

## Summary of What We've Heard during the Idea Gathering Phase of the Central Corridor Project February through July, 2011

From February through July, 2011, the Planning Department facilitated a community dialogue about the future of the Central Corridor – that is, the area in the vicinity of 4<sup>th</sup> Street within SoMa. This document contains a summary of what we heard during these conversations. In addition to the list below, please see the results of our community survey and the results of our mapped visioning exercise. The Planning Department will now work to develop a draft Central Corridor Plan reflecting the input we've received, and throughout 2011 and beyond we will continue working with the community to determine the best strategy for the future of this area.

### **Land Use**

#### *Overall Mix/Density of Uses*

- Important to provide for housing and jobs, not just one or the other
- Do not allow any one use to dominate
- Need to have mix of all uses so that neighborhood is “self-contained”
- A lot of both housing and office space to create balanced daytime-nighttime activity
- Area should be mostly residential with more restaurants
- New uses should serve working class people in the neighborhood
- Development should incorporate the culture (e.g. Filipino) of people in the area
- Emphasize commercial activity toward Market Street, with more small scale shops and restaurants toward Caltrain
- Key opportunity sites include 4<sup>th</sup>/Brannan, 4<sup>th</sup>/Townsend, Harrison Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Chronicle site
- Make sure planned transportation improvements have capacity to support new development
- Support a more active and integrated neighborhood
- Focus activity around the subway stations
- Plan for jobs based on City's economic strategy (and integrate training programs for those industries)

#### *Housing*

- More of all types of housing
- More affordable housing everywhere, less market rate housing
- More market rate housing everywhere, less affordable housing
- Affordable housing needs to include/target moderate income
- More housing for seniors and people with disabilities
- Noise mitigation from traffic is key issue for housing
- More housing in Yerba Buena area
- Make sure to recognize that many families/seniors currently live on Clementina and nearby area

#### *Office*

- Office growth not necessary
- Support growth of the tech/digital sector; Vacancy in Soma is becoming very low, it is where companies want to be; Tech companies like Soma environment, but need more room to grow
- Concentrate jobs near regional transit (toward Market and Townsend)
- Office buildings themselves don't create demand for space in Soma – social and physical character of community is the attraction

- Office space is a good buffer from Caltrain yard
- Good locations for office growth include: Chronicle site, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Townsend Street, Harrison Street
- Require on-site childcare (except near freeway) with new offices
- Support large floor-plate offices

#### *Retail*

- More retail and restaurants
- Diversity of retail uses is good, like Inner Sunset/Union St/West Portal area
- Concentrate retail/restaurants in one area, potentially 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets south of Bryant
- Need more small-scale locally-serving retail, more shops and restaurants generally
- Limit Formula Retail to small sizes
- Retail everywhere

#### *Entertainment*

- Concern about pressure for further displacement of entertainment venues (e.g. Hotel Utah) and eclectic gathering places by new development; Bars and entertainment important to culture and life of Soma
- Allow “light” nighttime entertainment uses in restaurants
- Concern about conflict between residential and entertainment, and expectations about how loud this neighborhood is/should be.
- Need to “Plan for Fun”
- Disagreement over the correct amount of entertainment

#### *Industrial*

- PDR (industrial) zoning does not make sense here/Eastern Soma
- Need to understand displacement of blue-collar jobs
- Auto repair is an important service and should not be displaced
- Industry can decrease here

#### *Institutional/Educational/Cultural*

- Need more affordable cultural activities
- Central Corridor should help decentralize over-concentration of social services in 6<sup>th</sup> Street area
- More schools desired
- More medical services desired
- More cultural uses desired

#### *Hotel/Visitor/Tourism*

- Hotels are a good buffer from Caltrain yard
- Allow hotels in office areas

#### *Other*

- Keep limit on parking garages to keep congestion down
- Provide more affordable parking
- Locate 24-hr car share/van-pool/bike rental depot under freeway

## **Urban Form**

- Higher heights OK
- Allow taller heights on larger sites, and lower heights on smaller sites
- 85' is high enough
- Taller buildings OK as long as lower scale historic buildings preserved
- Keep the "street wall" low and require setbacks for taller buildings
- Allow limited high rise near Caltrain station
- Small lot fabric should be preserved
- Prevent tall buildings from creating wind tunnels
- Tech companies like Soma environment partly because of building types (large floorplate, open plan, high ceilings, operable windows)
- More active building edges (e.g. restaurants) along sidewalks
- Respect historic buildings, allow their flexible re-use
- Higher heights north of the freeway

