



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Planning Commission Resolution

HEARING DATE: MARCH 26, 2015

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
**415.558.6378**

Fax:  
**415.558.6409**

Planning  
Information:  
**415.558.6377**

*Project Name:* **Amendments to the Rincon Hill Area Plan, a subplan within the San Francisco General Plan**  
*Case Number:* **2014.0925M**  
*Staff Contact:* Paul Chasan and  
[paul.chasan@sfgov.org](mailto:paul.chasan@sfgov.org)  
*Reviewed by:* Joshua Switzky  
joshua.switzky@sfgov.org, 415-575-6815

*Recommendation:* **Recommend Approval**

RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPT AMENDMENTS TO THE PLANNING CODE TO REFLECT ADOPTION OF THE RINCON HILL STREETScape PLAN; ADOPTING FINDINGS, INCLUDING ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS, PLANNING CODE SECTION 302 FINDINGS, AND FINDINGS OF CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN AND THE PRIORITY POLICIES OF PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.

### PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors adopted the Rincon Hill Plan in August of 2005; and,

WHEREAS, The Plan adopts numerous streetscape and traffic changes including, but not limited to: Increasing the sidewalk width on Spear Main, Beale, Fremont, First, and Harrison Streets; bicycle lanes on Beale and Fremont Streets; corner bulbs; and mid-blocks crosswalks on Spear, Main and Beale Streets; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors adopted the Rincon Hill Plan in August of 2005; and,

WHEREAS, The proposed changes have been considered and approved by the Rincon Hill Plan Environmental Impact Report in 2006; and,

WHEREAS, The Rincon Hill Plan converts a large number of vacant or underutilized parcels located within a five-minute walk from the financial district into a large number of housing units in mid-rise and high-rise development and that few locations in San Francisco Represent such a major opportunity; and,

WHEREAS, The Rincon Hill Plan is the culmination of extensive public planning that began in 2003, with more than 30 workshops, hearings and walking tours, input of the existing residents and business, advocates and other public agencies; including the Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) and that resulted in a plan that balances Rincon Hill's potential to provide much-needed housing with the design requirements of a livable neighborhood; and,

WHEREAS, The streetscape changes contemplated in the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan are necessary for the traffic and streetscape conversions articulated in the Rincon Hill Plan; were approved in the Rincon Hill Environmental Impact Report and were approved on January 26, 2006 by the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation (ISCOTT); and,

WHEREAS Policy 7.4 of the Rincon Hill Plan Area Plan calls on the city to “Pursue the adoption of the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan by all necessary agencies and the board of Supervisors...”, and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Department in partnership with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and the Department of Public Works led a robust public process engaging numerous community stakeholders to develop the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan from in 2006 to and has made held several follow-up meetings in the neighborhood between 2012 and 2014; and,

WHEREAS on May 30th of 2006, the MTA Board adopted the streetscape improvements identified in the Rincon Hill Area Plan and subsequently further articulated in the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan and under Resolution number 06-067, and

WHEREAS, on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 the Environmental Planning Division of the San Francisco Planning Department issued a Note to File to the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan finding the streetscape proposed bulb-outs supplemental added to the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan after it was initially drafted would result in not have a significant environmental impact; and

WHEREAS, on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 the Environmental Planning Division of the San Francisco Planning Department published a note to file finding the streetscape changes contemplated in the initial Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan EIR will not have any significant impact (see attachment); and,

WHEREAS, on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015, the MTA Board adopted Resolution Number 15-035, approving said revisions to the Draft Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan; and,

WHEREAS, on March 5<sup>th</sup> 2015, the Planning Commission initiated resolution number 19329 and on March 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 adopted resolution number 19342 initiating amendments to the San Francisco Planning Code reflecting the adoption of the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan; and

WHEREAS, on March 5<sup>th</sup> 2015, the Planning Commission initiated resolution number 19330 and on March 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 adopted resolution number 19343 initiating amendments to the San Francisco General Plan reflecting the adoption of the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan; and

**RESOLVED**, that the Planning Commission hereby recommends approval of the proposed General Plan amendment.

**MOVED**, that the Commission hereby *adopts* this Resolution to recommend approval of the draft Ordinance to the Board of Supervisors.

## **FINDINGS**

Having reviewed the materials identified in the preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

1. **General Plan Compliance.** This Resolution is consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

### **I. URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT (2010)**

#### **OBJECTIVE 1**

EMPHASIS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC PATTERN WHICH GIVES TO THE CITY AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS AN IMAGE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND A MEANS OF ORIENTATION.

