



PART II: **CENTRAL SOMA IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

DRAFT KEY DEVELOPMENT SITE GUIDELINES

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PURPOSE

The Central SoMa Plan Area contains a number of “key development sites” - large, underutilized development opportunities with lot areas ranging from 30,000 square feet to well over 100,000 square feet (see Figure 1). By providing greater direction to the development of these sites, the City has an opportunity to maximize public benefits and to ensure that their development directly delivers critical public benefits, such as:

- **Affordable housing**, per Plan Policy 2.3.1: “Set affordability requirements for new residential development at rates necessary to fulfill this objective;”
- **Protections and incentives for production, distribution, and repair space**, per Plan Policy 3.3.4: “Provide incentives to fund, build, and/or protect PDR;”
- **A large hotel serving the Convention Center**, per Plan Policy 3.5.1: “Allow hotels throughout the growth-oriented parts of the Plan Area;”
- **Pedestrian access**, per Plan Policy 4.1.9: “Expand the pedestrian network wherever possible through creation of new narrow streets, alleys, and mid-block connections;”
- **New public parks**, per Plan Policy 5.2.1: “Create a new public park in the highest growth portion of the Plan Area” and Plan Policy 5.2.2: “Create a new linear park along Bluxome Street between 4th and 5th Streets;”
- **A new public recreation center**, per Plan Policy 5.3.1: “Increase the amount of public recreation center space, including the creation of a new public recreation center;” and
- **Public plazas**, per Plan Policy 5.5.1: “Require new non-residential development and encourage

residential development to provide POPOS that address the needs of the community.”

Finding space on which to locate these kinds of public assets is tremendously difficult in a highly developed neighborhood like SoMa. But on these key development sites, the City can partner with the developer to address the unique design challenges that could constrain the creation of these amenities in exchange for their provision.

The draft Key Development Site Guidelines contained in this document are intended to help fulfill the opportunities for public benefits and address these design challenges. In doing so, these Guidelines are intended to help implement Objective 8.5 and Policy 8.5.1 of the Central SoMa Plan. Objective 8.5 states, “Ensure that large development sites are carefully designed to maximize public benefit,” whereas Policy 8.5.1 states, “Provide greater direction and flexibility for large development sites in return for improved design and additional public benefits.” The intent is for these guidelines to be further refined and codified with the adoption of the Central SoMa Plan, with additional refinement to occur as these projects seek entitlement from the City.

