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PART II: **CENTRAL SOMA IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

GUIDE TO URBAN DESIGN

PURPOSE

- To convey design guidance that is specific to Central SoMa in a way that complements and supplements the requirements of the Planning Code and pending citywide Urban Design Guidelines; and
- To visually demonstrate Central SoMa Plan bulk controls.

CONTENTS

1. **Additional Architectural Guidance** This section contains additional guidance for implementing the architectural vision for the Plan Area beyond what was written under Objective 8.6 of the Plan;
2. **Calculating Skyplane** This section contains a graphical explanation of how to calculate the apparent mass reduction requirements contained in Implementation Measures 8.3.3.1, 8.4.1.3, and 8.4.1.4;
3. **Visualizing Bulk Controls** This section contains a graphical representation of the implementation of the skyplane, mid-rise, and tower controls contained in Implementation Measures 8.3.3.1, 8.3.3.2, 8.3.3.4, 8.3.4.1, and 8.3.4.2; and
4. **Neighborhood Renderings** This section contains renderings of how the Plan Area might look from street level after development of a substantial number of its anticipated buildings.

855 Folsom. Photo by Natoma Architects
178 Townsend. Photo by Blake Marvin, HKS, Inc.

Folsom and Dore. Photo by Brian Rose
Historic building. Photo by SF Planning
South Park Cafe. Photo by Julia Spiess and Frank Schott

PART 1: ADDITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL GUIDANCE

This section contains additional guidance for implementing the architectural vision for the Plan Area conveyed by Plan Objective 8.6: "Promote high quality architecture that enhances the neighborhood." Specifically, it includes guidance around the following Implementation Measures:

8.1.2.1 Provide fixtures, furnishings, and art at interior and exterior ground floor openings to invite and support use of adjacent public areas

8.6.2.1 Utilize application of "skyplane" as a device to create interestingly shaped buildings

8.6.2.2 Harmonize new building designs with existing neighborhood materials but in a contemporary or reinterpreted way

8.6.2.3 Recognize and enhance existing local form and geometry variations to support neighborhood-specific architecture

8.6.2.4 Employ innovative architectural ideas for larger projects that provide a clear organizing principle for design

8.6.3.2 Utilize material systems that visually diminish upper facades

8.6.5.1 Modulate larger projects vertically or horizontally, whichever is more appropriate, to reflect surrounding lots and massing patterns

8.6.5.2 For projects with more than one building, recognize and respond to the existing pattern of long blocks, open spaces, and large and small streets

8.6.5.3 Vary the roofs of buildings for projects with long facades.

Developing Site Concepts and Massing

Unlike downtown, the South of Market long blocks, low-rise buildings, and wide streets provide a more open experience of sun and sky. Central SoMa alleys contrast this "bigness" with more human-scaled environments.

Below are suggested, not prescribed, means that meet the intention of the implementation measure.

Support Lots of Sky

Employ the flexibility of skyplane to creatively shape upper mass away from large streets and alleys. When employing skyplane, consider the building base to the be the prominent and durable architecture and the upper building portion above the urban room as a more recessive, sculptural or even etherial component. Consider volumetrically sculpting the tops of buildings to reflect the human scale, for example: contemporary versions of the mansard roof, indentions for smaller-scale balconies, clock towers, or light boxes that express interior use.

Enhance Horizontality

While vertical articulations are common in most of San Francisco, designers working in the southern portion of Central SoMa should consider how horizontal geometry reads more strongly. The long blocks of Central SoMa offer opportunities for large floorplate buildings but long undifferentiated facades, however, are not ideal for a positive street experience. Consider developing a modulated horizontality to express the existing environment, but with other articulations and fine-grained texture to create a visually compelling urban room.

Precinct-Specific Form

Central SoMa has several distinct building clusters that require more nuanced site design considerations, for example: 5th and Brannan, South Park, 5th and Howard, smaller residential enclaves, and parcels close to the freeway. Note and respond to urban form types and scales within these areas including nearby proposed projects.

