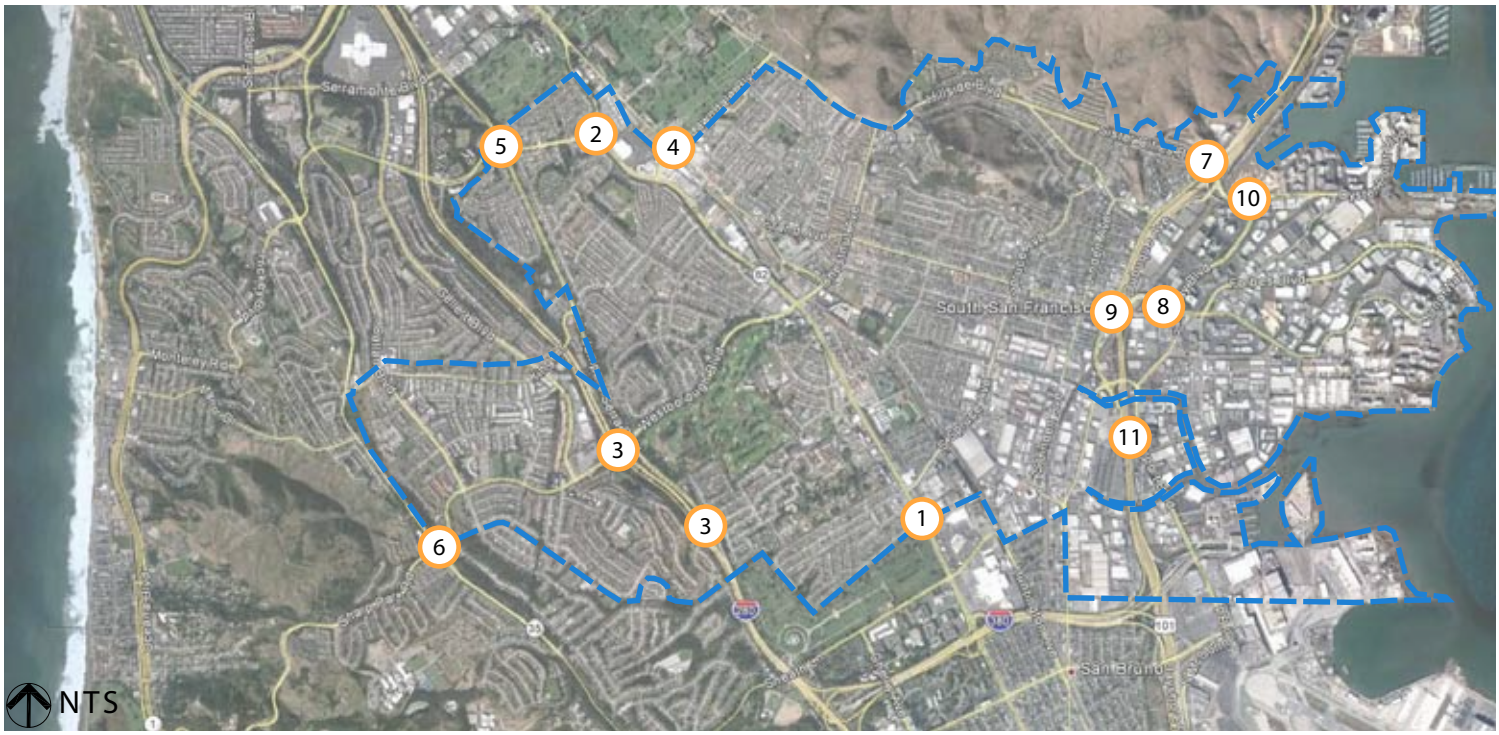

1 NORTH BOUND EL CAMINO REAL
2 SOUTH BOUND EL CAMINO REAL
3 280 EXIT TO WESTBOROUGH BLVD.
4 MCLELLAN DR. & MISSION RD.
5 HICKEY & JUNIPERO SERRA BLVDS.
6 SKYLINE & WESTBOROUGH BLVDS.
7 AIRPORT & SISTER CITIES BLVD.
8 GRAND AVE. OFF RAMP
9 SOUTH AIRPORT BLVD. OFF RAMP
10 OYSTER POINT OFF RAMP
11 101 EXIT TO S. AIRPORT BLVD.

