



GENERAL PLAN REFERRAL

13 September 2024

Case No.: 2024-007686GPR
Block/Lot No.: 1099/031
Project Sponsor: Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development
Applicant: Cindy Heavens – (628) 652-5831
cindy.heavens@sfgov.org
1 South Van Ness, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
Staff Contact: Danielle Ngo – (628) 652-7591
danielle.ngo@sfgov.org

Recommended By: 
Josh Switzky, Deputy Director of Citywide Policy for
Rich Hillis, Director of Planning

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

Please note that a General Plan Referral is a determination regarding the project's consistency with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 and conformity with the Objectives and Policies of the General Plan. This General Plan Referral is not a permit to commence any work or change occupancy. Permits from appropriate Departments must be secured before work is started or occupancy is changed.

Project Description

The Project is the renovation of Midtown Park Apartments ("Midtown"), a 140-unit multifamily rental housing development in Western Addition owned by the City and County of San Francisco (Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development ("MOHCD")). Midtown was built in 1962 and contains 140 units in six (6) buildings. The buildings have the following addresses and contain the number of units shown below:

- 1415 Scott Street. Building ("Bldg") #1 – 30 units. This is the primary address.
- 2040 O'Farrell. Bldg 2 – 22 units.
- 2060 O'Farrell. Bldg 3 – 22 units.
- 1450 Divisadero. Bldg 4 – 22 units.
- 2121 Geary. Bldg 5 – 22 units.

- 2141 Geary. Bldg 6 – 22 units.

In 2014 or thereafter, one (1) unit was turned into a property management office and community room, leaving 139 remaining units. There are laundry rooms in two (2) buildings. Of the 139 units, 105 units are currently occupied.

Since Midtown's initial construction, no major renovation has occurred, and major systems are failing. There are some key health and safety items in violation of the current code. With the lack of adequate fire safety, buildings are becoming difficult to insure. Failure of one system could be catastrophic with death, injury, and/or large displacement. Extremely low rents of existing tenants cause an annual operations gap, and this operation's gap is filled by MOHCD.

Over the next five years, MOHCD or its property management agent would like to repair or replace failing systems, depending on available funds. All six (6) buildings would undergo repairs or replacements of the following systems:

- Fire Alarm
- Fire Sprinklers
- Heaters/Hot Water
- Structural Upgrades
- Roof
- Windows
- Balcony
- Paint of Exterior and Interior Units

In addition, if funding allows, add a laundry room at one (1) building and another between two (2) buildings.

The City, working through MOHCD, has three goals it hopes to achieve with the repair and replacement plan for Midtown:

- 1) Bring Midtown to code and mitigate risk from health and safety issues;
- 2) Rent vacant units after repairs at or near market rates to eliminate ongoing City operating subsidy through MOHCD to Midtown; and,
- 3) Discourage, through lease enforcement, new tenants from installing and using in-unit washers and dryers.

The Project requires a General Plan Referral as it pertains to "project plans for public housing, or publicly assistant private housing in the City and County" (San Francisco Charter §4.105. Planning Commission).

Environmental Review

The project was determined to be categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 on 8/23/2024 (Planning Case No. 2024-007686PRJ).

General Plan Compliance and Basis for Recommendation

As described below, the 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.

HOUSING ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1.A

ENSURE HOUSING STABILITY AND HEALTHY HOMES

POLICY 2

Preserve affordability of existing subsidized housing, government-owned or cooperative-owned housing, or SRO hotel rooms where the affordability requirements are at risk or soon to expire.

The Project will preserve affordability of existing government-owned housing. Midtown is a multifamily rental housing development in Western Addition owned by the City and built in 1962. There are 105 out of 139 units that are currently occupied. After repairs and replacements, the vacant units will be rented at or near market rates to eliminate the annual operations gap and ongoing City operating subsidy through MOHCD to Midtown. This will support preservation of the currently occupied units at extremely low rents.

