



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

General Plan Referral

Date: October 31, 2016
Case No. Case No. 2016-009848GPR
101 First Street Sidewalk Widening

Block/Lot No.: 3720 / 009

Project Sponsor: Michael L. Abella
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Applicant: Anthony Librizzi
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Recommendation: Finding the project, on balance, is **in conformity** with the General Plan

Recommended By: 
John Rahaim, Director of Planning

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project site is located in the Transit Center District and consists of block/lot 3720/009 located at the southeast corner of Mission and First Street, bounded by Fremont Street to the east. The project proposes a new 63-story building with a roof height of 915'-6 with a decorative crown height of 1070'. The project consists of 1,090,937 square feet of office space, 9,823 square feet of retail space, 28,300 square feet of public open space, and 87,750 square feet of below grade parking.

The project is reconstructing sidewalk along the frontages including First Street, Mission Street, and Fremont Street. The sidewalk will be widened to 21 feet on First Street and 21 feet on Fremont Street. The Mission Street sidewalk will remain 10 feet wide, but does include a new bulbout at the southeast corner of First and Mission Street. The submittal is for a General Plan

Referral to recommend whether the Project is in conformity with the General Plan, pursuant to Section 4.105 of the Charter, and Section 2A.52 and 2A.53 of the Administrative Code.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project was fully evaluated in the Transit Center District Plan and Transit Tower EIR, certified by the Planning Commission on 5/24/12, Motion No. 18628, Case Nos. 2007.0558E and 2008.0789E.

GENERAL PLAN COMPLIANCE AND BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Project is consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 as described in the body of this letter and is, on balance, **in-conformity** with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 3

IMPROVE ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY TO OPEN SPACE.

POLICY 3.6

Maintain, restore, expand and fund the urban forest.

The Planning Department, in collaboration with the Department of Public Works, created a plan to promote San Francisco's urban forest with a focus on street trees. The Urban Forest Plan – Phase 1: Street Trees (2014) identifies policies and strategies to proactively manage, grow and protect the City's street tree population.

The proposed project will enhance the connectivity of green spaces throughout the district by planting additional street trees along First Street.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1

MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS FOR SAFE, CONVENIENT AND INEXPENSIVE TRAVEL WITHIN SAN FRANCISCO AND BETWEEN THE CITY AND OTHER PARTS OF THE REGION WHILE MAINTAINING THE HIGH QUALITY LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF THE BAY AREA.

POLICY 1.2

Ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians throughout the city.

Safety is a concern in the development and accommodation of any part of the transportation system, but safety for pedestrians (which includes disabled persons in wheelchairs and other ambulatory devices) should be given priority where conflicts exist with other modes of transportation. Even when the bulk of a trip is by transit, automobile or bicycle, at one point or another nearly every person traveling in San Francisco is a pedestrian.

The project will provide additional sidewalk space for pedestrians and those boarding/deboarding transits. This will increase space, alleviate sidewalk crowding, and will facilitate safer crossings by bulbing out into intersections and by offering places of refuge during crossing.

OBJECTIVE 15

ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVES TO THE AUTOMOBILE AND REDUCED TRAFFIC LEVELS ON RESIDENTIAL STREETS THAT SUFFER FROM EXCESSIVE TRAFFIC THROUGH THE MANAGEMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND FACILITIES.

POLICY 15.1

Discourage excessive automobile traffic on residential streets by incorporating traffic-calming treatments.

Such treatments may include signalization and signage changes that favor other modes of transportation, widened sidewalks, landscape strips, bicycle lanes or transit stops, bicycle-and-transit friendly speed bumps, or reduced traffic speeds.

This project will implement traffic calming treatments such as a bulb out on the corner of First and Mission Street, pedestrian refuges, and sidewalk extensions that will discourage fast-moving, and excessive traffic in residential neighborhoods.

OBJECTIVE 18

ESTABLISH A STREET HIERARCHY SYSTEM IN WHICH THE FUNCTION AND DESIGN OF EACH STREET ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE CHARACTER AND USE OF ADJACENT LAND.

POLICY 18.4

Discourage high-speed through traffic on local streets in residential areas through traffic 'calming' measures that are designed not to disrupt transit service or bicycle movement, including:

- Sidewalk bulbs and widenings at intersections and street entrances;
- Lane off-sets (chicanes) and traffic bumps;
- Narrowed traffic lanes with trees, landscaping and seating areas;
- Colored and/or textured sidewalks and crosswalks; and
- Median and intersection islands.

Sidewalk bulbs, pedestrian refuges, and corner sidewalk extensions will discourage high-speed traffic on local streets by reducing overall right-of-way width.

OBJECTIVE 21

DEVELOP TRANSIT AS THE PRIMARY MODE OF TRAVEL TO AND FROM DOWNTOWN AND ALL MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTERS WITHIN THE REGION.

POLICY 21.9

Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to transit facilities.

Pedestrian access to and from major destinations and the serving transit facility should be direct, uncomplicated, safe, accessible, and inviting. Bicyclists should be accommodated on regional and trunkline transit vehicles - including light rail vehicles - wherever feasible, and at stations through the provision of storage lockers and/or secured bicycle parking.