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Project Goals

The primary goals of this project are fourfold:

1. identify the main gateways to the City
2. provide unique gateways specific to South San Francisco that emanate the character of the City
3. establish consistent design parameters for all gateways
4. provide a strategy/roadmap for implementing construction of the gateways

Supplementary goals of this project include:

1. respect both the history and the future of the City
2. design gateways that withstand the test of time and change
3. factor into account the SSF Downtown Strategy Plan
4. design gateways to accommodate driving speeds
5. be consistent with City sign guidelines
6. establish guidelines for materials and plants
7. create a total of three (3) gateway categories that could be used as the basis for design for all sites

Program

To implement the project goals a design program was created. The program consisted of:

- identifying potential sites,
- working with the City and Advisory Committee (AC) to refine the sites,
- developing preliminary designs,
- developing gateway categories
- working with the City and AC to refine the designs and determine the gateway plants and materials,
- presenting the plans for public review and feedback at a Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council Meeting,
- and then developing a final master plan to implement the gateway program.

Advisory Committee

An integral component to the design process was the development of an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee (AC) was created to provide a forum for representatives of key city staff from a variety of departments and commissions to review all plans and voice their opinions. This committee functioned as a sounding board for design ideas, project challenges, funding opportunities, and implementation strategies before development of this plan. Three AC meetings were held throughout the process at key plan development milestones.

The AC members included the following:

City Council - Karyl Matsumoto
Parks and Recreation Commission - Doug Reynolds, Sean Garrone
Beautification Committee - Sean Garrone
City Planning Department - Susy Kalkin, Billy Gross, Linda Ajello
City Parks and Recreation Department - Sharon Ranals, Greg Mediati, Drew Arzaga

The purpose of each AC Meeting was as follows

AC Meeting #1
review project goals and objectives and discuss gateway sites and categories
AC Meeting #2
review the project scope and site selection criteria, discuss the schedule, and further refine the process
AC Meeting #3
review refined designs and draft master plan

A copy of all meeting summaries is included in Appendix B.

Opposite top. Location map

Opposite bottom. Example of site location map and existing conditions

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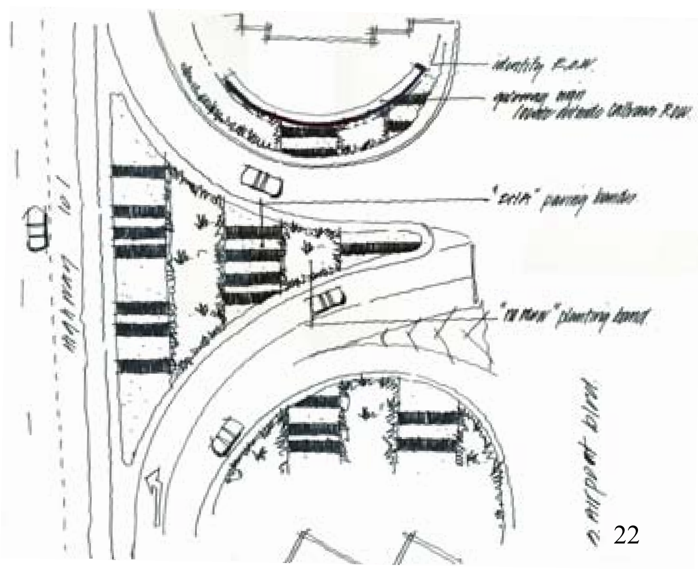

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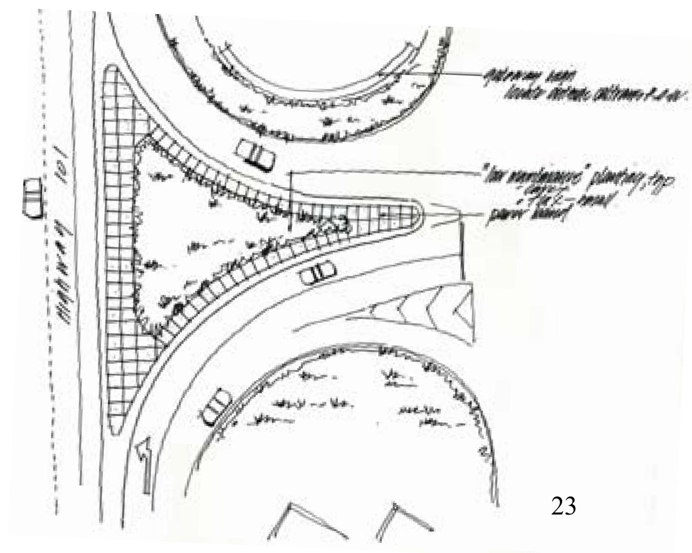

