



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Executive Summary Approval of the Central SoMa Plan

HEARING DATE: MAY 10, 2018

Project Name: Central SoMa Plan: Approval of Amendments to the General Plan, Planning Code, Administrative Code, and Zoning Maps, and Adoption of the Implementation Program

Date: May 3, 2018

Record Number: 2011.1356EMTZU

Initiated By: Mayor Farrell and Supervisor Kim on February 27, 2018 (Planning Code and Administrative Code Amendments, Zoning Map Amendments)
Planning Commission on March 1, 2018 (General Plan amendments)

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Recommendation: **Approval with Modifications**

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SUMMARY

The San Francisco Planning Department is seeking to adopt and implement the Central SoMa Plan ("the Plan"). The Plan is the result of a multi-year public and cooperative interagency planning process that began in 2011. Central SoMa is a 230-acre area that sits adjacent to downtown, has excellent transit access, and contains numerous underdeveloped sites. As such, the neighborhood is well positioned to accommodate needed employment, housing, and visitor facilities in the core of the city and Bay Area region. It is also a neighborhood with an incredible history and a rich, ongoing, cultural heritage. As it grows and evolves over the next 25 years, Central SoMa has the opportunity to become a complete, sustainable, and vital neighborhood without losing what makes it special and unique today. The Central SoMa Plan contains the goals, objectives, and policies to guide this growth and evolution such that the results serve the best interests of San Francisco – in the present and the future. This includes a public benefits package of over \$2 billion to serve the needs of the neighborhood.

Adoption of the Plan will consist of numerous actions. These include approval of amendments to the General Plan, Planning Code, Administrative Code, and Zoning Map, as well as adoption of an Implementation Program. Together with actions related to certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report and adoption of CEQA Findings, these actions will constitute the Commission's approval of the Central SoMa Plan and its implementing mechanisms.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends that the Commission *approve with modifications* the proposed Ordinances and Implementation Program and adopt the attached Draft Resolutions to that effect.

PLAN BACKGROUND

The desire for a Central SoMa Plan began during the Eastern Neighborhoods planning process. In 2008 the City adopted the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, including new land use controls and proposed community improvements for the eastern part of the South of Market neighborhood (SoMa), as well as the Central Waterfront, Mission, and Showplace Square/Potrero Hill neighborhoods. At that time, the City determined that the development potential of the industrially zoned part of East SoMa, coupled with the improved transit provided by the Central Subway, necessitated a subsequent, focused planning process that took into account the city's growth needs and City and regional environmental goals. The Central SoMa Plan is that subsequent process.

Similarly, the Western SoMa Area Plan, adopted in 2013, explicitly recognized the need to increase development capacity near transit in Objective 1.5, which states that the City should "Support continued evaluation of land uses near major transit infrastructure in recognition of citywide and regional sustainable growth needs." The explanatory text in Objective 1.5 concludes that "The City must continue evaluating how it can best meet citywide and regional objectives to direct growth to transit-oriented locations and whether current controls are meeting identified needs." The Objective's implementing Policy 1.5.1 states that the City should "Continue to explore and re-examine land use controls east of 6th Street, including as part of any future evaluation along the 4th Street corridor." The Central SoMa Plan is intended to fulfill the Western SoMa Plan's Objective 1.5 and Policy 1.5.1.

The process of creating the Central SoMa Plan began in 2011. Since that time, the Planning Department released a draft Plan and commenced the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process in April 2013, released an Initial Study in February of 2014, released a revised Draft Plan and Implementation Strategy in August of 2016, and released the Draft Environmental Impact Report in December of 2016.

Throughout the process, the Central SoMa Plan has been developed based on robust public input, including ten public open houses; twelve public hearings at the Planning Commission; two public hearings at the Board of Supervisor's Land Use & Transportation Committee; additional hearings at the Historic Preservation Commission, Arts Commission, and Youth Commission; a "technical advisory committee" consisting of multiple City and regional agencies; a "storefront charrette" (where the Planning Department set up shop in a retail space in the neighborhood); two walking tours, led by community members; two community surveys; an online discussion board; meetings with over 30 of the neighborhoods groups and other community stakeholders; and thousands of individual meetings, phone calls, and emails with stakeholders.

