



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 679

HEARING DATE: JUNE 6, 2012

Date: May 31, 2012
Case No.: 2007.0558MTZ
Project Address: **Transit Center District Plan**
Review and Comment on Plan Adoption and related Ordinances
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RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPT PROPOSED ORDINANCES ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRANSIT CENTER DISTRICT PLAN TO AMEND THE SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL PLAN, PLANNING CODE, AND ZONING MAPS, INCLUDING AMENDMENTS TO PLANNING CODE ARTICLE 11 AND VARIOUS APPENDICES, AND MAKING FINDINGS, INCLUDING ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS, AND FINDINGS OF CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN AND THE PRIORITY POLICIES OF PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1.

Whereas, on June 6, 2012, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter "Commission") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider aspects in the proposed Transit Center District Plan and related Ordinances that directly impact Article 11 buildings, and historic resources; and

The Historic Preservation Commission, at a duly noticed public hearing on May 2, 2012, initiated the proposed Boundary Change and change of name of the Conservation District and related Planning Code amendments to Article 11, including various appendices; and

The Planning Commission, at a duly noticed public hearing on May 3, 2012 and in accordance with Planning Code Section 302(b), initiated General Plan, Planning Code Amendments, and Zoning Map Amendments related to the Plan. The Plan enhances and augments the Downtown Plan's patterns of land use, urban form, public space, circulation, and historic preservation, and makes policy recommendations, including enlarging the New Montgomery-Second Street Conservation District; and

Prior to considering relevant amendments to the General Plan, Planning Code, Zoning Maps and other actions related to implementing the Transit Center District Plan, the Planning Commission adopted Motion No. 18628 certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Transit Center District Plan in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Planning Commission also adopted Motion No. 18629 adopting CEQA Findings related to the Transit Center District Plan. The Historic Preservation Commission incorporates by reference the CEQA Findings related to the Transit Center District Plan as set forth in Planning Commission Motion No. 18629; and

The Planning Commission, at a duly noticed public hearing on May 24, 2012, recommended adoption of the Plan and related ordinances to the Board of Supervisors. The Planning Commission also adopted Resolution No. 18632 recommending adoption of amendments to Planning Code Article 11 and various Appendices related to a boundary change to expand the New Montgomery-Second Street Conservation District to include an additional twenty-six (26) properties, and to change name to the New Montgomery-Mission-Second Street Conservation District; and

The Historic Preservation Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of the applicant, Department staff, and other interested parties; and

All pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the custodian of records, at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco; and

The Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the proposed Plan and Ordinances; and

COMMENTS

Having reviewed the materials identified in the recitals above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission has provided the following comments regarding the proposed Plan and related Ordinances:

1. The Commission recommends approval with modification:
 - a. That height for small parcel on south side of Minna Street, and west end of proposed Transit Center site, between 1st and 2nd Streets not be increased to 500'.

The proposal will promote the following relevant objectives and policies of the General Plan:

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE 2: CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES WHICH PROVIDE A SENSE OF NATURE, CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST, AND FREEDOM FROM OVERCROWDING.

POLICY 2.4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

POLICY 2.5: Use care in remodeling of older buildings, in order to enhance rather than weaken the original character of such buildings.

POLICY 2.7: Recognize and protect outstanding and unique areas that contribute in an extraordinary degree to San Francisco's visual form and character.

POLICY 4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

The proposed designations and boundary change would preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value by recognizing their cultural and historical value and providing mechanisms for review of proposed alterations as well as incentives for property owners to maintain and preserve their buildings. Designating significant historic resources as Significant and Contributing buildings will further continuity with the past because the buildings will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

DOWNTOWN PLAN

The Downtown Plan grows out of an awareness of the public concern in recent years over the degree of change occurring downtown – and of the often conflicting civic objectives between fostering a vital economy and the retaining the urban patterns and structures which collectively form the physical essence of San Francisco. The Plan foresees a downtown known the world over as a center of ideas, services and trade, and as a place for stimulating experiences. In essence, downtown San Francisco should encompass a compact mix of activities, historical values, and distinctive architecture and urban forms that engender a special excitement reflective of a world city.

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE 1: MANAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CHANGE TO ENSURE ENHANCEMENT OF THE TOTAL CITY LIVING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT.

OBJECTIVE 12: CONSERVE RESOURCES THAT PROVIDE CONTINUITY WITH SAN FRANCISCO'S PAST.