Pedestrian access to transit facilities will be improved via expanded sidewalk space at the transit stops along Mission and First where boarding/deboarding will be aided by more sidewalk space. Crowding of sidewalk adjacent to the Transit Center will be reduced and transit efficiency will potentially improve because of shorter dwell time.

OBJECTIVE 23

IMPROVE THE CITY'S PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION SYSTEM TO PROVIDE FOR EFFICIENT, PLEASANT, AND SAFE MOVEMENT.

POLICY 23.1

Provide sufficient movement space with a minimum of pedestrian congestion in accordance with a pedestrian street classification system.

Sidewalks should be sufficiently wide to comfortably carry existing and expected levels of pedestrians, and to provide for necessary pedestrian amenities and buffering from adjacent roadways. The need for these elements varies by the street context – sidewalk width should be based on the overall context and role of the street.

Sidewalk extensions at corners and a transit stop will provide additional space at crossings/transit stop and will eliminate potential crowding of the sidewalk.

POLICY 23.6

Ensure convenient and safe pedestrian crossings by minimizing the distance pedestrians must walk to cross a street.

Appropriate treatments may include widening sidewalks at corners to provide more pedestrian queuing space and shorter crosswalk distances, especially where streets are wide. Large pedestrian islands should be installed to provide pedestrians with a safe waiting area while crossing where traffic volumes are high and/or streets are unusually wide. Consideration

should be given to bicycle movement and the efficient operation of transit service in sidewalk widenings.

Sidewalk extensions at corners and pedestrian refuges will decrease the total crossing distance of an intersection and provide a safe waiting area respectively. Sidewalk extensions at corners also provide increased queuing area and greater corner visibility for pedestrians waiting to cross.

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 4

IMPROVEMENT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT TO INCREASE PERSONAL SAFETY, COMFORT, PRIDE AND OPPORTUNITY

POLICY 4.4

Design walkways and parking facilities to minimize danger to pedestrians.

Pedestrian walkways should be sharply delineated from traffic areas, and set apart where possible to provide a separate circulation system. Where necessary and practical, the separation should include landscaping and other barriers, and walkways should pass through the interiors of blocks. Walkways that cross streets should have pavement markings and good sight distances for motorists and pedestrians.

The sidewalk extensions and proposed bulbouts will help reduce danger to pedestrians on busy streets by calming traffic and allowing for more sidewalk area. Barriers will also be installed at the corner of First and Mission to avoid encroachments on sidewalks and increase safety for pedestrians.

TRANSIT CENTER DISTRICT PLAN

OBJECTIVE 3.1

MAKE WALKING A SAFE, PLEASANT, AND CONVENIENT MEANS OF MOVING ABOUT THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT

POLICY 3.2

Widen sidewalks to improve the pedestrian environment by providing space for necessary infrastructure, amenities and streetscape improvements.

The streets in the District, particularly key streets such as Mission Street, are generally barren of necessary streetscape infrastructure, including trees, landscaping, benches, pedestrian lighting, bicycle racks, waste receptacles, and other elements. Additional space is necessary for curbside circulation to accommodate these elements.

The proposed sidewalk extensions will allow for more room for sidewalk furniture, necessary streetscape infrastructure, and pedestrian circulation. The larger sidewalks will allow for comfortable circulation along major streets in the Transit Center in a busy pedestrian and transit oriented area.

POLICY 3.3

Facilitate pedestrian circulation by providing sidewalk widths that meet the needs of projected pedestrian volumes and provide a comfortable and safe walking environment.

Sidewalk and corner crowding can cause uncomfortable or unpleasant walking conditions: an inability to walk at a preferable speed to fit one's needs. Added sidewalk widths throughout the District will accommodate anticipated pedestrian traffic, allow for a coordinated program of streetscape amenities and improvements, as well as provide areas for sidewalk cafes and retail displays.

The enhanced sidewalk widths will provide adequate room for the increased volume of pedestrian activity adjacent to the Transit Center and major bus lines. The sidewalk widening will provide safer pedestrian conditions, especially at the corners of Mission and 1st, and Mission and Fremont.

PROPOSITION M FINDINGS – PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1

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

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:

The proposed 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.

This project does not propose any changes to retail or land uses. The proposed transit and pedestrian improvements would improve safety and accessibility for residents and employees of local businesses.

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

The Project would have no adverse effect on the City's housing stock. The new sidewalks will enhance the pedestrian experience and 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 not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.

The proposed sidewalk bulb-out at First and Mission Street and sidewalk widening will not adversely affect traffic. The Project would enhance Muni's ability to serve the neighborhood and 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 residential employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced.

The Project would not affect the existing economic base in this area.

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

The new sidewalk repair will enhance the public right-of-way where there are existing damaged sidewalks. The Project would not adversely affect achieving the greatest possible preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

7. That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.

The proposed project has no impact to landmarks and/or historic buildings.

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

The Project would have no adverse effect on parks and open space or their access to sunlight and vista.

RECOMMENDATION:	Finding the Project, on balance, in-conformity with the General Plan
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cc: Michael Abella, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping, San Francisco Public Works

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