Enhance a Scale-shift

Recognize the scale changes from the large street environments to the small scale alleys by relating facade textures and modulation to equivalent heights

Bryant Street elevation. Photo by Google Maps

Brannan Street. Photo by SF Planning

Taber Alley. Photo by SF Planning

and proportions. Consider how building or landscape corners turn between these two environments and how the pedestrian experience can transition. Examine building openings that lead to alleys or open spaces for opportunities as gateways. Include neighborhood landmark features such as clock towers, special geometry, refined materials, coloration or other demarcating devices.

Engage Wide Streets

The existing wide streets of Central SoMa will remain and be reinforced as the streetwall heights are designed to match their widths. Alternating big and small gaps are a familiar pattern in the pedestrian experience of Central SoMa. Designers should consider the cadence, proportions, and widths of alleys and wide streets in developing mid-block passages, entries to POPOS and courtyard spaces.

Selecting Contextual Materials

Central SoMa has rich and varied histories that have left material patterns and scales. Contemporary architecture and construction techniques should express their time, but thoughtfully within the lineage of the neighborhood.

Below are suggested, not prescribed, means that meet the intention of the implementation measure.

Express Industrial Legacy

Consider re-introducing familiar elements from historic building elements, for example: sawtooth light portals, longer spans for open floorplates, corrugation for texture and articulation, roll up doors to support active street frontages, and small wall openings to highlight the human scale. These elements should not be considered an industrial aesthetic but rather a reinterpretation of their benefits for contemporary programs and uses.

Neighborhood buildings. Photo by SF Planning

Support Historic Character

Adaptively re-use existing fabric in innovative ways. This includes developing very contemporary language or "hyphenations" with older low-rise buildings.

Provide masonry buildings

Designers should consider using materials that offer textures or geometries at the scale of brick. While brick is not endemic to all of Central SoMa, its scale of texture, however, is a familiar pattern demonstrated in earlier eras, such as corrugated metal, plate steel, industrial sash windows, larger window spans, frame buildings, and load-bearing masonry buildings with large spans. Consider contemporary materials that employ similar logics for scale, texture and access but avoid mimicry or appropriation.

Offer Gritty Architecture

Repeatedly noted by residents as both a benefit and detriment, the "grit" of Central SoMa can be positively interpreted as environments that are "eclectic," "surprising," or "hardy." Provide durable materials at the ground floor that are more rugged and resilient. Consider using facade systems that allow for small-scale flexible or modular insertions that would be easy to repair or swap for a change in technology, artistic exploration, or other future adaptation. Offer pedestrian scale indentions at the ground floor that could host seating or outdoor work areas. Support production activities being visible from or extending into the alley network.

Programming Architecture to Support Public Space

Central SoMa's history of industrial and art production have fostered it as a place of innovation and experimentation. Consider how furnishings and programming will help Central SoMa support this character and evolve over time.

Below are suggested, not prescribed, means that meet the intention of the implementation measure.

Support the Alley Experience

Alleys in Central SoMa foster both quiet residential neighborhoods and industrial overflow. Rather than being just utilitarian, they can sponsor art, outdoor workspace or places to hang out. The Department recommends thoughtfully inventing alley way uses that can support full and safe pedestrian use while still facilitating loading and the other rougher functional uses needed by PDR uses at the ground level.

Offer Mid-Block Surprises

To animate alleys and public open space, offer and program small spaces that are flexible for different activities, for example, fold out galleries, flexible kiosks, micro-retail, art or lighting installations, playful street furnishings, or places for outdoor workshops or maker activities. Create stewardship programs that support or host curated events or activities. Where panels, solid surfaces, or other less pedestrian-friendly elements are required for utilitarian purposes, consider those as opportunities for art, special materials, or display.