## **Streets and Open Space**

### *Open Space and Public Life*

- Area needs more parks/open space
- Need children's playgrounds
- Encourage small parks/plazas with seating, especially adjacent to retail/restaurants
- "Parklets" in parking lane good
- Encourage sidewalk activity/seating by retail/restaurants
- Alleys are best location for open space because they are protected from traffic and noise
- Need more places to sit
- Need accommodation of pets/dogs, particularly if there will be more housing
- Need community gathering spaces (not just coffee shops), like library/community center
- Caltrans properties (i.e. around freeway) are major concern and need improvement
- Block bounded by Bryant/4<sup>th</sup>/Brannan/5<sup>th</sup> has opportunity for open space similar to South Park
- Ensure room for food trucks
- Vagrancy and homelessness create a feeling of lack of safety
- Open spaces need to be activated to minimize negative influence

### *Pedestrian Safety and Pedestrian Environment (General)*

- Pedestrian safety improvements critical, particularly because there are a lot of seniors in the area
- Need more sidewalk greenery and street trees everywhere
- Need wider sidewalks and bulbouts throughout the area;
- Need better street lighting, especially under freeway
- More sidewalk seating, particularly in areas with lots of seniors
- Traffic speeds are too high and should be reduced to encourage street life
- Traffic signage needs to be improved to convey that SoMa is not an extension of the freeway
- Break up the long blocks
- Connect alleys across major streets with signalized crosswalks

- Create mid-block alleys, especially for north-south connections
- Too many locations where pedestrians are prohibited from crossing
- Consider medians to for pedestrian refuges and to break up the wide scale of the streets
- Streets are so wide and mean to cross
- Public art associated with MTA stations should also be on the outside of the stations, not just inside
- Utilities should be undergrounded
- Connect abandon rail spurs to public circulation network in coordination with development
- Pedestrians are encouraged by clean, secure, well-lit streets that are active, landscaped, and with nice surrounding buildings and shops.
- Pedestrians are strongly discouraged when streets are dirty or unsafe, and discouraged when there is too much surrounding traffic, difficulty crossing, lack of landscaping, and narrow sidewalks.
- Neighborhood envisioned as cleaner, friendlier, tree-lined and bustling with activity (night and day), and less of a traffic-throughway to other destinations.
- Some alleys could have limited nighttime access

#### *Pedestrian Safety and Pedestrian Environment Priorities (Specific)*

- New station areas
- Wider sidewalks on: Harrison, Byrant and Brannan in relation to width of street and amount of traffic; 3<sup>rd</sup> Street east side sidewalk between King and Byrant to accommodate ballpark pedestrian traffic
- Allow pedestrian crossings across Harrison on the west side of 4<sup>th</sup> and across 3<sup>rd</sup> from the north side of Folsom
- Improve under freeway areas and all Caltrans areas
- Corners and crossing at freeway ramps; Pedestrian crossings near off- and on-ramps are particularly unpleasant and challenging
- From a walking and hanging out perspective, the following streets are:
  - Deemed generally good: 2<sup>nd</sup> St.
  - Deemed generally OK: 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Market St. Mission St., Howard St., Folsom St., Brannan St., Townsend St.
  - Deemed generally poor: 4<sup>th</sup> St., Harrison St., Bryant St.,
  - Deemed terrible: 5<sup>th</sup> St., 6<sup>th</sup> St.
- Clementina between 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> as a major east-west linkage and should be emphasized; Yerba Buena alleys in general should be prioritized; Connections between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets
- Bluxome from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> should be a “green alley”
- Prioritize safe routes to schools
- Prioritize pedestrian crossings north of Harrison near highest concentration of existing housing, schools and major destinations (e.g. Moscone)
- Sidewalks areas alongside Moscone between Howard and Folsom are unpleasant
- 4<sup>th</sup> between Folsom and Howard could use shelter from sun
- Coordinate with 2-way Folsom Street being studied
- Model streets include Market for activity, 2<sup>nd</sup> for convenience and cleanliness, South Park’s streets for quaintness, the walking alleys between Market and Mission – though people expressed a wide range of preferred streets.
- Disliked streets focused on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, under the freeway, through a wide range of opinions was offered.

