



GENERAL PLAN REFERRAL

March 22, 2022

Case No.: 2021-004847GPR
Block/Lot No.: 4852/001-022 and 877/001-004– 1236 Carroll Street, San Francisco, CA
Project Sponsor: City and County of San Francisco – Real Estate Division
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Recommended By: 
AnMarie Rodgers, Citywide Policy Director, for Rich Hillis, Director of Planning

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

Project Description

The City proposes to acquire the property at 1236 Carroll Avenue and construct a new fire-training facility that would be on two city blocks bounded by Carroll Avenue, Hawes Street, Armstrong Avenue, and Griffith Street. Bancroft Avenue, which bisects the project site between and parallel to Hawes and Griffith streets, would be vacated, and the parcels would be merged to form a contiguous site of 317,300 square feet (7.28 acres). Following acquisition of the property, the project sponsor would develop detailed plans for the project site and would seek project approvals for the proposed fire-training facility.

The proposed fire- training facility would provide necessary training facilities for effective firefighting, including live-fire training, classroom training, equipment training, and emergency medical services training; and consolidate and replace the fire department training facilities that are currently at 19th and Folsom streets and on Treasure Island.

The proposed fire-training facility would include the following **structures**:

- a three-story (50-foot-tall), approximately 70,000-square-foot fire-training and administration building for

classroom instruction and administrative functions;

- a one-story (50-foot-tall), approximately 27,000-square-foot apparatus building for apparatus training and storage and;
- a one-story (40-foot-tall), approximately 19,200-square-foot shop/maintenance building that would house metal and wood shops for building and maintaining training props.

The fire-training facility would also include the following **prop buildings**:

- A seven-story (110-foot-tall) training tower;
- A four-story (60-foot-tall) condo-apartment-style building; and
- Several structures and equipment up to 40 feet tall, including a Victorian house, a commercial prop burn room, a container burn room, a mock BART station, a vehicle fire prop, an apparatus training “hill” and other simulation props.

These General Plan findings address the site acquisition and street vacation aspects of this project. It is understood that later actions, such as rezoning to enable some of the proposed heights, will be required and subject to their own General Plan analysis.

Environmental Review

This project was recently subject to environmental review resulting in a Final Mitigated Negative Declaration - Case No. 2021-004847ENV.

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.

COMMUNITY SAFETY ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 2

BE PREPARED FOR THE ONSET OF DISASTER BY PROVIDING PUBLIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING ABOUT EARTHQUAKES AND OTHER NATURAL AND MAN-MADE DISASTERS, BY READYING THE CITY’S INFRASTRUCTURE, AND BY ENSURING THE NECESSARY COORDINATION IS IN PLACE FOR A READY RESPONSE.

Policy 2.7

Continue to expand the City’s fire department prevention and firefighting capability with sufficient personnel and training.

The Project involves upgrading existing and building new structures for staff training to address emergencies and environmental crisis and hazards. The project will increase the Fire Department capability to respond more quickly and effectively to a fire, earthquake, or other disaster.

OBJECTIVE 3

ESTABLISH STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF A DISASTER.

Policy 3.1

After an emergency, follow the mandates of the Emergency Response Plan and Citywide Earthquake Response Plan.

The proposed project promotes the update and maintenance of emergency procedures through staff training programs.

Policy 3.11

Ensure historic resources are protected in the aftermath of a disaster.

The proposed project promotes the protection of historic resources through public safety procedures.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 5

DEVELOPMENT OF A SYSTEM OF FIREHOUSES WHICH WILL MEET THE OPERATING REQUIREMENTS OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT IN PROVIDING FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES AND WHICH WILL BE IN HARMONY WITH RELATED PUBLIC SERVICE FACILITIES AND WITH ALL OTHER FEATURES AND FACILITIES OF LAND DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED FOR OTHER SECTIONS OF THE GENERAL PLAN.

The proposed project will update and modernize current Fire Department operations by providing necessary and upgraded training facilities for effective firefighting, including live-fire training, classroom training, equipment training, and emergency medical services training.

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

Policy 2.8

Maintain a strong presumption against the giving up of street areas for private ownership or use, or for construction of public buildings.

Policy 2.9

Review proposals for the giving up of street areas in terms of all the public values that streets afford.

While the proposal does include vacating a section of Bancroft Avenue that would result in the construction of a public facility, this segment of Bancroft is not improved, and is not a coherent part of a larger street or public realm network. The Urban Design Element states that street area should not be vacated if any of the public purposes described therein would be significantly violated. The criteria generally describe situations where public values of access, public use (i.e., streets as open space), or public functions (i.e. utility and fire access) would be compromised; or where value would be conveyed to private development without commensurate public benefit.

Here, the subject segment of Bancroft is unimproved and not well connected to the surrounding street network and does not provide through access to either vehicles or pedestrians. The only adjacent parcels that might rely on this segment of Bancroft in the future if it were to be fully improved would be those that are a part of the proposed fire training facility.

The Urban Design Element also provides criteria where such street vacation could be supported. These criteria address situations where the vacation is part of a larger assembly of lots that would improve the overall block pattern of the site; where such vacation is necessary for a significant public use that is a better use of the land than typical street uses; and would meet other objectives and policies of the General Plan. Here, the proposed fire-training facility is a high-priority for the City of San Francisco in its ongoing effort to improve public safety in the event of fires, earthquakes, and other disasters. The loss of this unimproved portion of Bancroft will enable the City to build a modern fire-training facility in a built context that is appropriate for such a facility. The loss of this segment of Bancroft will not adversely affect the street network and public access to it.

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 adverse effect on neighborhood-serving retail uses or opportunities for resident employment in or ownership of such businesses.

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 adverse effect on the City's housing stock or on neighborhood character.

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

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

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

The Project would 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 resident

employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced;

The Project would not negatively affect industrial and service sectors.

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

The Project would increase the City's ability to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake. The Project will construct a new fire-training facility to train fire fighters who are emergency responders in the event of emergencies. The Project would not only make the subject fire-training facility a better-equipped place in the event of an earthquake; it would also enhance those facilities' emergency responses, reducing the potential injuries that would likely be caused by earthquakes or fires in the Bay region.

7. That the landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;

This project will be constructed on vacant, underutilized land and no landmark or historic buildings will be affected.

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

This project will be constructed on vacant, underutilized land. Due to the topography, the project sits approximately 20 feet below the adjacent neighborhood development, thus vertical development of the project will not affect sunlight or vistas for any City-owned park or neighborhood.

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