Taber Alley. Photo by Street Arts SF

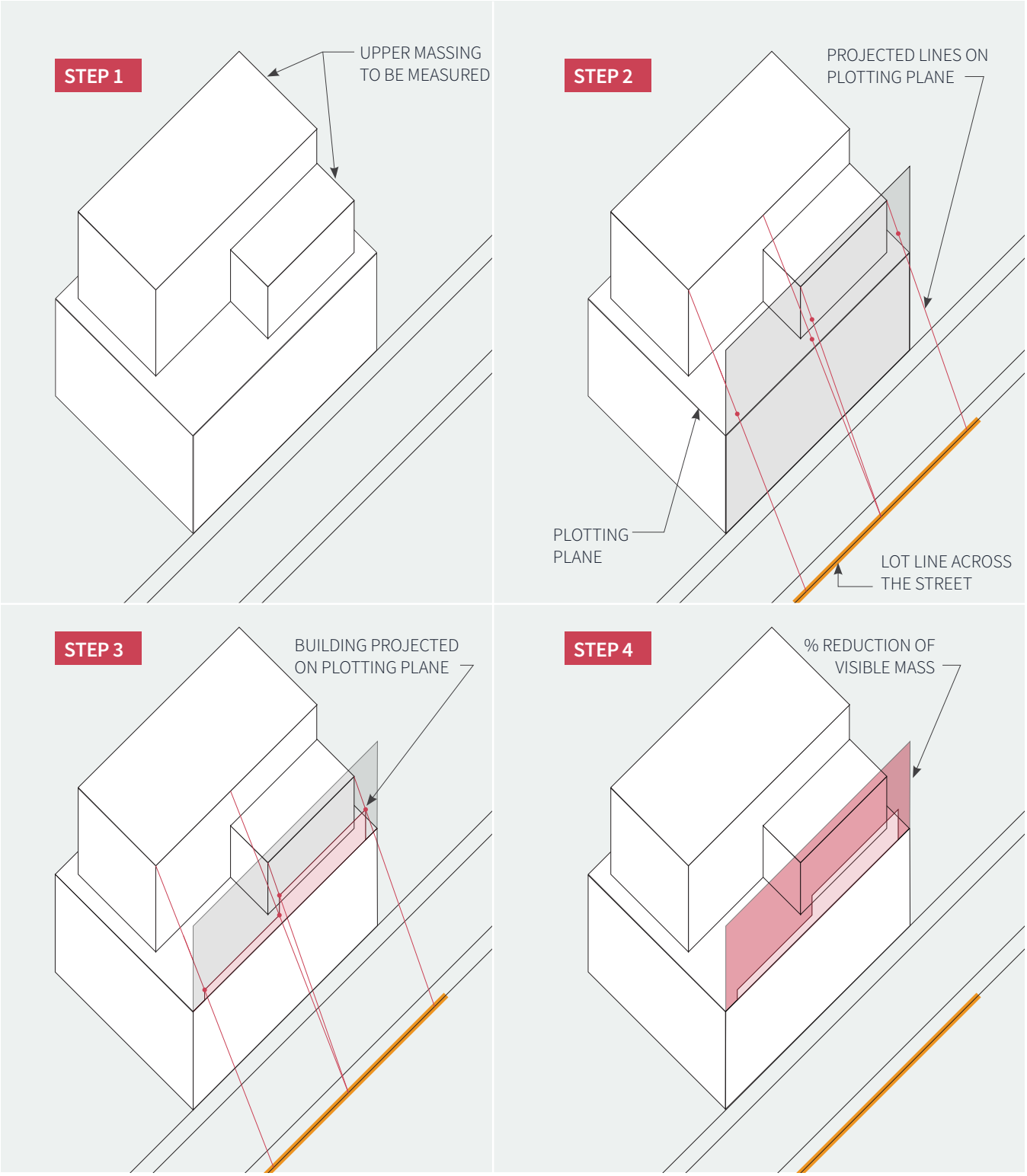
Loading dock near Little Skillet. Photo credit: Kendra Aronson.