POLICY 39

Support the repair and rehabilitation of housing to ensure life safety, health, and well-being of residents, especially in Environmental Justice Communities, and to support sustainable building practices.

The Project will support the repair and rehabilitation of housing to ensure life safety, health, and well-being of residents. Since Midtown's initial construction in 1962, no major renovation has occurred, and major systems are failing. The failure of one system could be catastrophic to death, injury, and/or large displacement. Depending on available funds, MOHCD or its property management agent would repair or replace failing systems over five years, including: fire alarm; fire sprinklers; heaters/hot water; structural upgrades; roof; windows; balcony; and paint of exterior and interior units. These improvements address conditions of life safety, health, and well-being.

OBJECTIVE 5.B

ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, CLIMATE, AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

POLICY 39

Support the repair and rehabilitation of housing to ensure life safety, health, and well-being of residents, especially in Environmental Justice Communities, and to support sustainable building practices.

See Objective 1.A, Policy 39.

SAFETY & RESILIENCE ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 3.1.

EXISTING BUILDINGS. ENSURE RETROFITS AND RENOVATIONS TO EXISTING STRUCTURES INCREASE BUILDING LONGEVITY AND MEET CURRENT BEST PRACTICES TO PROTECT OCCUPANTS AND STRUCTURES.

POLICY 3.1.1.

Reduce the risks presented by City-owned structures and privately-owned buildings and provide assistance to vulnerable communities with limited adaptive capacity to reduce those risks.

The Project will reduce the risks presented by City-owned structures and provide assistance to vulnerable communities with limited adaptive capacity to reduce those risks. Midtown is a multifamily rental housing development in Western Addition owned by the City and built in 1962. There are 105 out of 139 units that are currently occupied, with extremely low rents for existing tenants. Since Midtown's initial construction, no major renovation has occurred, and major systems are failing. There are some key health and safety items in violation of the current code. The Project's repair and replacement plan aims to bring Midtown to code and mitigate risk to tenants from health and safety issues by addressing major systems such as structural upgrades, fire sprinklers, heaters/hot water, and roof.

POLICY 3.1.3.

Abate structural and non-structural hazards in City-owned properties.

The Project will abate structural and non-structural hazards in City-owned properties. Since Midtown's initial construction in 1962, no major renovation has occurred, and major systems are failing. There is lack of adequate fire safety, and so the buildings are becoming difficult to insure. There are some key health and safety items that are in violation of the current code. The Project has a repair and replacement plan over five years to address major systems, such as fire alarms, hot water, and structural upgrades, to mitigate risk from health and safety issues that could lead to death, injury, and/or large displacement.

POLICY 3.1.5.

Support the ability to shelter in place and provide help for vulnerable communities with limited adaptive capacity.

The Project will support the ability to shelter in place and provide help for vulnerable communities with limited adaptive capacity. Since Midtown's initial construction in 1962, no major renovation has occurred, and major systems are failing. There are some key health and safety items that are in violation of the current code. The Project has a repair and replacement plan over five years to address major systems, such as fire, water, and structural upgrades, to mitigate risk from health and safety issues. These improvements will support the existing tenants in the currently occupied units; mitigate risk of death, injury, and/or large displacement from system failure; and support the ability to shelter in place.

POLICY 3.1.9.

Reduce hazards from gas-fired appliances and gas lines, removing gas lines when possible, focusing on communities with concentrations of older housing stock.

The Project will reduce hazards from gas-fired appliances and gas lines, focusing on communities with concentrations of older housing stock. Since Midtown's initial construction in 1962, no major renovation has occurred, and major systems are failing. There are some key health and safety items that are in violation of the current code. There is lack of adequate fire safety, and so the buildings are becoming difficult to insure. Midtown has a repair and replacement plan for failing systems, such as fire alarm, fire sprinklers, and heaters/hot water, that will bring Midtown to code and mitigate risk from health and safety issues. These improvements will reduce hazards from gas-fired appliances and gas lines.