Figure 1

KEY DEVELOPMENT SITES

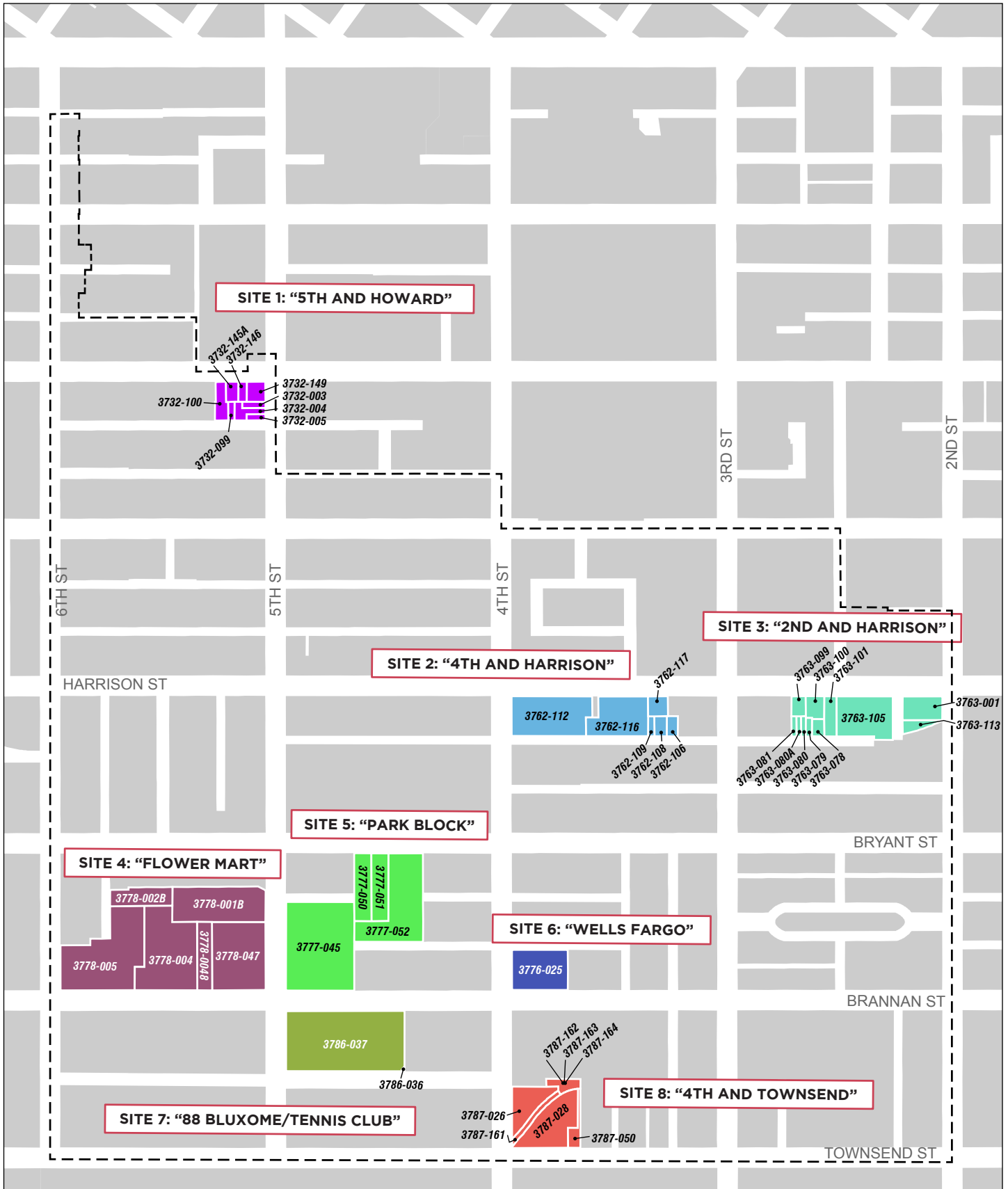


Figure 2
EXISTING ZONING

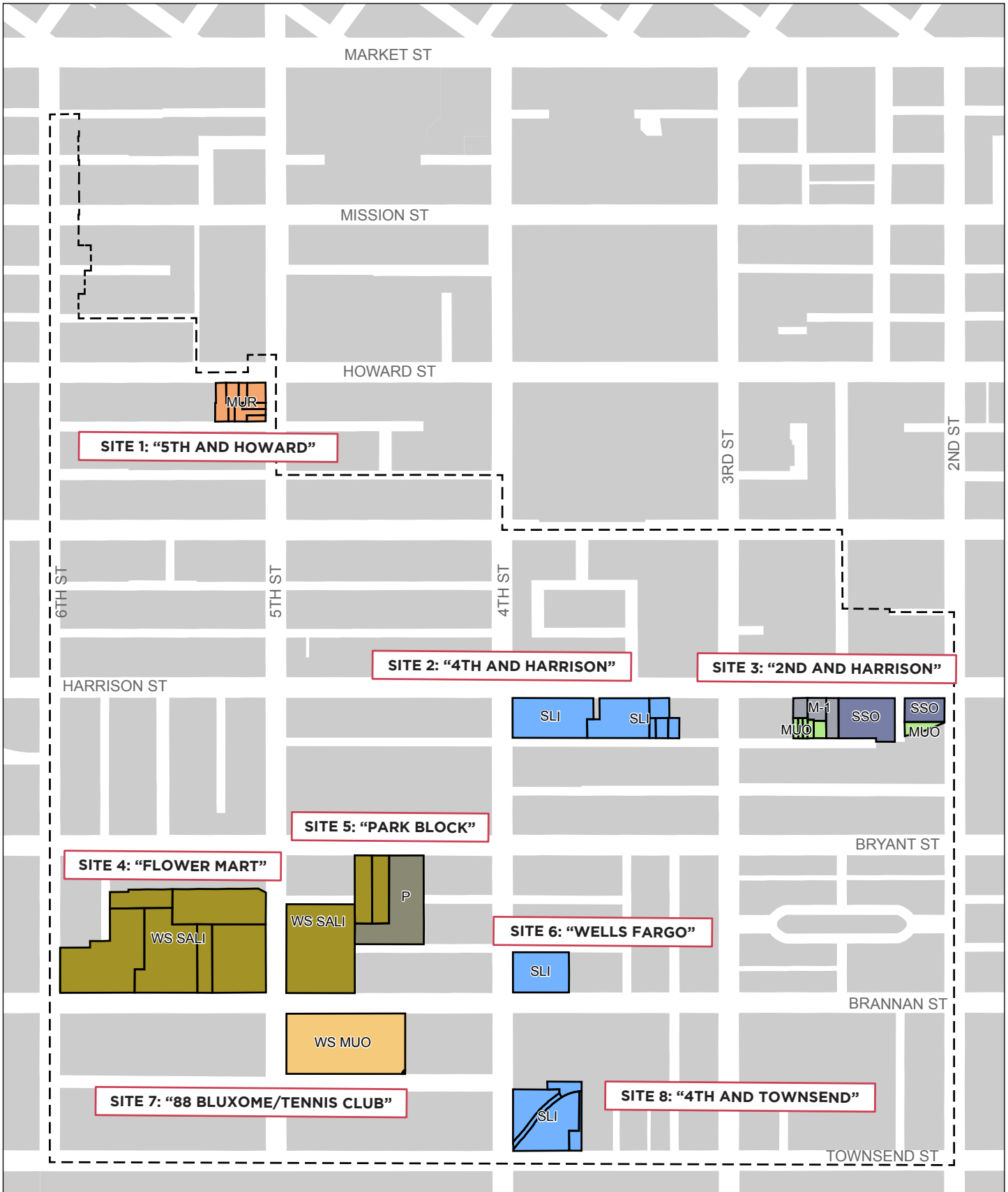


Figure 3

PROPOSED ZONING