Provide Maker Spaces

As a place of production, Central SoMa favored interior uses that were rough, eclectic, and supported invention and less pristine or tightly honed activities. Consider PDR as an active ground floor use where making or distributing material goods can be a recognized human endeavour through the use of transparency, openings, lighting, and doorways. Consider inventing ways for this use to invite pedestrian views or engagement through affiliated retail or more organized cultural events.

PART 2: CALCULATING SKYPLANE

This section contains a graphical explanation of how to calculate the "skyplane" requirements contained in Implementation Measures 8.3.3.1, 8.4.1.3, and 8.4.1.4.



PART 3: VISUALIZING BULK CONTROLS

This section contains a graphical representation of the implementation of the skyplane and tower controls contained in Implementation Measures 8.3.3.1, 8.3.3.2, 8.3.3.4, 8.3.4.1, and 8.3.4.2. It includes images for three kinds of buildings:

Buildings taller than 160 feet subject to tower controls

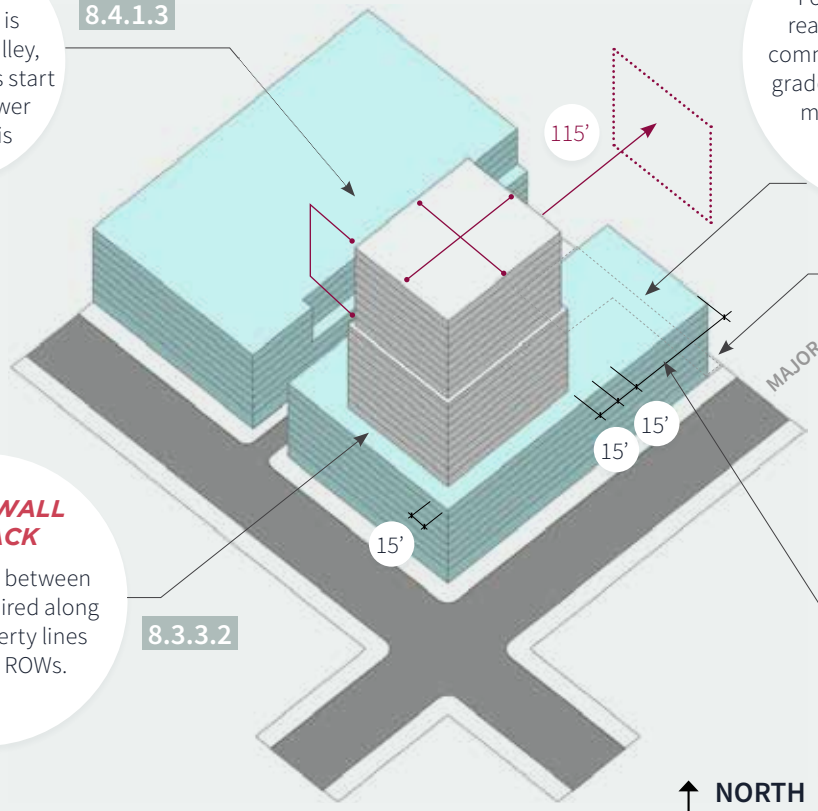
Buildings above 85 feet but not taller than 160 feet subject to skyplane controls

Buildings 85 feet and less subject to skyplane controls when fronting on narrow streets and alleys

Bulk Controls for Buildings Taller than 160'

Central SoMa will allow a handful of buildings taller than 160 feet, to punctuate important intersections (such as at the Caltrain station). To support height at these locations while still supporting light, air, and sun access to the streets, the Plan includes:

Below is a majority but not complete depiction of Implementation Measures (referenced by number that may affect the building envelope.



ALLEY CONTROLS

8.3.3.1
8.4.1.3

When a tower is adjacent to an alley, skyplane controls start 15' after the tower (hidden in this view)

LOT COVERAGE

For residential use, a rear yard (25%) and for commercial use, POPOS at grade (15%) requirements may reduce amount of allowable lot coverage.

MID-BLOCK ALLEY

On a lot longer than 200', a mid-block alley may be required.