POLICY 3.1.10.

During building retrofits, follow a comprehensive retrofit strategy to provide support to vulnerable communities, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce the risk of property loss and damage during wildfires, flooding, and seismic hazards.

The Project is a repair and replacement plan for Midtown over five years. The retrofits of the buildings follow a comprehensive strategy to provide support to vulnerable communities, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce the risk of property loss and damage during wildfires, flooding, and seismic hazards. Since Midtown's initial construction in 1962, no major renovation has occurred, and major systems are failing. There are some key health and safety items that are in violation of the current code. With the lack of adequate fire safety, buildings are becoming difficult to insure. Depending on available funds, the repair and replacement plan will address failing systems such as: fire alarms, fire sprinklers, heaters/hot water, and structural upgrades. These improvements will reduce the risks from wildfires, flooding, and seismic hazards.

OBJECTIVE 6.1.

BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE. MAXIMIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES TO RESTORE AND REBUILD THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT WITH RESILIENCE TO ALL HAZARDS.

POLICY 6.1.1.

Support actions to mitigate the spread of homelessness pre-disaster and increase the likelihood that the City's stock of lowest-cost housing will survive post-disaster.

The Project will support actions to mitigate the spread of homelessness pre-disaster and increase the likelihood that the City's stock of lowest-cost housing will survive post-disaster. There are currently 105 units occupied at Midtown, out of 139 units, and some existing tenants have extremely low rents. Since Midtown's initial construction, no major renovation has occurred, and major systems are failing. Failure of one system could be catastrophic with death, injury, and/or large displacement. The Midtown's repair and replacement plan aims to bring Midtown to code and mitigate risk from health and safety issues. These improvements mitigate the risk of displacement and homelessness to existing tenants pre-disaster and increase the resilience of Midtown buildings to survive post-disaster.

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 effect on existing neighborhood-serving retail uses. There is no neighborhood-serving retail in the Midtown complex. The complex is an existing and occupied multifamily rental development.

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 not have a negative effect on the cultural and economic diversity of the neighborhood. Midtown is existing and occupied multifamily rental development. The Project intends to repair and/or replace major building systems at Midtown in a manner that preserves the cultural and economic diversity.

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

The Project is an existing and occupied multifamily rental development managed MOHCD. The Project intends to repair and/or replace major building systems in a manner that preserves and enhances the City's supply of affordable housing at Midtown.

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

The Project would not result in impeding MUNI transit service or overburdening streets and neighborhood parking. Midtown is an existing and occupied multifamily rental development. The Project intends to repair and/or replace major building systems in a manner that does not impede MUNI transit or overburden streets and 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 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. By repairing and/or replacing major building systems at Midtown, the diverse economic base of industrial and service sector workers—some of whom live at Midtown Park Apartments—are protected because they will not be forced to relocate if a building system fails. MOHCD, through its property owner, will require prevailing wages of any vendor that works on a repair or replacement to a major building system. Therefore, this approach enhances future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in the

sectors selected by the vendor to do repairs or replacement.

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

The Project would enhance the City's preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake. Constructed in 1962, Midtown has had no major renovation, and major systems are failing. The Project at Midtown intends to have structural repair that will bring the building up to current City codes, related to preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in the event of an earthquake.

7. That the landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;

The Project would not have a negative effect on the City's landmarks and historic buildings. While Midtown Park Apartments was constructed over 50 years ago, the planned repairs and/or major building systems replacement will not change the building façade. If MOHCD has funds available, the building exterior may be repainted with elastomeric paint to seal cracks and prevent spauling. The architectural history of Midtown Park Apartments will be maintained. There are no surrounding landmarks and historic buildings that are preserved.

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

The Project is an existing and occupied multifamily rental development that intends to repair and/or replace major building systems. The parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas would not be affected by the repairs and/or replacement of major building systems.

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