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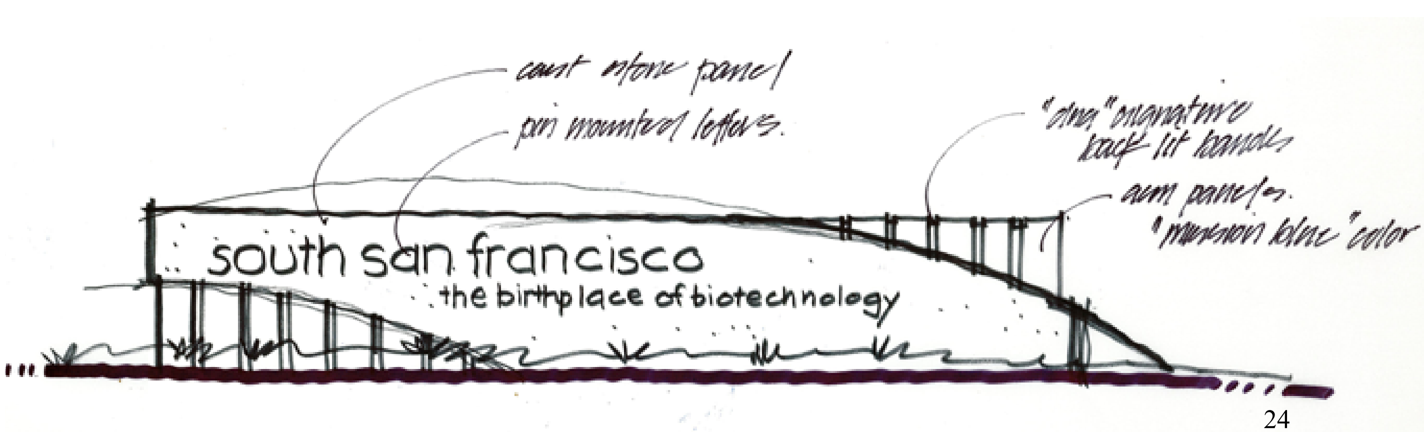

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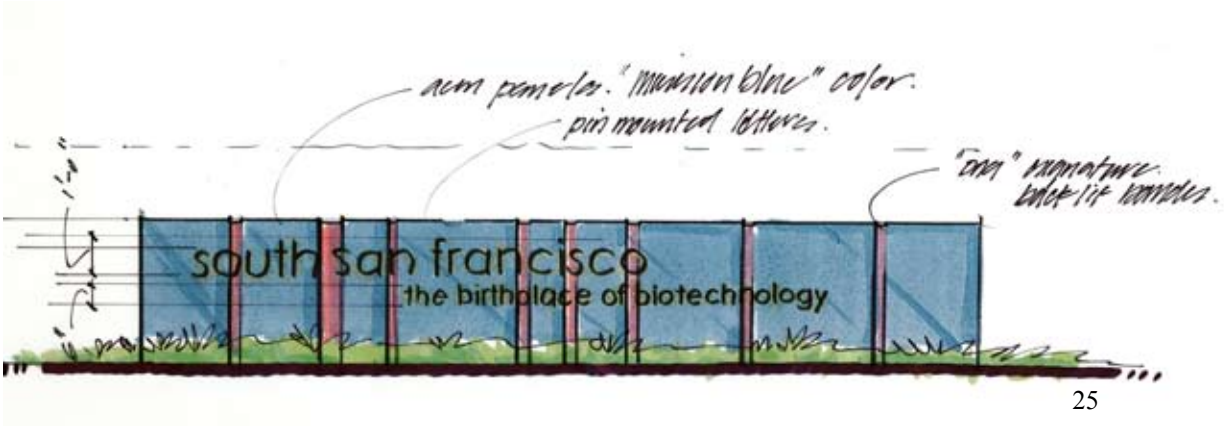
Site Analysis

After going through the design development process and identifying all the potential gateway sites, each site was analyzed to determine:
- the approximate location of gateway signs,
- which of the gateway categories would be appropriate for each site,
- what the extent of improvements would be,
- and which site would be most appropriate to highlight each category for the purpose of this master plan.

