



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

General Plan Referral

Date: July 9, 2015
Case No. 2015-008571GPR
30 Van Ness Avenue – Sale of City-owned four story office building over ground floor retail/commercial.

Block/Lot No: 0835/004

Project Sponsors: John Updike, Director
San Francisco Real Estate Department
25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94102

Applicant: Same as Above

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Recommendation: Finding the project, on balance, is in conformity with the General Plan

Recommended By: 
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On July 8, 2015, the Planning Department (herein “the Department”) received a request from the City and County of San Francisco Real Estate Division to consider the sale of City-owned property at 30 Van Ness Avenue. The property is currently a four story office building occupied by a variety of City offices with retail/commercial on the ground floor. The existing uses would be retained until City lease-back of the building terminates, no later than 12/31/2018. The future use is not known at this time, but any proposal must comply with the policies and guidelines set forth in the San Francisco General Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Categorically Exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15312, or Class 12: Surplus Government Property Sales.

GENERAL PLAN COMPLIANCE AND BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

As described below, the Project is consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 and is, on balance, **in-conformity** with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

Note: General Plan Objectives and Policies are in **bold font**; General Plan text is in regular font. Staff comments are in *italic font*.

Market and Octavia Plan

OBJECTIVE 1.1

CREATE A LAND USE PLAN THAT EMBRACES THE MARKET AND OCTAVIA NEIGHBORHOOD'S POTENTIAL AS A MIXED-USE URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD.

POLICY 1.1.2

Concentrate more intense uses and activities in those areas best served by transit and most accessible on foot.

POLICY 1.1.5

Reinforce the importance of Market Street as the city's cultural and ceremonial spine.

The proposed sale of 30 Van Ness Avenue could allow for redevelopment of the site with a project in keeping with the Market and Octavia Plan's policies, which seek to concentrate high-density and active uses at the Market and Van Ness intersection.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

ENCOURAGE URBAN FORM THAT REINFORCES THE PLAN AREA'S UNIQUE PLACE IN THE CITY'S LARGER URBAN FORM AND STRENGTHENS ITS PHYSICAL FABRIC AND CHARACTER.

POLICY 1.2.2

Maximize housing opportunities and encourage high-quality commercial spaces on the ground floor.

POLICY 1.2.5

Mark the intersection of Van Ness Avenue and Market Street as a visual landmark.

The proposed sale of 30 Van Ness Avenue could allow for redevelopment of the site with a project that potentially maximizes housing opportunities, includes high-quality ground floor commercial space, and helps to mark the Market Street and Van Ness Avenue intersection as a visual landmark.

OBJECTIVE 2.4

PROVIDE INCREASED HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AFFORDABLE TO HOUSEHOLDS AT VARYING INCOME LEVELS.

The proposed sale of 30 Van Ness Avenue could allow for redevelopment of the site with a project which helps the city provide additional affordable housing, either on-site or via in-lieu fees.

HOUSING ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1

IDENTIFY AND MAKE AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT ADEQUATE SITES TO MEET THE CITY'S HOUSING NEEDS, ESPECIALLY PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Policy 1.10

Support new housing projects, especially affordable housing, where households can easily rely on public transportation, walking and bicycling for the majority of daily trips.

OBJECTIVE 13

PRIORITIZE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PLANNING FOR AND CONSTRUCTING NEW HOUSING

Policy 13.1 Support "smart" regional growth that locates new housing close to jobs and transit.

The proposed sale of 30 Van Ness Avenue could allow for the redevelopment of the site with a new housing project which supports the City's goals of providing new housing in transit-rich areas.

Eight Priority Policies Findings

The subject project is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 in that:

1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced.
The proposed property sale will not negatively affect existing neighborhood-serving retail uses or opportunities for employment in or ownership of such businesses. Ground floor retail uses would be included in any reuse/redevelopment of the site.
2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods.
The proposed property sale would not displace any existing housing and any potential redevelopment of the site would be in conformance with the policies of the General Plan.

3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced.
The proposed property sale will not directly affect the City's supply of affordable housing.
4. That commuter traffic not impede Muni transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.
The proposed property sale will not result in commuter traffic impeding Muni's transit service, overburdening the streets or altering current neighborhood parking.
5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for residential employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced.
The proposed property sale will not displace industrial or service sector uses. Commercial office uses are limited by the San Francisco Planning Code's Van Ness & Market Downtown Residential Special Use District.
6. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.
Pending lease-back termination, the proposed property sale will result in relocation of City operations currently located at the site to a more resilient asset in the greater Civic Center area, facilitating better public sector responsiveness in the event of an emergency.
7. That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.
The proposed property sale will not affect landmarks or historic buildings.
8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development.
The proposed property sale will not affect City parks or open spaces, or their access to sunlight and vistas.

RECOMMENDATION:	Finding the Project, on balance, in-conformity with the General Plan
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cc: John Updike, Real Estate Division
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