STREETWALL SETBACK

A 15' setback between 65' 85' is required along interior property lines and public ROWs.

8.3.3.2

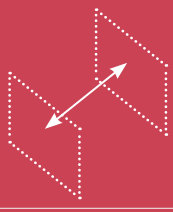
8.4.1.3

PODIUM BULK CONTROLS

When a tower is adjacent to a building that is between 85 to 160 feet, at least 30 feet separation is required. That portion of the podium is also subject to mid-rise bulk controls.

TOWER BULK CONTROLS

TOWER SEPARATION



IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 8.3.3.4

When there is an existing tower, the second tower should be at least 115'. The distance between towers may be reduced to a minimum of 85' if the difference in the height of the two towers is at least 50' and the bulk of the second tower is reduced relative to the reduction in tower separation, such that at 85', the maximum tower bulk shall be 10,000 sf.

TOWER REDUCTION

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 8.3.4.2

For towers 250' or more, the upper 1/3 of any tower must feature minimum bulk reductions of 15% of the floorplate and the maximum diagonal of 7.5%. The upper tower bulk reduction shall not be required for any tower for which the overall tower is reduced from the maximum bulk allowance by an equal or greater volume (above a height of 85').

TOWER BULK

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 8.4.1.3

No residential or hotel use would be allowed to have a floor exceed 12,000 gsf. The average floor for commercial uses cannot exceed 15,000 gsf and no single floor may exceed 17,000 gsf. The maximum horizontal dimension would be 150'. The maximum diagonal dimension would be 190'.