#### **POLICY 1.5**

Emphasize the special nature of each district through distinctive landscaping and other features.

#### **POLICY 1.7**

Recognize the natural boundaries of districts, and promote connections between districts.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4**

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

#### **POLICY 4.1**

Protect residential areas from the noise, pollution and physical danger of excessive traffic.

#### **POLICY 4.10**

Encourage or require the provision of recreation space in private development.

#### **POLICY 4.11**

Make use of street space and other unused public areas for recreation, particularly in dense neighborhoods, such as those close to downtown, where land for traditional open spaces is more difficult to assemble.

#### **POLICY 4.12**

Install, promote and maintain landscaping in public and private areas.

#### **POLICY 4.13**

Improve pedestrian areas by providing human scale and interest.

#### **POLICY 4.14**

Remove and obscure distracting and cluttering elements.

**II. TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT (2010)**

**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 1.1**

Involve citizens in planning and developing transportation facilities and services, and in further defining objectives and policies as they relate to district plans and specific projects.

**POLICY 1.2**

Ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians throughout the city.

**POLICY 1.3**

Give priority to public transit and other alternatives to the private automobile as the means of meeting San Francisco's transportation needs, particularly those of commuters.

**POLICY 1.6**

Ensure choices among modes of travel and accommodate each mode when and where it is most appropriate.

**OBJECTIVE 2**

USE THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AS A MEANS FOR GUIDING DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT.

**POLICY 2.4**

Organize the transportation system to reinforce community identity, improve linkages among interrelated activities and provide focus for community activities.

**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.

**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.

**OBJECTIVE 23**

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

**POLICY 23.1**

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

**POLICY 23.2**

Widen sidewalks where intensive commercial, recreational, or institutional activity is present, sidewalks are congested, where sidewalks are less than adequately wide to provide appropriate pedestrian amenities, or where residential densities are high.

**POLICY 23.9**

Implement the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the city's curb ramp program to improve pedestrian access for all people.

**OBJECTIVE 24**

IMPROVE THE AMBIENCE OF THE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT.

**POLICY 24.3**

Install pedestrian-serving street furniture where appropriate.

**POLICY 24.5**

Where consistent with transportation needs, transform streets and alleys into neighborhood-serving open spaces or "living streets" by adding pocket parks in sidewalks or medians, especially in neighborhoods deficient in open space.

**OBJECTIVE 26**

CONSIDER THE SIDEWALK AREA AS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE CITYWIDE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM.

**POLICY 26.1**

Retain streets and alleys not required for traffic, or portions thereof, for through pedestrian circulation and open space use.

**POLICY 26.3**

Encourage pedestrian serving uses on the sidewalk.

**OBJECTIVE 27**

ENSURE THAT BICYCLES CAN BE USED SAFELY AND CONVENIENTLY AS A PRIMARY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION, AS WELL AS FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES.

**POLICY 27.1**

Expand and improve access for bicycles on city streets and develop a well-marked, comprehensive system of bike routes in San Francisco.

**POLICY 27.3**

Remove conflicts to bicyclists on all city streets.

**POLICY 27.6**

Accommodate bicycles on local and regional transit facilities and important regional transportation links wherever and whenever feasible.

**III. RINCON HILL AREA PLAN (2006)**

**4. RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**OBJECTIVE 4.5**

USE EXCESS STREET SPACE ON SPEAR, MAIN, AND BEALE STREETS FOR SIDEWALK WIDENINGS THAT PROVIDE USABLE OPEN SPACES AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES.

**5. STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION**

**OBJECTIVE 5.1**

CREATE SAFE AND PLEASANT PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS WITHIN THE RINCON HILL AREA, TO DOWNTOWN, AND TO THE BAY.

**OBJECTIVE 5.2**

WIDEN SIDEWALKS, REDUCE STREET WIDTHS, AND MAKE OTHER PEDESTRIAN AND STREET IMPROVEMENTS, WHILE RETAINING THE NECESSARY SPACE FOR TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS, PER THE RINCON HILL STREETScape PLAN.

**OBJECTIVE 5.3**

PRIORITIZE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY THROUGH STREET AND INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS, ESPECIALLY AT INTERSECTIONS ADJACENT TO FREEWAY RAMPS, AND INTERSECTIONS WITH A HISTORY OF VEHICLE/PEDESTRIAN COLLISIONS.