The sites were photographed to be used for further design review and to help determine potential costs of each site. Other factors taken into account were the speed at which vehicles traveled, property ownership, Caltrans jurisdiction, how electrical and irrigation would connect to the City's existing systems, and how existing plant materials were performing, amongst other factors. This analysis was then incorporated into the preliminary design.

Preliminary Design Alternatives

The preliminary designs were developed utilizing the information gathered during the site analysis, discussions with the City and Advisory Committee, and the Primary and Supplementary goals of the project. In order to gain feedback from the Advisory Committee the initial concepts were drawn in pen and ink (as shown in Exhibits 22-27). These designs established the basis for the character of the signs - subtly encapsulating the character of the City and incorporating the City's mission blue butterfly in color and subtle nods to the biotech community. Based upon input, the preliminary designs were further developed using a 3-D modeling tool (Sketch-Up) to help refine and better visualize the design.



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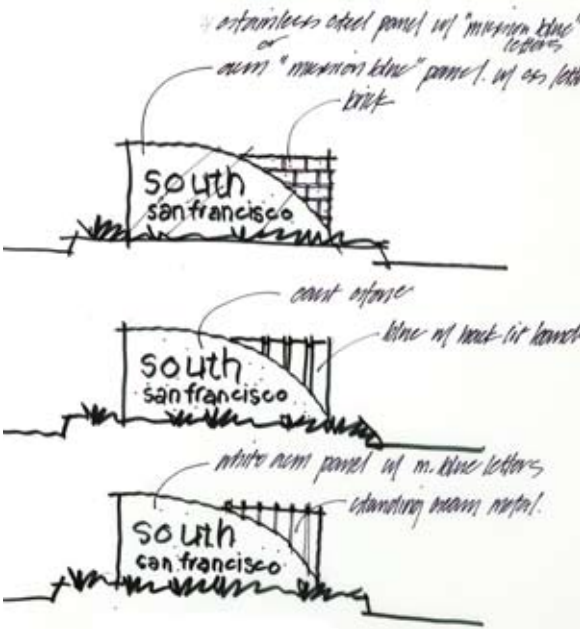

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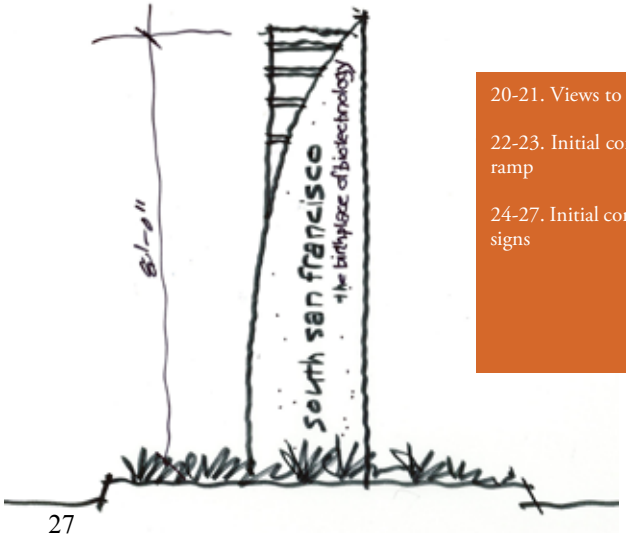

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20-21. Views to South Airport Blvd.

22-23. Initial concept sketches of 101 off ramp

24-27. Initial concept sketches of gateway signs

Gateway Modeling

The aim for the 3D modeling of gateway features was to convey the magnitude and vision for each concept. A simple model was used, as seen in exhibits 28 to 31 to the right, to get further direction on which concepts captured the character of South San Francisco. The models also allowed for quick and effective communication of what type of impact different materials would have on the gateway signs. This helped determine what worked with the design and what didn't, as different neighborhoods would potentially use different materials to complement the character of the neighborhood.

In the case of exhibit 28, the metal panels of the BART station were replicated in the design of the sign. Exhibit 29 shows a more traditional sign for some of the more historical areas of South San Francisco. And exhibits 30 and 31 show a variation of what the large gateways could look like.