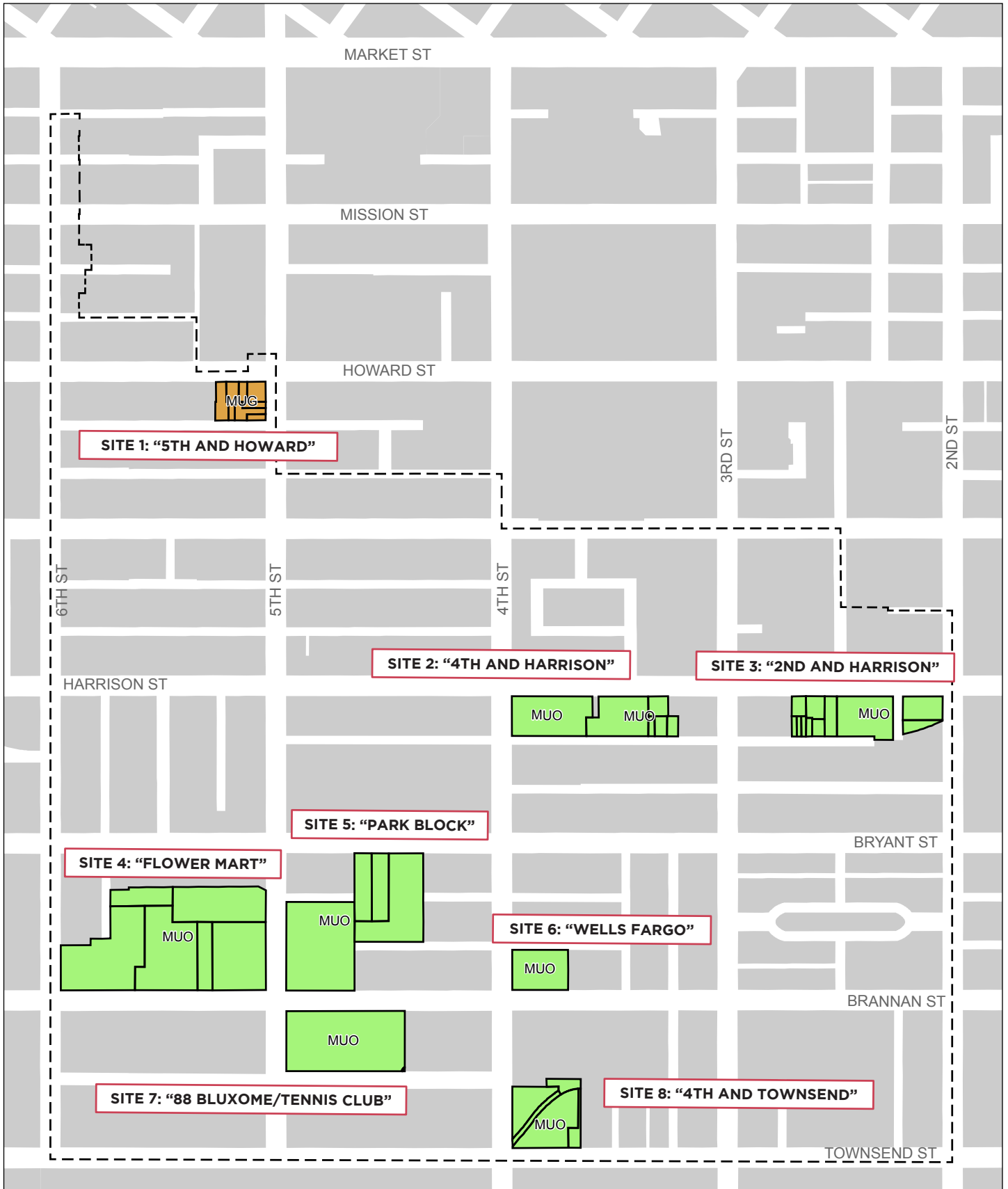


Figure 4

EXISTING HEIGHT LIMITS

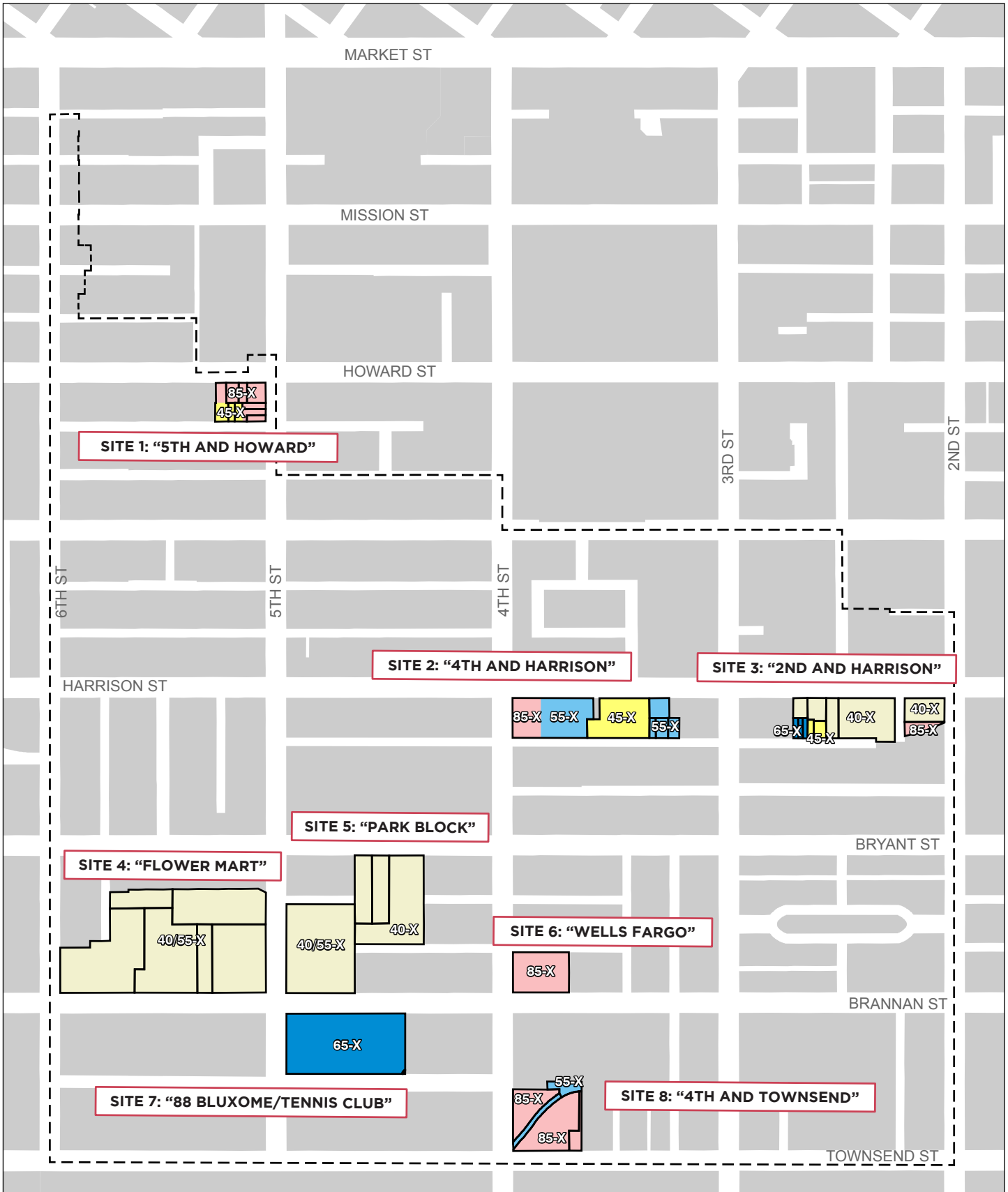
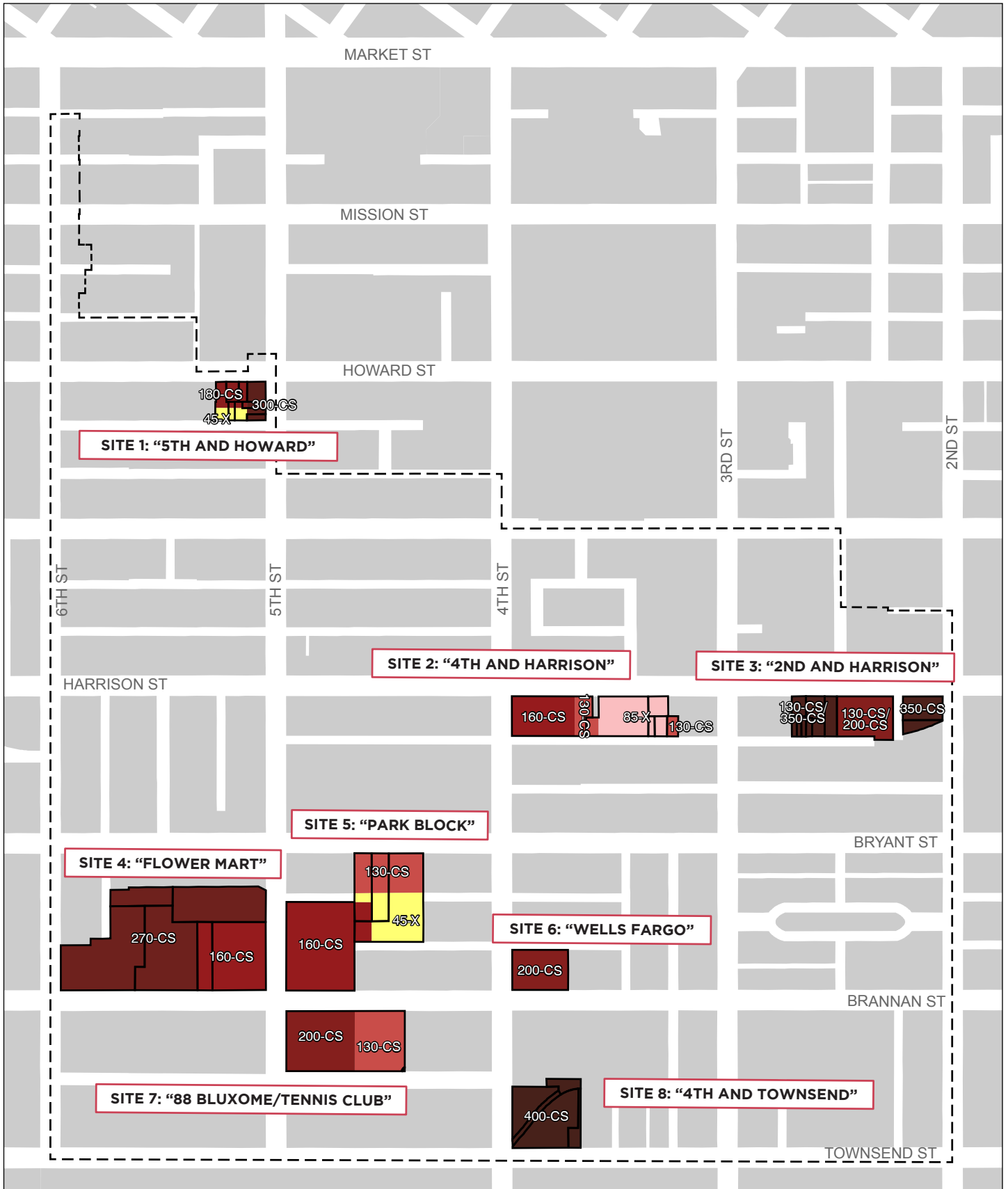