The Central SoMa Plan Area runs from 2nd Street to 6th Street, Market Street to Townsend Street, exclusive of those areas that are part of the Downtown Plan that comprise much of the area north of Folsom Street (see "Plan Area", below). The vision of the Central SoMa Plan is to create a sustainable neighborhood by 2040, where the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Central SoMa Plan seeks to achieve sustainability in each of its aspects – social, economic, and environmental. The Plan's philosophy is to keep what is already successful about the neighborhood, and improve what is not. Utilizing the Plan's philosophy to achieve the Plan's vision will require implementing the following three strategies:

- Accommodate growth;
- Provide public benefits; and
- Respect and enhance neighborhood character.

Implementing the Plan's strategies will require addressing all the facets of a sustainable neighborhood. Doing so can be accomplished by meeting all of the Plan's eight Goals:

1. Accommodate a Substantial Amount of Jobs and Housing
2. Maintain the Diversity of Residents
3. Facilitate an Economically Diversified and Lively Jobs Center
4. Provide Safe and Convenient Transportation that Prioritizes Walking, Bicycling, and Transit
5. Offer an Abundance of Parks and Recreational Opportunities
6. Create an Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient Neighborhood
7. Preserve and Celebrate the Neighborhood's Cultural Heritage
8. Ensure that New Buildings Enhance the Character of the Neighborhood and the City

The implementation of the Plan would fulfill its vision, philosophy, and goals by:

- Accommodating development capacity for up to 33,000 jobs and 8,300 housing units by removing much of the area's industrially-protective zoning and increasing height limits on many of the area's parcels;
- Maintaining the diversity of residents by requiring that over 33% of new housing units are affordable to low- and moderate-income households and requiring that these new units are built in SoMa;
- Facilitating an economically diversified and lively jobs center by requiring most large sites to be jobs-oriented, by requiring production, distribution, and repair uses in many projects, and by allowing retail, hotels, and entertainment uses in much of the Plan Area;
- Providing safe and convenient transportation by funding capital projects that would improve conditions for people walking, bicycling, and taking transit;

- Offering an abundance of parks and recreational opportunities by funding the rehabilitation and construction of parks and recreation centers in the area and requiring large non-residential projects to provide publicly-accessible open space;
- Creating an environmentally sustainable and resilient neighborhood by requiring green roofs and use of non-greenhouse gas energy sources, while funding projects to improve air quality, provide biodiversity, and help manage stormwater;
- Preserving and celebrating the neighborhood's cultural heritage by helping fund the rehabilitation and maintenance of historic buildings and funding social programs for the neighborhood's existing residents and organizations; and
- Ensuring that new buildings enhance the character of the neighborhood and the city by implementing design controls that would generally help protect the neighborhood's mid-rise character and street fabric, create a strong street wall, and facilitate innovative yet contextual architecture.

PLAN ELEMENTS

This section discusses the information contained in the packet, including the key documents whose adoption or approval will constitute adoption of the Central SoMa Plan, as well as supplemental information to help convey the proposed changes. The packet is organized around items that require Commission action, as follows:

- Parts I – CEQA Findings
- Part II – General Plan Amendments Ordinance
- Part III – Planning Code and Administrative Code Amendments Ordinance
- Part IV – Zoning Map Amendments Ordinance
- Part V – Implementation Program

Full case reports detailing these are included in this package.

In addition to these elements, the Plan includes amendments to Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code designating new landmarks and buildings of significance in Central SoMa. These amendments were initiated and adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission on March 21 and April 18, respectively. Additionally, the Plan includes a proposed AB73 Housing Sustainability District, which is also scheduled to come to the Planning Commission on May 10th for your consideration.