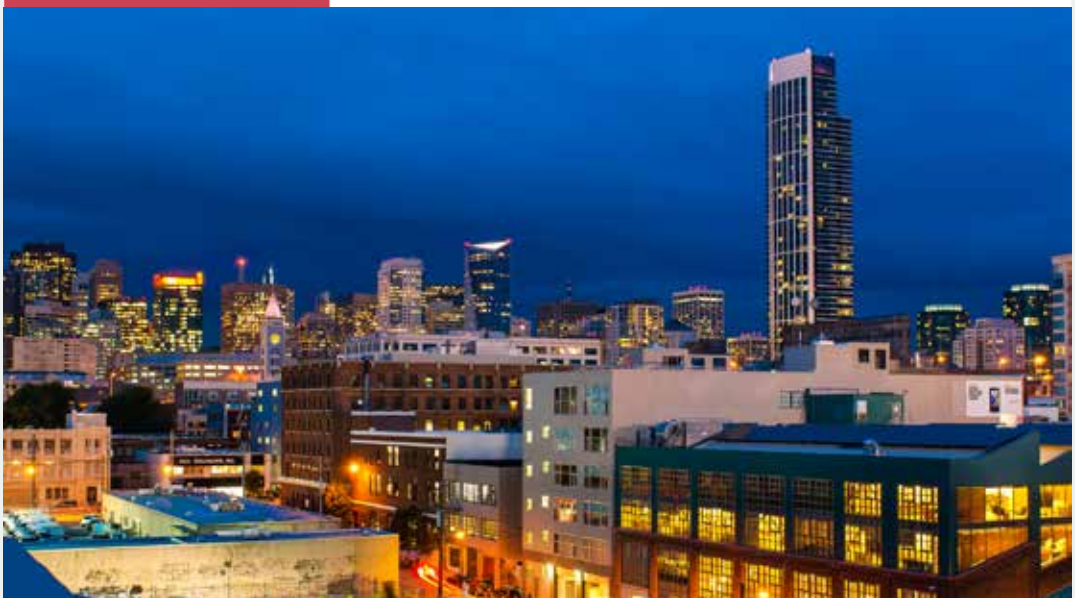
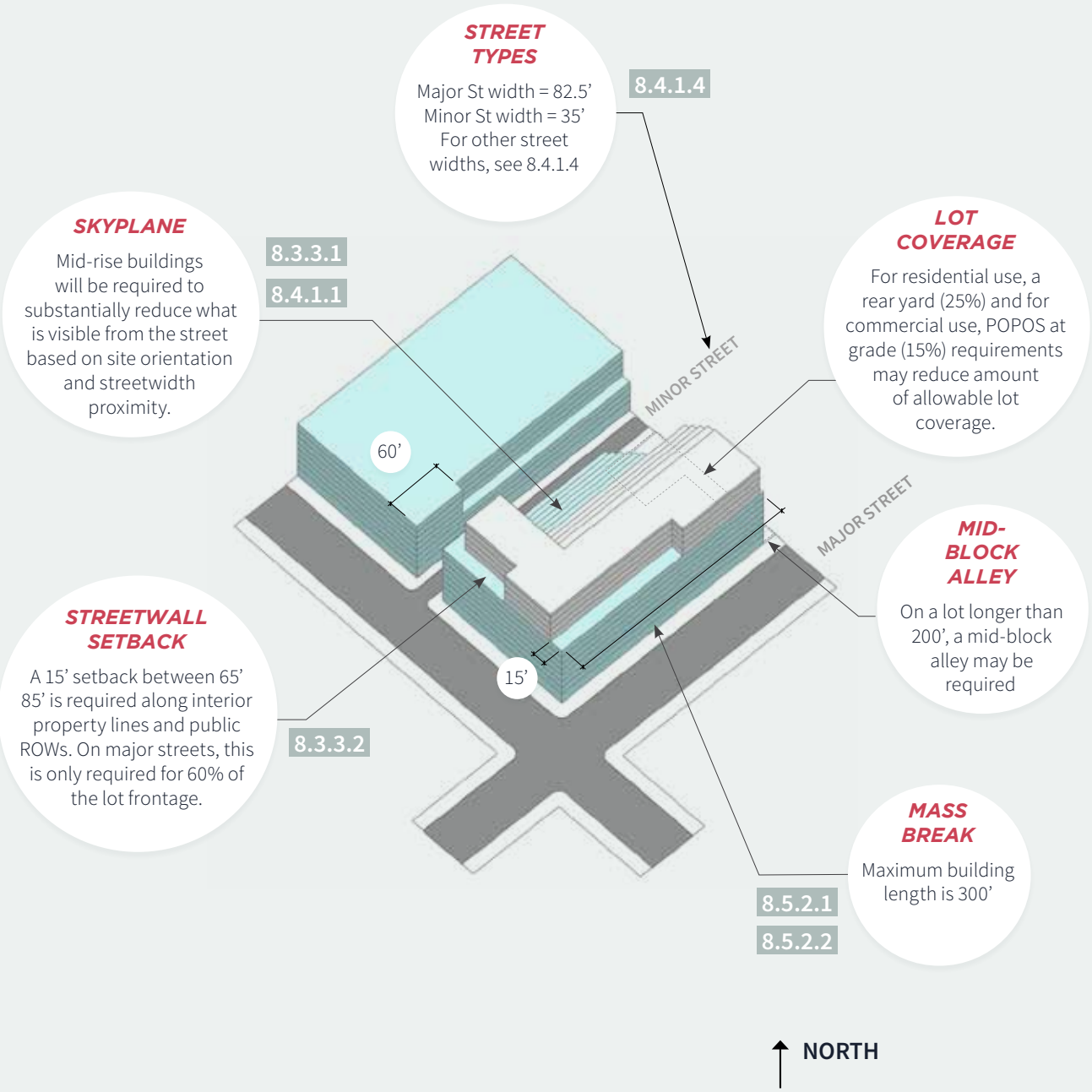


Photo by Daniel Austin Hoherd, Flickr (CC BY-NC 2.0).