Figure 5

PROPOSED HEIGHT LIMITS



CONTENTS

The following information is contained for each key development site:

- The existing conditions on the site (as of August 2016);
- Its development potential, based on proposed zoning and height limit;
- The “Potential Public Benefits,” which, as the name implies, describes the public benefits that could be provided on the site that are not otherwise required by the Plan, tailored to the unique potential of the site;
- The “Potential Flexibility,” which describes the potential exceptions from the Plan’s Implementation Measures that may be necessary to achieve the increased public benefits, tailored to the unique circumstances of each site and of provision of the potential public benefits; and
- The “Design Guidelines,” which describe site-specific strategies to best implement the Plan’s policies where such explicit direction is not already given by the Plan.

SITE 1: “5TH AND HOWARD”

Existing Conditions

The 31,000 square foot site currently contains a large surface parking lot covering most of its area. It also includes two small two-story commercial buildings, one fronting Howard Street with parking in the rear and one extending from Howard Street to Tehama Street.

Development Potential

Based on the proposed height, bulk and zoning parameters, there is potential for approximately four to five hundred thousand square feet of total development at this site across all uses, including any office, residential, retail, hotel, and PDR on the site. This site is currently under the ownership of a non-profit housing development organization, and the expected development on the site would consist of a residential project with a very high percentage of affordable housing.

Potential Public Benefits

This site has the potential to provide a substantial amount of affordable housing, approximately 400 housing units, at least 2/3 of which would be affordable to very low, low, and moderate income San Franciscans. This would greatly exceed the percentage of below market rate housing otherwise required for the site (as contained in Part C of the Central SoMa Implementation Strategy, “Requirements for New Development”).

Potential Flexibility

Height

The site could contain two buildings – one of 300 feet and one of 180 feet. To maximize affordable housing units, the Plan could allow the 180-foot building to utilize the height to be treated as a mid-rise building rather than a tower (per Implementation Measure 8.5.1.2), in which case it would be allowed to have floor plates larger than 12,000 square feet and be within 30 feet of the adjacent tower.

Massing

Where buildings are taller than 160 feet, the Plan requires a 15-foot setback along all property lines at a height of 85 feet (per Implementation Measure 8.3.4.2). To maximize affordable housing units, the Plan could allow a partial reduction this setback requirement. However, at that height, design techniques including articulation (and not simply materiality and surface treatments) must be used to distinguish the streetwall podium from the tower. The Plan could also modify the apparent mass reduction requirement (per Implementation Measure 8.3.3.1) along Howard Street for the 180-foot building.

Design Guidelines

Parking and Loading Access

To minimize conflicts on Howard and 5th Streets, any parking and loading for provided on this site shall be accessed off of Tehama Street.

SITE 2: “4TH AND HARRISON”

Existing Conditions

The 102,000 square foot site currently contains four single-story buildings, including automobile parking for commuters and other non-residential uses.

Development Potential

Based on the proposed height, bulk and zoning parameters, including requirements for mid-block alleys, there is potential for approximately one million square feet of total development at this site across all uses, including any office, residential, retail, hotel, and PDR on the site.

Potential Public Benefits

Because of its large size, the site has the potential to provide space for one or more of the following as described further below: 1) an affordable housing site, 2) affordable space for production, distribution, and repair, 3) a public recreation center.

Affordable Housing Site

This site contains the potential for dedicating a portion of the site for a 100% affordable housing development while still including a large footprint for a substantial commercial development. Should this site yield an affordable housing site, the preferred location would be interior to the block facing Harrison Street, with a size of between 15,000 – 30,000 square feet (which is the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development’s preferred size for affordable housing developments).

Production, Distribution, and Repair

Any proposed office building on this site would be required to provide PDR space (per Implementation Measure 3.3.3.1). While the City cannot require that this

space be subsidized as part of the Plan, the project sponsor could provide affordable rents to through a development agreement or other mechanism.

Public Recreation Center

Because of its large size and development potential, this site contains the potential to include the new public recreation center being sought by the City. Such a recreation center could be stand-alone, or for purposes of site efficiency, incorporated into the affordable housing site or a proposed office development. Any proposed recreation center should coordinate the amenities and offerings with those available at the Gene Friend Recreation Center located at 6th and Folsom Streets.