Upon review of the initial gateway options the Advisory Committee chose to move forward with a family of three (3) sign types, allowing for different options depending on location:

1. large gateway - for major transit areas such as freeways and intersections (see exhibits 31 and 32)
2. standard gateway, vertical - for medians or intersections (see exhibit 30)

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3. standard gateway, horizontal - for medians or intersections (see exhibits 28 and 29)

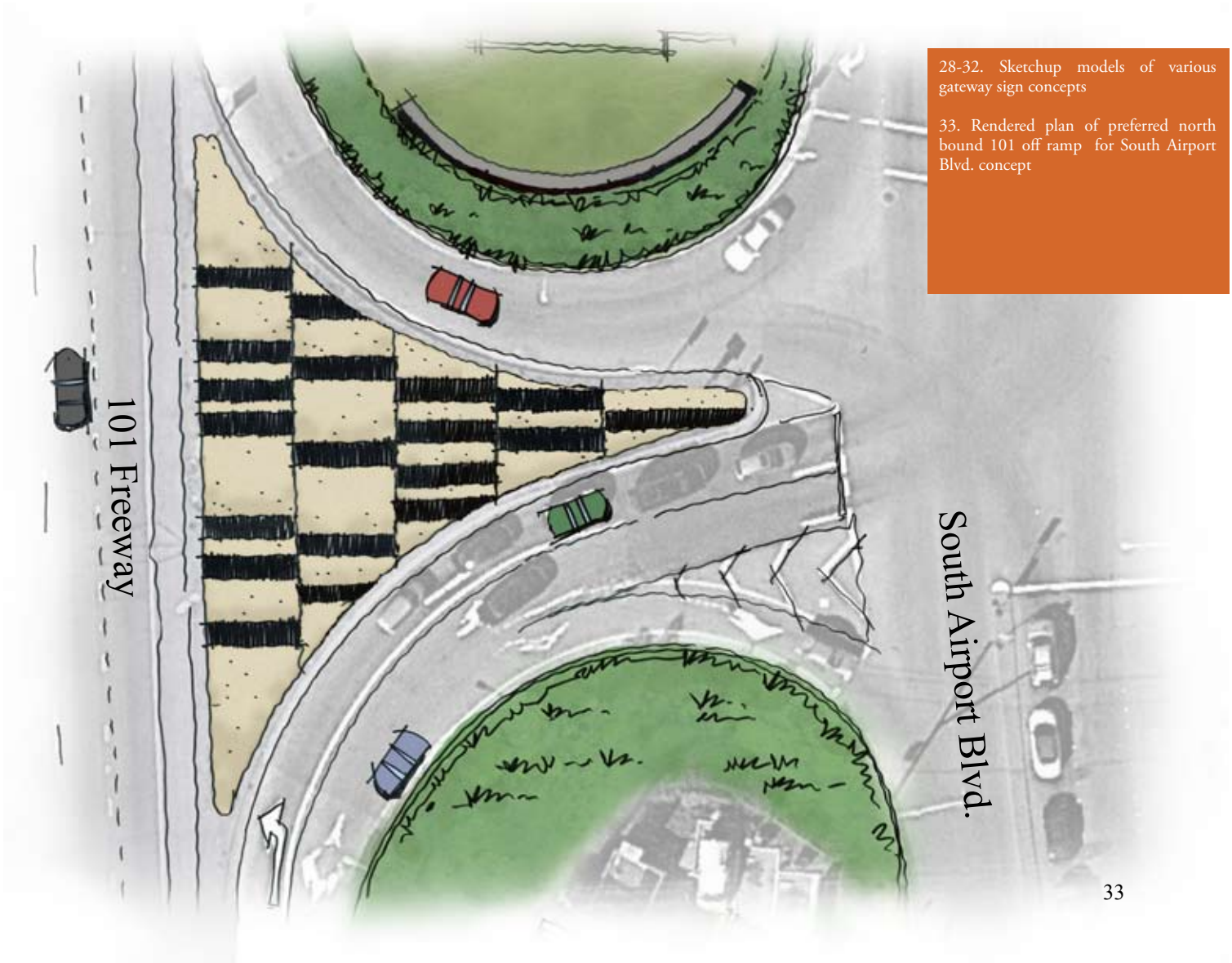
Preferred Alternative Plans

Once designs and locations were set, the next step was to identify three (3) priority locations and develop concepts for each, reflective of the input to date, that could then be used as models for the other gateway locations. The locations selected include,

