



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Planning Commission Resolution No. 20119

HEARING DATE MARCH 1, 2018

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*Project Name:* Central SoMa Plan – General Plan Amendments  
*Record No.:* **2011.1356MTZU [Board File. No 170961]**  
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**ADOPTING A RESOLUTION OF INTENTION TO INITIATE AMENDMENTS TO THE SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL PLAN TO INCORPORATE AMENDMENTS PURSUANT TO THE ADOPTION OF THE CENTRAL SOMA PLAN AND SCHEDULING A HEARING ON OR AFTER MARCH 29, 2018 TO CONSIDER THESE AMENDMENTS**

WHEREAS, Section 4.105 of the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco mandates that the Planning Commission shall periodically recommend to the Board of Supervisors for approval or rejection proposed amendments to the General Plan in response to changing physical, social, economic, environmental or legislative conditions; and

WHEREAS, 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 to be 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 the result of that subsequent process; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the process, the Central SoMa Plan has been developed based on robust public input, including ten public open houses; ten 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" (during which the Planning Department set up shop in a retail space in the neighborhood to solicit community input on the formulation of the plan); 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; and

WHEREAS, 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. 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;

and

WHEREAS, Implementing the Plan's strategies will require addressing all the facets of a sustainable neighborhood. To do so, the Plan seeks to achieve 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;

and

WHEREAS, The Plan would implement its vision, philosophy, and goals by:

- Accommodating development capacity for up to 40,000 jobs and 7,000 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.

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Planning Department is seeking to adopt and implement the Central SoMa Plan. The core policies and supporting discussion in the Plan have been incorporated into an Area Plan proposed to be added to the General Plan. The General Plan, Planning Code, Zoning Map Amendments, and Implementation Document provide a comprehensive set of policies and implementation programming to realize the vision of the Plan. The Implementation Document describes how the Plan's policies will be implemented, outlines public improvements, funding mechanisms and interagency coordination that the City must pursue to implement the Plan, as well as controls for key development sites and key streets, and design guidance for new development; and

WHEREAS, Policies envisioned for the Area Plan are consistent with the existing General Plan. However, a number of amendments to the General Plan are required to further achieve and clarify the vision and goals of the Central SoMa Plan, to reflect its concepts throughout the General Plan, and generally to update the General Plan to reflect changed physical, social and economic conditions in this area. Proposed amendments to the General Plan, including the proposed new Area Plan, are attached hereto as Exhibits I-3 and I-4. The City Attorney's Office has reviewed the draft ordinance and approved it as to form; and

WHEREAS, Staff recommends adoption of the draft resolution initiating amendments to the General Plan, which includes adding the Central SoMa Area Plan to the General Plan, and making related amendments to various elements of the General Plan, including the East SoMa Area Plan, Western SoMa Area Plan, Commerce and Industry Element, Housing Element, and Urban Design Element.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That pursuant to Planning Code Section 340(c), the Planning Commission adopts a Resolution of Intention to Initiate Amendments to the General Plan, as contained in the draft General Plan amendment ordinance, approved as to form by the City Attorney and attached hereto as Exhibits I-3 and I-4.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That pursuant to Planning Code Section 306.3, the Planning Commission authorizes the Department to provide appropriate notice for a public hearing to consider the above referenced General Plan amendments contained in an ordinance approved as to form by the City Attorney and attached hereto as Exhibit I-3 and I-4, to be considered at a publicly noticed hearing on or after March 29, 2018.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on March 1, 2018.



Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES: Hillis, Fong, Johnson, Koppel, Moore, Richards  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: Melgar  
ADOPTED: March 1, 2018