Potential Flexibility

Height

If providing on-site affordable housing and/or a recreation center, the Plan could allow up to 25 feet of additional height on the buildings on the site (per Implementation Measure 8.5.1.2).

Massing

The Plan’s “skyplane” requirements mandate mass reduction from 50-80% along street-facing property lines (per Implementation Measure 8.3.3.1). If required to provide on-site affordable housing and/or a recreation center without diminishing overall project development potential, the Plan could allow a reduction of the “skyplane” requirements along some combination of Harrison Street and 4th Street. This reduction would be designed to shift the building mass in a manner that emphasizes the corner of 4th and Harrison.

Design Guidelines

Mid-Block Connections

Per Planning Code Section 270.2, the site will be required to provide a mid-block connection between Harrison and Perry Streets. The mid-block connection should be located in the middle-third of the block.

Pedestrian Experience under I-80

Current pedestrian conditions along 4th Street under I-80 along could be improved in a number of ways to create a safer, more engaging environment. The project could provide or contribute to public art, lighting and other improvements in coordination with the City.

Parking and Loading Access

Any parking and loading provided shall be accessed off of Perry Street and/or the new mid-block alley.

Privately-owned public open space (POPOS)

New development is required to provide POPOS, on-site or within 900 feet of the project. A good location for this project's POPOS is off-site under the I-80 freeway, on the west side of 4th Street, where it could serve to activate the street (in keeping with Implementation Measures 4.1.10.1 and 5.3.2.1). If provided on-site, the project's POPOS should be oriented towards Harrison Street or a courtyard that is well connected to the surrounding streets.

SITE 3: “2ND AND HARRISON”

Existing Conditions

The site currently contains five buildings. There is a four story, 65,000 square foot commercial building on Harrison Street between 2nd Street and Vassar Place. To the west of Vassar Place, covering the full lot from Harrison Street to Perry Street, is a five story, 150,000 square foot historically significant commercial building. West of that building are three two-story commercial buildings fronting Harrison Street with parking lots fronting Perry Street.

Development Potential

Based on the proposed height, bulk and zoning parameters, there is potential for approximately one million square feet of total development at this site across all uses, including any office, residential, retail, hotel, and PDR on the site.

Potential Public Benefits

As a large site, the site has the potential to deliver one or more of the following as described further below: 1) increased affordable housing, 2) affordable space for production, distribution, and repair, 3) a large hotel.

Affordable Housing Site

The collection of parcels west of the site’s historic building has been proposed for a residential tower. With additional development potential, the site could potentially exceed the affordability levels required by the Plan (as contained in Part C of the Implementation Strategy, “Requirements for New Development”).

Production, Distribution, and Repair

Any proposed office building on this site would be required to provide PDR space (per Implementation Measure 3.3.3.1). While the City cannot require that this

space be subsidized as part of the Plan, the project sponsor could provide affordable rents to through a development agreement or other mechanism.

Large Hotel

The City is seeking large hotels (500 rooms or more) in the proximity of the Moscone Convention Center (as discussed in Implementation Measure 3.5.1.1). This site could accommodate such a hotel.

Potential Flexibility

Height

The Plan contains two potential height limits for this key development site – a lower height and a higher height that could only be achieved through provision of the affordable housing and large hotel described above. This would include up to 200 feet on the Lot 105 and 350 feet on the collection of parcels to its west.

Massing

The Plan’s tower controls establish a maximum floorplate of 12,000 square feet for hotels (per Implementation Measure 8.3.4.2) and a minimum distance of 115 feet between any two towers (per Implementation Measure 8.3.3.4). Achieving the City’s desired minimum number of hotel rooms on-site could require the hotel tower to exceed the Plan’s proposed maximum floor size and dimensions, as well as its minimum tower separation. However, such a tower would be required to be set back on the site such that it is no more visible from the north side of Harrison Street than would be otherwise allowed a building of 160 feet.

Privately-owned public open space (POPOS)

The Plan's POPOS requirements state that the development's POPOS should be open to the sky (per Implementation Measure 5.5.1.1). However, the location of the site adjacent to the freeway is not highly conducive to an outdoor POPOS. Simultaneously, a use that activates 2nd Street for pedestrians is very important along that busy street. As such, the Plan could allow an exception to the requirement that the POPOS be open to the sky, and instead provide an enclosed POPOS, as long as it is at sidewalk grade and has a clear ceiling height of at least 25 feet and meets other standards for design and performance.

Lot Consolidation

To maintain historic neighborhood character, the Plan bans consolidation of lots containing buildings with historic or neighborhood-character buildings (per Implementation Measure 7.6.1.1). As shown in Plan Figure 7.2, several parcels fronting Harrison and 2nd Streets would not be allowed to consolidate with other parcels under this provision. However, on this large site, this requirement may impact the ability to achieve both public benefits and superior design and potential for public benefits. Therefore, the Plan could allow the project to consolidate these lots.

Design Guidelines

Mid-Block Connections

The development site has the potential to add a portion of Lot 112. If this occurs, the development should connect Vassar Place all the way from Harrison Street to Perry Street. However, a second mid-block connection in addition to Vassar Place is unlikely to provide an important pedestrian route, given the

availability of Vassar Street and the lack of a mid-block connection south of Perry Street, and could diminish from the street wall along Harrison Street. Therefore, the project may not be required to develop a second mid-block connection.

Pedestrian Experience under I-80

Current pedestrian conditions along 2nd and 3rd Streets under I-80 along could be improved in a number of ways to create a safer, more engaging environment. The project could provide or contribute to public art, lighting and other improvements in coordination with the City.

Parking and Loading Access

Parking and loading should be provided off of Perry Street or Vassar Place, but not 2nd Street or Harrison Street.

SITE 4: “FLOWER MART”

Existing Conditions

The site currently contains a large wholesale flower mart consisting of single-story warehouses, smaller shops, parking, and ancillary facilities. Additionally, there is a surface parking lot at the corner of 5th and Brannan that has been used to store utility vehicles.

Development Potential

Based on the proposed height, bulk and zoning parameters, including requirements for mid-block alleys, there is potential for at least two million square feet of total development at this site across all uses, including any office, residential, retail, hotel, and PDR on the site.

Potential Public Benefits

As a large collection of parcels, the site has the potential to deliver one or more of the following as described further below: 1) a replacement Flower Mart at subsidized rents, 2) an affordable housing site.