1. north bound 101 off ramp for South Airport Blvd.
2. north bound 101 off ramp for Grand Ave.
3. north bound El Camino Real

The north bound 101 off ramp for South Airport Blvd. was chosen because, if improved, it would have a major impact to the impression that visitors, near and far, coming to the City, and specifically the Convention Center, would have. It also will require extensive coordination since the areas to be improved would require agreements with both Caltrans (this is a freeway off ramp) and the adjacent property owner where this sign would be located. The triangular shaped area between the off and on ramps would be paved with a "signature" treatment consistent with all other gateways, thus achieving an aesthetic low maintenance solution that could accommodate wide swinging freight trucks. The large gateway sign would be located just outside the Caltrans right-of-way.

The north bound 101 off ramp for Grand Ave was chosen due to its proximity to the biotechnology community, proximity to downtown,



28-32. Sketchup models of various gateway sign concepts

33. Rendered plan of preferred north bound 101 off ramp for South Airport Blvd. concept

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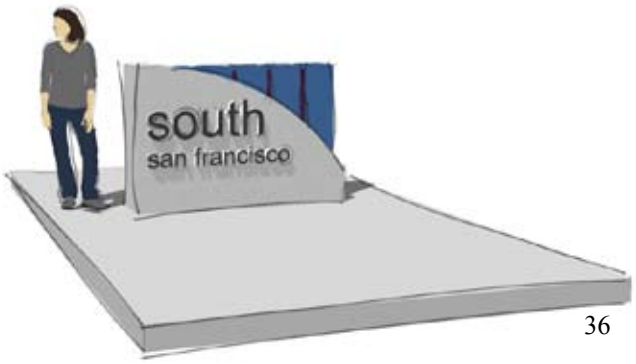
and amount of traffic it receives. The gateway treatment is typical of a major gateway to South San Francisco, with a pavement and planting scheme to complement the signage.

The north bound El Camino Real location was chosen as a model because it is a typical median situation that is also under Caltrans jurisdiction.



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Sign Manipulation

The intent of the preferred signage designs is to develop a general framework for design intent, look and feel. There are several factors that can be manipulated in the final design to affect appearance and neighborhood integration;

Font: style, size, and capitalization can all be changed to effect character and emotional response.
Materials: cast stone, brick, concrete, metal and other materials can be incorporated to better reflect neighborhood character and historical references. Welcome statements "climate best by government test" and "The City of Good Living" are both examples of community slogans in the area. How does the City want to welcome visitors can be reflected in what the sign says.

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34. Rendered plan of preferred north bound 101 off ramp for Grand Ave.. concept

35. Rendered plan of preferred north bound El Camino Real concept

36-39. Sketchup models of preferred gateway sign concepts

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Phasing

The construction of the 12 potential gateway locations will be implemented over a period of time as funding becomes available and the various permitting processes are completed. The ultimate goal is to establish a roadmap for which the City can implement the gateways in order of priority. This order will be determined upon the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council input.

Permitting and Property Rights

Four (4) of the twelve gateway locations are within Caltrans jurisdiction, which will play a significant role in the final design of the gateways. The City's goal is to work closely with Caltrans to create gateways that are mutually beneficial to both Caltrans and the City and that meet Caltrans requirements. This is a process that will take time, which is why some of the first gateways that the City moves forward with will likely be within Caltrans jurisdiction.

The projects within Caltrans jurisdiction will require coordination with the District Gateway Monument Coordinator. The design of the gateway monuments shall meet Caltrans standards as detailed in the State document titled "Caltrans Gateway Monuments", dated 11/16/2011. The plan submittal shall include a site plan with the location of the proposed monument, including dimensions, offsets, and topography. All gateway monuments require a Standard Encroachment Permit Application.

In addition to permitting the City will be working closely with adjacent property owners so that the gateways, and improvements for them, are agreed upon and complementary to the adjacent landscape.

Costs

Probable project costs were identified for each of the (3) concepts chosen as the priority gateway locations. The projected costs for each of these gateways are:

1. north bound 101 off ramp for South Airport Blvd. - $315-335,000
2. north bound 101 off ramp for Grand Ave. - $180-200,000
3. north bound El Camino Real - $105-125,000

For a more detailed breakdown of costs refer to Appendix C.