Policy 12.1: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural, or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

POLICY 12.2: Use care in remodeling significant older buildings to enhance rather than weaken their original character.

The proposed designations and boundary change are consistent with the objectives and policies of the Downtown Plan as it would increase the number of notable landmarks and expand areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value by expanding the size of the New Montgomery-Second Street Conservation District and designating additional buildings as historic resources. Designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

TRANSIT CENTER DISTRICT PLAN

The historic preservation objectives and policies of the Transit Center District Plan build upon the preservation principles of the Downtown Plan. They are intended to provide for the identification, retention, reuse, and sustainability of the area's historic properties. As the area continues to change

and develop, historic features and properties that define it should not be lost or their significance diminished through demolition or inappropriate alterations. As increased densities will provide a contrast to the traditional lower-scale, masonry, pre-war buildings, new construction with the historic core of the Transit Center District should respect and relate to its historic context. The District Plan regulations sound treatment of historic resources according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards; in encourages the rehabilitation of historic resources for new compatible uses, and it allows for incentives for qualifying historic properties.

Historic Preservation Objectives

OBJECTIVE 5.1: PROTECT, PRESERVE, AND REUSE HISTORIC PROPERTIES THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND EVALUATED WITHIN THE TRANSIT CENTER PLAN AREA.

OBJECTIVE 5.2: PROVIDE PRESERVATION INCENTIVES, GUIDANCE, AND LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE TRANSIT CENTER DISTRICT PLAN AREA.

OBJECTIVE 5.3: FOSTER PUBLIC AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE TRANSIT CENTER PLAN AREA.

OBJECTIVE 5.4: PROMOTE WELL DESIGNED, CONTEMPORARY INFILL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE HISTORIC CORE OF THE TRANSIT CENTER PLAN AREA.

The proposed designations and boundary change are consistent with the objectives and policies of the Transit Center District Plan as it would increase the number of notable landmarks and expand areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value by expanding the size of the New Montgomery-Second Street Conservation District. Designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

The proposed amendments to the Planning Code are consistent with the eight Priority Policies set forth in Section 101.1(b) of the Planning Code in that:

- a. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced;

The proposed boundary change and building designations will not impact neighborhood-serving retail uses or ownership/employment opportunities in such businesses. Many of the buildings proposed for designation have a history of mixed-use, generally with commercial or retail at the ground floor. Retention of historic fabric that contributes to this mixed-use character, and related uses, would be encouraged within the Conservation District.

- b. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods;

The proposed boundary change and building designations will encourage conservation and protection of neighborhood character as all proposed alterations to exterior features of Significant or

Contributory buildings or any buildings within a Conservation District shall be subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission, or as delegated to Planning Department staff by HPC Motion No. 0122, in accordance with Sections 1111 through 1111.6 of the Planning Code and Section 4.135 of the City Charter. Enlargement of the Conservation District and designation of buildings in Categories I through IV will encourage retention of existing buildings by providing a preservation incentive in the form of eligibility for Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs).

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

The proposed boundary change and designations will not negatively impact the City's supply of affordable housing. The proposed amendments to Article 11 will not affect affordable housing supply and are consistent with the policies and objectives related to housing outlined in the Transit Center District Plan and Downtown Plan.

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

The proposed Boundary Change and building designations will not impede transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.

- e. 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 proposed boundary change and building designations would not impact the diversity of economic activity.

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

The proposed boundary change and building designations would not modify any physical parameters of the Planning Code or other Codes. It is furthermore not anticipated that the proposed designations would result in any building activity and therefore would have no effect on the City's preparedness for an earthquake.

- g. That the landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;

Initiating the proposed boundary change and designation of buildings under Article 11 will further continuity with the past because the character-defining features of buildings within the district will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review any proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features of buildings within the district. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made. The proposed designations will not have a significant impact on any of the other elements of the General Plan.

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

The proposed boundary change and designation of buildings would not impact or facilitate any development which could have any impact on our parks and open space or their access to sunlight and vistas.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that the Board ADOPT the proposed Transit Center District Plan and related Ordinances including amendments to Planning Code Article 11 and various Appendices.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on June 6, 2012.

Linda D. Avery
Commission Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Damkroger, Johns, Hasz, Martinez, Matsuda, and Wolfram

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Chase

ADOPTED: June 6, 2012