Flower Mart

Any proposed office building on this site would be required to provide PDR space (per Implementation Measure 3.3.3.1). It is important that such space be provided for current Flower Mart tenants as well as future operators, and that the facility is provided at affordable rents to ensure their longevity and financial success. The City and the project sponsor are considering a development agreement to ensure that this occurs.

Affordable Housing Site

Current plans for the site do not contemplate the inclusion of housing, due to potential conflicts with operations of the Flower Mart. However, if

such conflicts were mitigatable, and housing were contemplated on the site, such housing could also provide space for on-site affordability. The large size of the site could enable the potential for a 100% affordable housing development of 15,000 – 30,000 square feet, potentially at the corner of 6th and Brannan, while still including a substantial commercial development.

Potential Flexibility

Massing

The site design is driven by the Flower Mart’s need for a continuous ground floor operation of almost three acres. Given this consideration, the City could allow the following exceptions to skyline (per Implementation Measure 8.3.3.1), tower separation (per Implementation Measure 8.3.3.4), tower bulk (per Implementation Measure 8.3.4.2), setback requirements (per Implementation Measure 8.3.4.2), and building length (per Implementation Measure 8.5.2.2):

- The potential for the building at the corner of 5th and Brannan to have its 15-foot setback would occur up to a height of 100 feet rather than 85 feet;
- The “mid-rise” portion of the Flower Mart building to go to 200 feet rather than 160 feet, provided this increase is only located internally to the block along the mid-block connection created by the project;
- A reduced setback at 85 feet along 5th Street for a small percentage of the building;
- A waiver of the reduction in the bulk reduction in the top 1/3 of the tower;
- An ability to exceed the maximum building length of 300 feet if the project still contains architectural

mass breaks (as required in Planning Code Section 270.1) and is largely permeable and open to the elements at the ground floor

PDR Space

To ensure no net loss of PDR due to the Plan, the Plan proposes 100 percent replacement of PDR space in areas being rezoned from SALI to PDR (per Implementation Measure 3.3.3.1). However, by increasing the efficiency of the current Flower Mart, it is possible to have the same amount of businesses and workers on a smaller footprint. As such, the Plan could allow an exception to the 100 percent replacement requirement.

Lot Consolidation

To maintain historic neighborhood character, the Plan bans consolidation of lots containing buildings with historic or neighborhood-character buildings (per Implementation Measure 7.6.1.1). As shown in Plan Figure 7.2, the site parcels fronting both 5th and 6th Streets that would not be allowed to consolidate with other parcels. On this large site, this requirement runs counter to the ability to achieve superior design and potential for public benefits. Therefore, the Plan could allow the project to consolidate these lots.

Design Guidelines

Mid-Block Connections

Per Planning Code Section 270.2, the site will be required to provide multiple mid-block connections. These should be utilized to create an alley network on this block – one of the few in SoMa without one. This should include an east-west connection through the entire block, potentially as an extension of Freelon Street. This should also include a north-south

connection from Brannan Street to the east-west connection.

Pedestrian Experience under I-80

Current pedestrian conditions along 5th Street under I-80 along could be improved in a number of ways to create a safer, more engaging environment. The project could provide or contribute to public art, lighting or other improvements in coordination with the City.

Parking and Loading Access

Parking and loading should be provided off of an existing or new alley. Given the size and industrial nature of this site, it may require multiple parking access points.

Privately-owned public open space (POPOS)

Due to the site's size, there are multiple ways to meet the intent of the POPOS requirement. This could include pedestrianizing a large portion of the required mid-block connections. This could also include a large centralized public space on the site. Any such space should be oriented to maximize sunshine.

Ground Floor Activation

Presuming the replacement Flower Mart is at the ground floor, it will be important to ensure that the facility is designed to support activation at this level during the afternoon and evening hours when the Flower Mart typically has no to low activity. The portion of the building fronting POPOS should be lined with active commercial and/or community uses that serve the local population into the evenings and weekends.

SITE 5: “PARK BLOCK”

Existing Conditions

The site includes a nearly 100,000 square foot parcel (Lot 045) fronting Brannan and 5th Streets that includes a two-story building of approximately 40,000 square feet that formerly was a San Francisco Chronicle printing plant (now partially used for animal care), as well as a large parking lot. The site includes three parcels fronting Brannan Street, including a 60,000 square foot “L” shaped parcel (Lot 052) currently owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) and used primarily for open air storage of light poles. The other two lots are each about 19,000 square feet and contain low-rise industrial structures; one (Lot 051) contains a one-story auto body shop and the other (Lot 050) is used for additional storage by the SFPUC.

Development Potential

Based on the proposed height, bulk and zoning parameters, including requirements for mid-block alleys, there is potential for approximately one million square feet of total development at this site across all uses, including any office, residential, retail, hotel, and PDR on the site.

Potential Public Benefits

As a large collection of parcels, the site has the potential to deliver one or more of the following as described further below: 1) a public park, 2) an affordable housing site, 3) affordable space for production, distribution, and repair.

Public Park

The Central SoMa Plan has identified this site as the preferred location for a new public park (as discussed in Implementation Measure 5.2.2.1). The potential

park on this site could be up to an acre in size (~43,000 square feet), with a minimum desirable size of approximately three-quarters of an acre (~32,000 square feet). If located on the interior to this typical large SoMa block, it would be protected from noise and traffic by its location and could be accessed by up to six public streets based on implementation of the design recommendations discussed below. Given the limited opportunities to identify a site for a park of this size, the creation of this park is a very high priority of the Plan.

Affordable Housing Site

This site contains the potential for dedicating a portion of the site (between 15,000 – 30,000 square feet) for a 100% affordable housing development while still including a large footprint for a substantial commercial development. Should this site yield an affordable housing site, the preferred location would include a significant frontage facing the proposed park, which would directly benefit the residents and help provide “eyes” on the park around the clock throughout the week, in addition to that provided by the new adjacent commercial buildings, as well as ensuring a diversity of uses fronting the park.

Production, Distribution, and Repair

Any proposed office building on this site would be required to provide PDR space (per Implementation Measure 3.3.3.1). While the City cannot require that this space be subsidized as part of the Plan, the project sponsor could provide affordable rents to through a development agreement or other mechanism.

Potential Flexibility

Height

If providing a public park and/or on-site affordable housing, the Plan could allow up to 25 feet of additional height on the buildings on the site (per Implementation Measure 8.5.1.2).