**OBJECTIVE 5.5**

MANAGE PARKING SUPPLY AND PRICING TO ENCOURAGE TRAVEL BY FOOT, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, AND BICYCLE.

**OBJECTIVE 5.6**

IMPROVE LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRAFFIC FLOWS AND TRANSIT MOVEMENTS BY SEPARATING BRIDGE-BOUND TRAFFIC FROM LOCAL LANES IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS.

**OBJECTIVE 5.7**

MAINTAIN THE POTENTIAL FOR A BAY BRIDGE BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN/MAINTENANCE PATH, AND ENSURE THAT ALL OPTIONS FOR THE PATH TOUCHDOWN AND ALIGNMENT ARE KEPT OPEN.

**OBJECTIVE 5.8**

ENCOURAGE STATE AGENCIES TO ALLOW THE RE-OPENING OF BEALE STREET UNDER THE BAY BRIDGE AS SOON AS SECURITY CONCERNS CAN BE MET.

**OBJECTIVE 5.9**

REQUIRE PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CREATION AND ON-GOING MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS OF SPECIAL STREETSCAPES THROUGH IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION, A COMMUNITY FACILITIES DISTRICT, AND/OR DEVELOPER FEES. POLICIES

**Policy 5.1**

Implement the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan.

**Policy 5.2**

Significantly widen sidewalks by removing a lane of traffic on Spear, Main and Beale Streets between Folsom and Bryant Streets per the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan in order to create new "Living Streets," with pocket park and plaza spaces for active and passive recreational use, decorative paving, lighting, seating, trees and other landscaping. See Figure 6.

**Policy 5.3**

Transform Folsom Street into a grand civic boulevard, per this plan and the Transbay Redevelopment Plan.

**Policy 5.4**

Widen sidewalks, narrow lanes and remove lanes, where feasible, on Harrison, First and Fremont Streets.

**Policy 5.5**

Separate bridge-bound traffic from local traffic and transit through physical design strategies such as planted medians.

**Policy 5.6**

Implement streetscape improvements on Guy Place and Lansing Street that prioritize pedestrian use for the entire right-of-way.

Mid-Block Pedestrian Pathways

**Policy 5.7**

Ensure the creation of a safe, inviting, and pleasant publicly accessible pedestrian/open space mid-block pathway through Assessors Blocks 3744-3748 from First Street to the Embarcadero by requiring new developments along the alignment of the proposed path to provide a publicly-accessible easement through their property.

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**Policy 7.1**

Require new development to implement portions of the streetscape plan adjacent to their development, and additional relevant in-kind contributions, as a condition of approval.

**Policy 7.4**

Pursue the adoption of the Rincon Hill Streetscape Plan by all necessary agencies and the Board of Supervisors consistent with this plan.

2. The Planning Commission finds from the facts presented that the public necessity, convenience and general welfare require the proposed amendments to the Planning Code as set forth in Section 302.



3. This Resolution is consistent with the eight General Plan priority policies set forth in Section 101.1 in that:

- A) The existing neighborhood-serving retail uses will be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses will be enhanced.

*The proposed Ordinance would not have a negative impact on neighborhood serving retail uses and will not impact opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of neighborhood-serving retail.*

- B) The existing housing and neighborhood character will be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods.

*The proposed Ordinance would not have a negative effect on housing or neighborhood character. The modifications proposed would impose minimal impact on the existing housing and neighborhood character.*

- C) The City's supply of affordable housing will be preserved and enhanced.

*The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on the City's supply of affordable housing. The ordinance provides a path for persons with a disability to remain in their homes.*

- D) The commuter traffic will not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.

*The proposed Ordinance would not impede Muni transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.*

- E) A diverse economic base will be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development. And future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors will be enhanced.

*The proposed Ordinance would not cause displacement of the industrial or service sectors due to office development, and future opportunities for resident employment or ownership in these sectors would not be impaired.*

- F) The City will achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

*The proposed Ordinance would not have an impact on City's preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.*

- G) That landmark and historic buildings will be preserved.

*The proposed Ordinance would not have a negative impact on the City's Landmarks and historic buildings as any new modifications would be added under the guidance of local law and policy protecting historic resources, when appropriate.*

- H) Parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas will be protected from development.

*The proposed Ordinance would not have an impact on the City's parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas.*

I hereby certify that the Planning Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Resolution on March 26<sup>th</sup> 2015.

Jonas Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES: *Fong, Wu, Antonini, Hillis, Johnson, Moore, Richards*

NAYS: *None*

ABSENT: *None*

ADOPTED: March 26, 2015