



GENERAL PLAN REFERRAL

June 28, 2023

Case No.: 2023-005479GPR
Block/Lot No.: 0787/001, 0788/001
Project Sponsor: City and County of San Francisco - Real Estate Division
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Recommended By: 
Joshua Switzky, Acting Director of Citywide Planning *for*
Rich Hillis, Director of Planning

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

Project Description

The City and County of San Francisco ("City") owns the Civic Center Steam Loop ("Steam Loop") located in the San Francisco Civic Center. The Steam Loop provides steam for comfort heating and hot water to the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, 101 Grove Street, City Hall and the San Francisco County Civil Courthouse ("Steam Loop Buildings") and consists of approximately 3,100 feet of steam and condensate piping, 17 utility vaults and laterals to the Steam Loop Buildings.

Energy Center San Francisco LLC ("ECSF") owns and operates 12 miles of district heating steam distribution and condensate return piping in San Francisco for delivery and sale of steam to various facilities. Approximately 180 San Francisco steam customers are served by ECSF. Excluding the City, all ECSF customers receive steam at the property boundary using ECSF -owned piping which is metered by ECSF. The California Public Utility Commission regulates and approves ECSF tariffs. The Steam Loop is connected to ECSF's distribution network.

The City and ECSF agree that it would be mutually beneficial: (i) for ownership and operational responsibility for the Steam Loop to be transferred from the City to ECSF; (ii), for the City to grant ECSF an easement that will allow ECSF to continue to operate and maintain the Steam Loop in its current location for those areas where the Steam Loop is outside of the right of way (“ROW”); (iii) for ECSF to take the necessary steps, if any, to incorporate the sections of the Steam Loop in the ROW into its existing franchise agreement; (iv) for the City to reimburse ECSF and for ECSF to cause to be performed certain pipe replacement and other repairs to bring the Steam Loop back to reliable operation; (v) for ECSF to be solely responsible for future replacements, repairs and maintenance of the Steam Loop at ECSF's expense; and (vi) for the City to continue to buy steam from ECSF and for ECSF to continue to sell steam to the City for the Steam Loop Buildings for five (5) years following the Transfer Date. The granting of an easement as described above requires a General Plan Referral.

Environmental Review

The Project is a real estate transaction only. Not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378 and 15060(c)(2) because it would not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

General Plan Compliance and Basis for Recommendation

As described below, the proposed project is consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 and is, on balance, in conformity with the Objectives and Policies of the General Plan.

Note: General Plan Objectives are shown in **BOLD UPPER CASE** font; Policies are in **Bold** font; staff comments are in *italic* font.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 12

ESTABLISH THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO AS A MODEL FOR ENERGY MANAGEMENT.

Policy 12.3

Investigate and implement techniques to reduce municipal energy requirements.

OBJECTIVE 14

PROMOTE EFFECTIVE ENERGY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO MAINTAIN THE ECONOMIC VITALITY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.

Policy 14.5

Encourage use of integrated energy systems

The Project would facilitate continued operation of the Civic Center Steam Loop which, in conjunction with the district-scale steam distribution system owned and operated by ECSF, provides steam to Steam Loop Buildings for comfort heating and hot water. District-scale steam distribution systems are integrated energy systems which are in general more energy-efficient than building-scale heat and hot water systems.

Planning Code Section 101 Findings

Planning Code Section 101.1 establishes Eight Priority Policies and requires review of discretionary approvals and permits for consistency with said policies. The Project is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies as set forth in Planning Code Section 101.1 for the following reasons:

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 Project would have no effect on existing neighborhood-serving retail uses and on opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of neighborhood-serving retail.

2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods;

The Project would have no effect on housing or neighborhood character.

3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced;

The Project would have no effect on the City's supply of affordable housing.

4. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking;

The Project would have no effect on commuter traffic, MUNI transit service, streets, or 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 resident employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced;

The Project would have no effect on the industrial and service sectors and on future opportunities for resident employment or ownership in these sectors.

6. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake;

The Project would have no effect on City's preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

7. That the landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;

The project would facilitate continued provision of heat and hot water to landmarked and historical Steam Loop Buildings.

8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development;

The Project would provide an easement for existing Steam Loop infrastructure under Civic Center Plaza. It would have no effect on the City's parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas.

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