Massing

The Plan's "skyplane" requirements mandate mass reduction from 50-80% along street-facing property lines (per Implementation Measure 8.3.3.1). Recognizing that the proposed park substantially reduces the site's development potential, the Plan could allow the "skyplane" requirements to be reduced on this site, as viewed from Brannan, 5th, Bryant, and Welsh Streets. This reduction would shift the building mass in a manner that increases sun access to the park by moving it towards the corner of 5th and Brannan, towards Welsh Street, and towards Bryant. The buildings would still need to establish a strong streetwall of 65 feet to 85 feet along the major streets, step back substantially above that height, and use architectural techniques to render the upper portion deferential to the lower portion.

Design Guidelines

Mid-Block Connections

The new mid-block connections required on this site should connect and extend the existing dead end alleys directly to the public open space, and increase the pedestrian permeability through the interior of this block, as follows:

1. *Connect the two ends of Welsh Street:* This alley would provide east-west access through the block and remove two dead-end conditions. This alley

should follow the current alignment of Welsh Street alignment.

2. *Connect Freelon Street to 5th Street:* This alley would provide east-west access through the block and remove a dead-end condition.
3. *Connect Freelon Street to Brannan Street:* This connection should provide direct access to the proposed park (discussed above) from Brannan Street. The intersection of this mid-block connection with Brannan Street should be located as far to the east as possible, in order to effectively reduce the block length, provide most direct alignment to the park, and most closely align with both a proposed mid-block pedestrian crossing on Brannan Street and with a required mid-block connection on block 3786 ("88 Bluxome/Tennis Club" site).
4. *Connect Bryant Street to Welsh Street:* This connection should provide direct access to the proposed park from Bryant Street.

Pedestrian Experience under I-80

Current pedestrian conditions along 5th Street under I-80 along could be improved in a number of ways to create a safer, more engaging environment. The project could contribute to this improvement in coordination with the City.

Parking and Loading Access

Any parking and loading provided shall be designed to minimize conflicts with the use of and access to the public park.

Privately-owned public open space (POPOS)

As required by the Plan, the site will provide a significant amount of POPOS. This space should be located adjacent to the proposed public park to expand its size, and/or designed to enhance access to the park (via making the new mid-block connections pedestrian-only).

Ground Floor Activation

Activation of the park is critical. As required by the Plan, the park shall be lined with active uses, particularly retail, community uses (e.g., childcare), and PDR. To maximize activation, the ground floor uses should be diversified, in terms of users and time of use. Residential uses should be located facing to the park to provide additional eyes on it round the clock.

Light and Wind in the Public Park

The park and the development must be designed cooperatively to ensure that the project remains feasible and that the park does not reduce the site's development potential. That being said, the massing and design of the buildings should afford the park a substantial amount of sunshine and a minimum amount of wind to ensure its use and enjoyment.

SITE 6: “WELLS FARGO”

Existing Conditions

The site includes a 6,000 square foot single-story building containing a Wells Fargo bank branch and a chain coffee shop, as well as a large parking lot.

Development Potential

Based on the proposed height, bulk and zoning parameters, there is potential for approximately three- to four-hundred thousand square feet of total development at this site across all uses, including any office, residential, retail, hotel, and PDR on the site.

Potential Public Benefits

As a single, relatively modest sized parcel the site has the potential to deliver one or more of the following as described further below: 1) affordable space for production, distribution, and repair, 2) a public recreation center.

Production, Distribution, and Repair

Any proposed office building on this site would be required to provide PDR space (per Implementation Measure 3.3.3.1). While the City cannot require that this space be subsidized as part of the Plan, the project sponsor could provide affordable rents to through a development agreement or other mechanism.

Public Recreation Center

This site contains the potential to include the new public recreation center being sought by the City. Any proposed recreation center should coordinate the amenities and offerings with those available at the Gene Friend Recreation Center located at 6th and Folsom Streets.

Potential Flexibility

Massing

Since the site is proposed to be zoned at 200 feet, it could choose to develop as a tower, subject to the rules discussed in Implementation Measure 8.3.3.4, and the exceptions discussed here would not be necessary. However, if the site chooses to develop subject to the controls of a mid-rise building, with a maximum height of 160 feet, it could provide significantly more light and air onto Freelon Alley than the tower scenario. To support this outcome, the Plan could allow 1) an alteration of the skyplane requirements so that there is still significantly more light and air on Freelon Street than under the tower scenario, though less than otherwise required by Implementation Measure 8.4.1.1, and 2) a minor reduction in apparent mass reduction on Brannan Street. Such a gesture could help emphasize the importance of the corner of 4th and Brannan Streets.

Privately-owned public open space (POPOS)

To maximize development potential on the site, and in return for the public benefits described above, the City could allow the POPOS not open to the sky, as long as it has a clearance of at least 25 feet and meets other standards for design and performance included in Implementation Measure 5.5.1.1.

Design Guidelines

Mid-Block Connections

Per Planning Code Section 270.2, the site may be required to provide a new mid-block connection connecting 225-foot long lot frontages on Brannan and Freelon. However, given the existing permeability of the block (via such alleys as Freelon, Welsh, Zoe, and Ritch), such an alley is not necessary. If provided,

it should serve as a POPOS and be activated by uses within the development.

Pedestrian Experience under I-80

Current pedestrian conditions along 4th Street under I-80 along could be improved in a number of ways to create a safer, more engaging environment. The project could provide or contribute to improvements in coordination with the City.

Parking and Loading Access

Any parking and loading provided shall be accessed off of Freelon Street, rather than 4th Street or Brannan Street.

Privately-owned public open space (POPOS)

Part of the POPOS requirement on this site can be met through the required five foot setback along 4th Street, which is necessary to provide adequate sidewalk widths (see Implementation Measure 4.1.1.2). As per the remaining POPOS requirement, notwithstanding the potential exception discussed above, a good location for this project's POPOS is off-site under the I-80 freeway, where it could serve to activate the street (in keeping with Implementation Measures 4.1.10.1 and 5.3.2.1). If such a POPOS is infeasible, the site should consider a pedestrianized mid-block connection on the eastern end of the property (as discussed above) or through a setback along Freelon Street. The POPOS should not be provided as a "carve out" along 4th or Brannan Streets that diminishes from the streetwall provided by the building (per Implementation Measure 8.1.3.1).

SITE 7: “88 BLUXOME/TENNIS CLUB”

Existing Conditions

The site is currently utilized as a private recreational facility, most prominently featuring the city’s only indoor tennis courts.

Development Potential

Based on the proposed height, bulk and zoning parameters, including requirements for mid-block alleys, there is potential for approximately one million square feet of total development at this site across all uses, including any office, residential, recreational, retail, hotel, and PDR on the site.