The content of each section is briefly described below:

(I) CEQA Findings

Per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), prior to considering approval of the proposed Central SoMa Plan and related approval actions, the San Francisco Planning Commission must make and adopts the findings of fact and statement of overriding considerations and adopt recommendations regarding mitigation measures and alternatives

based on substantial evidence in the whole record. Exhibit I contains all of the information related to the proposed CEQA Findings, including (1) the case report, (2) the draft Resolution to make findings and a Statement of Overriding Considerations, (2A) the draft CEQA Findings, and (2B) the draft Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

(II) General Plan Amendments

The primary General Plan Amendment proposed is the creation of a Central SoMa Area Plan. This new Area Plan contains Goals, Objectives, and Policies for this area, as well as related contextual information. The General Plan Amendments also include amendments to the East SoMa Area Plan and Western SoMa Area Plan, reflecting that the creation of the Central SoMa Plan will require amendments to the boundaries of these other Plan Areas. Finally, the General Plan Amendments include various map updates and text amendments to update several Elements of the General Plan to reflect the specifics of the Central SoMa Plan. Exhibit II contains all of the information related to the proposed General Plan Amendments, including (1) the case report, (2) the draft Resolution to approve the Ordinance, (3) the draft Ordinance, (4) the draft Central SoMa Plan, (5) the draft updated Map of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, and (6) Changes to the Central SoMa Plan portion of the General Plan Amendments Draft Ordinance since Introduction.

(III) Planning Code and Administrative Code Amendments

The primary regulatory changes proposed in the Plan are reflected in proposed amendments to the Planning Code and Administrative Code, include changes to controls related to land use, density, urban form, open space, parking and loading, review procedures, and impact fees. Exhibit III contains all of the information related to the proposed Planning Code and Administrative Code Amendments, including (1) the case report, (2) the draft Resolution to approve the Ordinance, (3) the draft Ordinance, (4) a summary of Planning Code and Administrative Code amendments (5) Changes to the Planning Code and Administrative Code Amendments Draft Ordinance since Introduction, and (6) a memo with issues for Planning Commission consideration regarding the Planning Code and Administrative Code.

(IV) Zoning Map Amendments

The Zoning Map amendments reclassify properties as necessary throughout the Plan area to enable application of the Plan's policies via the Planning Code controls. The amendments include changes to zoning districts, special use districts, height limits, and bulk districts. Exhibit IV contains all of the information related to the proposed Zoning Map Amendments, including (1) the case report, (2) the draft Resolution to approve the Ordinance, (3) the draft Ordinance, (4) Expected Changes to the Zoning Map Amendments Draft Ordinance since Introduction, and (5) a memo with issues for Planning Commission consideration regarding the Zoning Map.

(V) Implementation Program

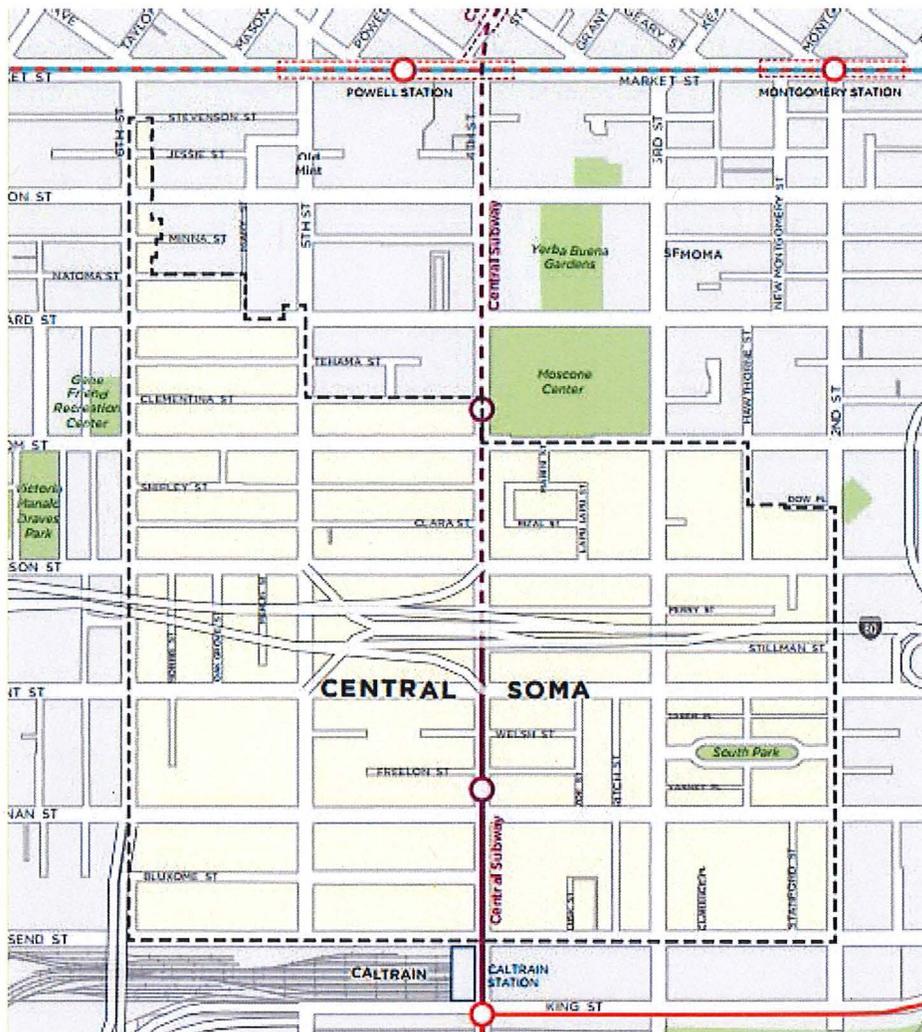
The Implementation Program contains several pieces, each intended to facilitate the Plan's implementation:

- An “Implementation Matrix” document conveying how each of the Plan’s policies would be implemented, including implementation measures, mechanisms, timelines, and lead agencies.
- A “Public Benefits Program” document containing the Plan’s proposed public benefits package, including a description of the range of infrastructure and services that will serve new growth anticipated under the Plan, a summary of how those benefits will be funded, and a description of how this program will be administered and monitored. The revenue allocations shown in the Public Benefits Program are for projection purposes only and represent proportional allocation to the various public improvements based on the revenues projected at the time of Plan adoption. Actual revenues will vary from these projections based on many factors, including the amount and timing of new development which cannot be predicted. The Board of Supervisors, with input from the Interagency Plan Implementation Committee and Eastern Neighborhoods Citizens Advisory Committee (or its successor), shall monitor and allocate revenues according to these proportional allocations based on actual revenues over time and the readiness of the various public improvements for expenditure. No improvement project listed in the Public Benefits Program is guaranteed to receive the absolute amounts shown in the Public Benefits Program. Allocations for all projects will be increased or decreased proportionally based on actual revenues received or revised projections over time
- A “Guide to Urban Design” document containing design guidance that is specific to Central SoMa in a way that complements and supplements the requirements of the Planning Code and citywide Urban Design Guidelines.
- A “Key Development Sites Guidelines” document that includes greater direction than available in the Planning Code for the development of the Plan Area’s large, underutilized development opportunity sites, in an effort to maximize public benefits and design quality.
- A “Key Streets Guidelines” document that includes greater policy direction for each of the major streets in the Plan Area.

Exhibit V contains all of the information related to the proposed Implementation Program, including (1) the case report, (2) the draft Resolution to approve, (3A) the draft Implementation Matrix, (3B) the draft Public Benefits Program, (3C) the draft Guide to Urban Design, (3D) the draft Key Development Site Guidelines, (3E) the draft Key Streets Guidance, (4) Changes to the Implementation Program since Introduction, and (5) a memo with issues for Planning Commission consideration regarding the Implementation Program.

PLAN AREA

The Central SoMa Plan Area runs from 2nd Street to 6th Street, Market Street to Townsend Street, exclusive of those areas that are part of the Downtown Plan or in the C-3 zoning districts. It is an “Eastern Neighborhoods Plan” comprised entirely of areas formerly part of the East SoMa Plan Area and Western SoMa Plan Area, whose boundaries will be adjusted accordingly. The Central SoMa Plan Area boundaries were created to include areas within easy walking distance (i.e., two blocks) of the Central Subway’s 4th Street alignment.



ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Department published the Draft Environmental Impact Report in December 2016 and the Response to Comments in March 2018. The Planning Commission will consider certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report on the Central SoMa Plan and adoption of CEQA findings on May 10, 2018. Subsequently the Planning Commission will consider approval of the Ordinances affiliated with the General Plan Amendments, Planning Code and Administrative Code Amendments, and Zoning Map Amendments, as well as the Implementation Program.