

Central SoMa Draft Policy Document

Hotels

January 2014

Summary

Proposal to allow, with a Conditional Use Permit, hotels of any room count in the MUO District, and to expand where hotels can be built.

Background

Tourism is one of the city's most important economic drivers. According to San Francisco Travel (formerly known as San Francisco's Convention and Visitors Bureau), over 16 million visitors flocked to San Francisco in 2012 for business and pleasure, spending nearly \$9 billion in local businesses, supporting 74,000 jobs, and contributing \$560 million in tax revenues to the City. About a third of them stayed in one of our 215 hotels. While hotels are present in many neighborhoods, the preponderance are located in the northern part of Central SoMa/Yerba Buena area or nearby in the Union Square area – 60% of the city's 33,600 hotel rooms are within walking distance (1/2 mile) of the Moscone Convention Center.

Hotels can be good neighbors and a boon to a neighborhood. Hotels often provide the best characteristics of residential and commercial uses by providing 24-hour activation of the nearby streets, helping support nearby retail and restaurant uses, caring for street appearance and maintenance, creating a safer round-the-clock environment, and sometimes providing their own retail and entertainment venues that add amenities and life of neighborhood. The hotel tax also funds the City's Grants for the Arts program.

Currently, controls for hotels differ across the Plan Area, as follows:

- In the C -3 zoning districts (e.g., Yerba Buena and downtown), hotels of any room count are permitted with a Conditional Use Permit.
- In the West SoMa MUO zoning district, hotels up to 75 rooms are permitted as of right.
- In areas zoned Mixed-Use Office (MUO), hotels of up to 75 rooms are permitted with a Conditional Use Permit. Additionally, on sites that have a permitted height of 105 feet or more, hotel rooms of any room count are permitted with a Conditional Use Permit.
- Hotels are not permitted in the MUR, SALI, SLI, South Park, and WS MUG Districts.

Proposal

In the MUO District, the Draft Plan proposes to remove the arbitrary limit (of 75 rooms) on the room count of hotels on parcels with height limits lower than 105 feet, such that hotels with any number of rooms as fits within the designated height limit for that parcel could be permitted by the Planning Commission through a Conditional Use Permit.

Additionally, as the rezoning extends the MUO and Mixed-Use General (MUG) Districts across much of the Plan Area, hotels would become permitted through much of the Plan Area with a Conditional Use Permit.