Potential Public Benefits

This large site has the potential to deliver one or more of the following as described further below: 1) an affordable housing site, 2) public recreation center, 3) Bluxome Linear Park.

Affordable Housing Site

This site contains the potential for dedicating a portion of the site (between 15,000 – 30,000 square feet) for a 100% affordable housing development while still including a large footprint for a substantial commercial development. Should this site yield an affordable housing site, the preferred location would be interior to the block.

Public Recreation Center

This site contains the potential to include the new public recreation center being sought by the City. For purposes of site efficiency, such a recreation center could be incorporated into the affordable housing site or a proposed office development. Any proposed recreation center should coordinate the amenities and offerings with those available at the Gene Friend Recreation Center located at 6th and Folsom Streets.

Bluxome Linear Park

The site contains the potential to create the new linear park along Bluxome Street between 4th and 5th Streets. While part of this requirement could meet the Plan’s POPOS requirements (per Implementation Measure 5.5.1.1), construction of the entire park would likely exceed the amount of required POPOS.

Potential Flexibility

Height

If providing an on-site affordable housing and/or a public recreation center, the Plan could allow up to 25 feet of additional height on the buildings on the site (per Implementation Measure 8.5.1.2).

Massing

The Plan’s “skyplane” requirements mandate mass reduction from 50-80% along street-facing property lines (per Implementation Measure 8.3.3.1). In return for the public benefits discussed above, the City could allow a reduction of the “skyplane” requirements along some combination of Bluxome, Brannan, and 5th Streets. This reduction would be designed to shift the building mass in a manner that emphasizes the corner of 5th and Brannan Streets. For the potential tower on the western portion of the site, the design should explore ways to increase floorplates and dimensions in a fashion that is minimally visible from the street, given the depth of the development lot. For the potential mid-rise building in the eastern portion of the site, it may be necessary to add mass on the upper floors to account for development capacity lost in providing the additional public benefits. These potential exceptions should be mindful of potential shadow impacts on the proposed park on the north side of Brannan Street (see “Park Block” site).

Production, Distribution, and Repair

The Plan requires that any proposed office building on the site would be required to provide PDR space (per Implementation Measure 3.3.3.1). The City could allow this PDR requirement to be waived in return for providing more than one of the public benefits discussed above.

Design Guidelines

Mid-Block Connections

Per Planning Code Section 270.2, the site will be required to provide a mid-block connection between Brannan and Bluxome Streets. The mid-block connection between Brannan and Bluxome Streets should be located in the middle-third of the block. While a new mid-block connection could be required east from 5th Street, it is unlikely that such a connection would benefit the circulation pattern in the area, and is therefore not a priority.

Parking and Loading Access

Any parking and loading provided shall be accessed off of Freelon Street, rather than 4th Street or Brannan Street. To minimize disruption of the proposed linear park along Freelon, this loading should occur as far east on the site as possible.

Light and Wind in the Public Park

The development on the site should consider its effects on shadows and wind on the proposed Bluxome Street linear park, balancing this issue against other massing considerations on the site.

SITE 8: “4TH AND TOWNSEND”

Existing Conditions

The site currently has several uses. On the triangular lot fronting 4th Street is a single-story building hosting two retail uses – a restaurant and a coffee shop. On the triangular lot fronting Townsend Street is a single story furniture store. In the northeast corner of the site are two residential condominiums and a commercial condominium. These are connected via a driveway to a curb cut at the intersection of 4th and Townsend.

Development Potential

Based on the proposed height, bulk and zoning parameters, including requirements for mid-block alleys, there is potential for approximately one million square feet of total development at this site across all uses, including any office, residential, retail, hotel, and PDR on the site.

Potential Public Benefits

As a large collection of parcels, the site has the potential to deliver one or more of the following as described further below: 1) an architectural identifier for the Plan Area, 2) pedestrian access to transit.

Architecture

The corner of 4th and Townsend is the intersection of two rail lines – Caltrain and the Central Subway. The Plan seeks to emphasize the importance of this location by establishing the Plan Area’s highest height limits. Additionally, the Plan seeks to use distinctive architecture to demarcate the importance of this site and serve as an identifier of Central SoMa on the skyline.

Pedestrian Access to Transit

The ongoing upgrades to Caltrain and the completion of the Central Subway are both going to bring a lot of new people to the intersection of 4th and Townsend Streets. To facilitate the movement of these pedestrians across this busy intersection, this development site should consider incorporation, in the plaza or in a ground floor space adjacent to the plaza, underground pedestrian access to the Caltrain station.

Potential Flexibility

Land Use

The Plan requires parcels larger than 30,000 square feet south of Harrison Street to be primarily non-residential (per Implementation Measure 3.1.1.1). The Plan could allow this site to be a primarily residential development, with potential for ground floor retail. This exception would be tied to the provision of non-residential development beyond otherwise required at an affiliated site (i.e., the Park Block site, currently proposed for development by the same sponsor).

Massing

The site has the potential for two towers designed in an architecturally superior way. Given this consideration, the City could allow the following exceptions to tower separation (per Implementation Measure 8.3.3.4), tower bulk (per Implementation Measure 8.3.4.2), setback requirements (per Implementation Measure 8.3.4.2):

- A reduced tower separation between the two buildings, to a minimum of 65 feet on the lower half of the building and a minimum of 85 feet on upper half of the building;

- An increase in the bulk such that one of the towers may have an individual floorplate of more than 12,000 square feet on any given floor, but between the two towers, on any given floor the sum would not exceed 24,000 square feet;
- A waiver of the reduction in the bulk reduction in the top 1/3 of the tower, provided that there is distinctive variation in floorplate sizes throughout the tower;
- An increase in the plan dimension of the towers up to 170 feet, and a diagonal of up to 230 feet;
- A reduced setback at 85 feet along Townsend Street, though this setback could be no less than 10 feet; and
- In the northeastern corner of the site, an increase in the height at which the 15-foot setback would occur up to a height of 100 feet.

Design Guidelines

Parking and Loading Access

To minimize impacts to transit vehicles traversing the intersection of 4th and Townsend Streets, all vehicle access to the site must be from an alley connecting to Townsend Street at the eastern edge of the site. New curb cuts are not permitted along 4th Street.

Public Plaza

The City requires residential projects to provide open space, and provides an incentive to make such open space publicly accessible. This site would be a good location for such a public open space, provided in the form of a substantial public plaza at the corner of 4th and Townsend that could be a hub for this busy intersection.