

1 [Preparation of Findings to Reverse the Community Plan Evaluation – 655 Fourth Street]

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3 **Motion directing the Clerk of the Board to prepare findings reversing a Community Plan**  
4 **Evaluation determination by the Planning Department that a proposed project at 655**  
5 **Fourth Street is exempt from further environmental review under a Community Plan**  
6 **Evaluation.**

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8 WHEREAS, On June 11, 2019, the Planning Department issued a Community Plan  
9 Evaluation and an Initial Study (“environmental determination”), pursuant to the California  
10 Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the CEQA Guidelines, 14 Cal. Code of Reg.,  
11 Sections 15000 et seq., and Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code, finding  
12 that the proposed project at 655 Fourth Street, 280–290 Townsend Street, and 292–296  
13 Townsend Street (“Project”) is consistent with the development density established by zoning,  
14 community plan, and general plan policies in the Central South of Market (SoMa) Area Plan  
15 (the “Area Plan”) for the project site, for which a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report  
16 (the “PEIR”) was certified; and

17 WHEREAS, The project site is composed of seven lots (Assessor’s Parcel Block  
18 No. 3787, Lot Nos. 26, 28, 50, and 161-164); currently containing three buildings, an  
19 approximately 4,000-square-foot surface parking lot, and a 2,300-square-foot loading area;  
20 the project site is completely developed, has minimal landscaping, and has served largely  
21 commercial land uses; and

22 WHEREAS, Lot No. 26, in the northwest portion of the site, fronts onto Fourth Street  
23 and consists of one building built in 1947; the one-story portion of the building on the southern  
24 end of the lot is currently occupied by The Creamery—a café and restaurant; and

1           WHEREAS, A restaurant, gym, and several commercial office tenants occupy the rest  
2 of the building on the remainder of Lot No. 26. The building is 12 to 33 feet high and is not set  
3 back from the property line at the street front; and

4           WHEREAS, Lot No. 161 is a privately-owned driveway accessed via a 31-foot-wide  
5 curb cut along Townsend Street, which diagonally splits the project site between Lot No. 26  
6 and Lot No. 28. This driveway is approximately 275 feet long by 30 feet wide and is lined with  
7 approximately 30 trees. There is one larger tree on the project site located on Lot No. 161.  
8 Excluding the loading zone, there are 14 off-street parking spaces along Lot No. 161 on the  
9 southern portion of the project site. There are also 11 off-street parking spaces within Lot No.  
10 50, a surface parking lot. Lot No. 50 is accessed via a 12-foot-wide curb cut along Townsend  
11 Street; and

12           WHEREAS, One building, built in 1948, occupies Lot No. 28 in the southeastern  
13 portion of the site. The two-story portion fronting Townsend Street is occupied by HD  
14 Buttercup, a retail business. The one-story portion behind HD Buttercup is occupied by  
15 Bulthaup, a remodeling business, and is accessed from the surface parking lot that is Lot No.  
16 50 and the loading area that is part of Lot No. 161; and

17           WHEREAS, Lot Nos. 162–164 consist of one three-story building, built in 1996. The  
18 first floor is a commercial unit and the upper two floors are two separate residential units. Off-  
19 street parking for Lot Nos. 162, 163, and 164 is accessed via the 31-foot-wide curb cut on  
20 Townsend Street, and each lot has an easement for one parking space within Lot No. 161 and  
21 an easement for ingress and egress through Lot No. 161 to access the reserved parking  
22 spaces; and

23           WHEREAS, The northwest property line of the project site faces the vehicular access  
24 driveway for 601 Fourth Street; and

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1           WHEREAS, The Project would demolish the three existing buildings, associated  
2 surface parking lots, and vegetation on the project site, including street trees and other  
3 plantings; and

4           WHEREAS, The project would merge the seven existing lots and construct two new  
5 buildings containing approximately 1,004,000 square feet of residential area, 24,500 square  
6 feet of hotel area (38 hotel rooms), 21,900 square feet of office area, and approximately  
7 18,500 square feet of ground-floor retail use; and

8           WHEREAS, The residential portion of the proposed project would include  
9 approximately 960 dwelling units in a mix of 242 studios, 330 one-bedroom units, 351 two-  
10 bedroom units, and 37 three-bedroom condominiums; and

11           WHEREAS, Each building would have two towers: one of which would rise to a height  
12 of 425 feet aboveground (including rooftop appurtenances 25 feet above the highest occupied  
13 floor), and the second which would rise to a height of 370 feet aboveground (including 10 feet  
14 for rooftop appurtenances); and

15           WHEREAS, The proposed project would also include a 94,500-square-foot below-  
16 grade, four-level garage containing building amenities, a vehicle drop-off area, a loading dock,  
17 back of the house retail operations, refuse handling area, 276 car parking spaces, and other  
18 back-of-house features such as mechanical equipment required for operation and  
19 maintenance of the building; a 35-foot-wide curb cut on Townsend Street would provide two  
20 vehicle lanes and one two-way truck lane to access the vehicular ramp to the basement level;  
21 and

22           WHEREAS, The project proposes 540 class 1 bicycle parking stalls to be located in the  
23 basement and 81 class 2 bicycle parking stalls at grade. The project would include a number  
24 of wind reduction features: a porous façade on one of the towers; canopies installed on all  
25 four towers; a wind screen installed on the south side of Townsend Street near the

1 intersection of Townsend and Lusk streets; and onsite landscaping consisting of shrubs and  
2 deciduous trees; and

3 WHEREAS, The proposed project would require excavation to a maximum depth of  
4 approximately 55 feet below the ground surface for construction of the below-grade parking  
5 garage and building foundations, which would require the removal and disposal of  
6 approximately 142,000 cubic yards of soil; the proposed project would use concrete-framed  
7 buildings supported on a 12-foot-thick, steel-reinforced concrete mat foundation. No pile  
8 driving would be used for the project; and

9 WHEREAS, On, June 20, 2019, the Planning Commission adopted the environmental  
10 determination and approved the large project authorization for the project (Planning  
11 Commission Motion M-20470), which constituted the approval action under Chapter 31 of the  
12 Administrative Code; and

13 WHEREAS, By letter to the Clerk of the Board, dated July 22, 2019, Michael Cruz and  
14 Kevin Rudich on behalf of the 401 Fourth Street Coalition (“Appellant”), appealed the  
15 environmental determination; and

16 WHEREAS, The Planning Department’s Environmental Review Officer, by  
17 memorandum to the Clerk of the Board dated July 25, 2019, determined that the appeal had  
18 been timely filed; and

19 WHEREAS, On September 3, 2019, this Board held a duly noticed public hearing to  
20 consider the appeal of the environmental determination filed by Appellant; and

21 WHEREAS, Following the conclusion of the public hearing, the Board of Supervisors  
22 conditionally reversed the determination that the project did not require further environmental  
23 review subject to the adoption of written findings of the Board in support of such determination  
24 based on the written record before the Board of Supervisors as well as all of the testimony at  
25 the public hearing in support of and opposed to the appeal; and

1           WHEREAS, The written record and oral testimony in support of and opposed to the  
2 appeal and deliberation of the oral and written testimony at the public hearing before the  
3 Board of Supervisors by all parties and the public in support of and opposed to the appeal of  
4 the environmental determination is in the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors File No. 190826  
5 and is incorporated in this Motion as though set forth in its entirety; now, therefore, be it

6           MOVED, That this Board of Supervisors directs the Clerk of the Board to prepare the  
7 findings specifying the basis for its decision on the appeal of the environmental determination  
8 issued by the Planning Department for the Project.

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