Bulk Controls for 130' or 160' Tall Buildings

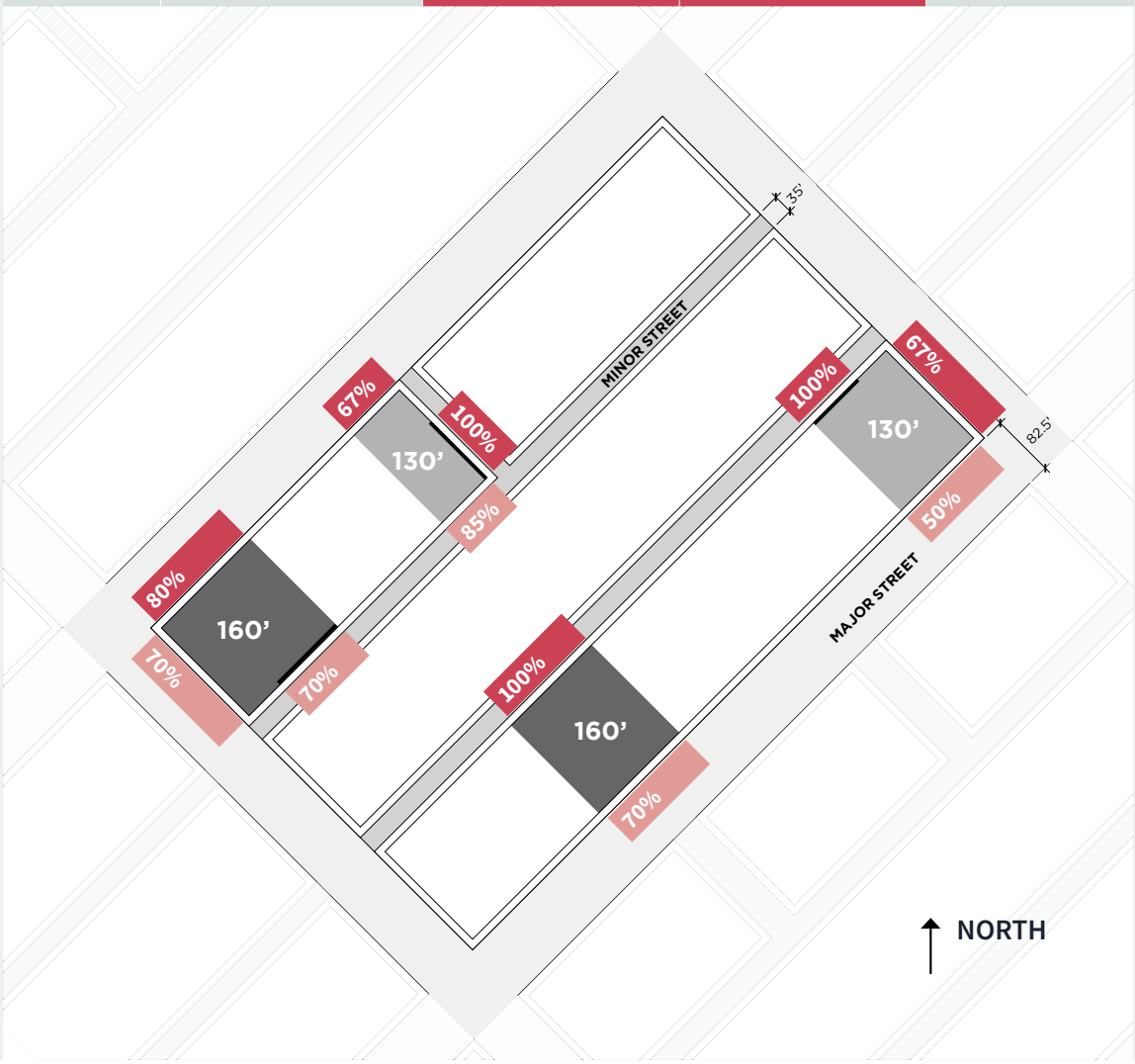
Central SoMa is primarily designed to be a mid-rise district, with buildings of 85 feet to 160 feet. To support this density while still supporting light, air, and sun access to the streets, the Plan includes:

Below is a majority but not complete depiction of Implementation Measures (referenced by number that may affect the building envelope.



SKYPLANE APPARENT MASS REDUCTION %

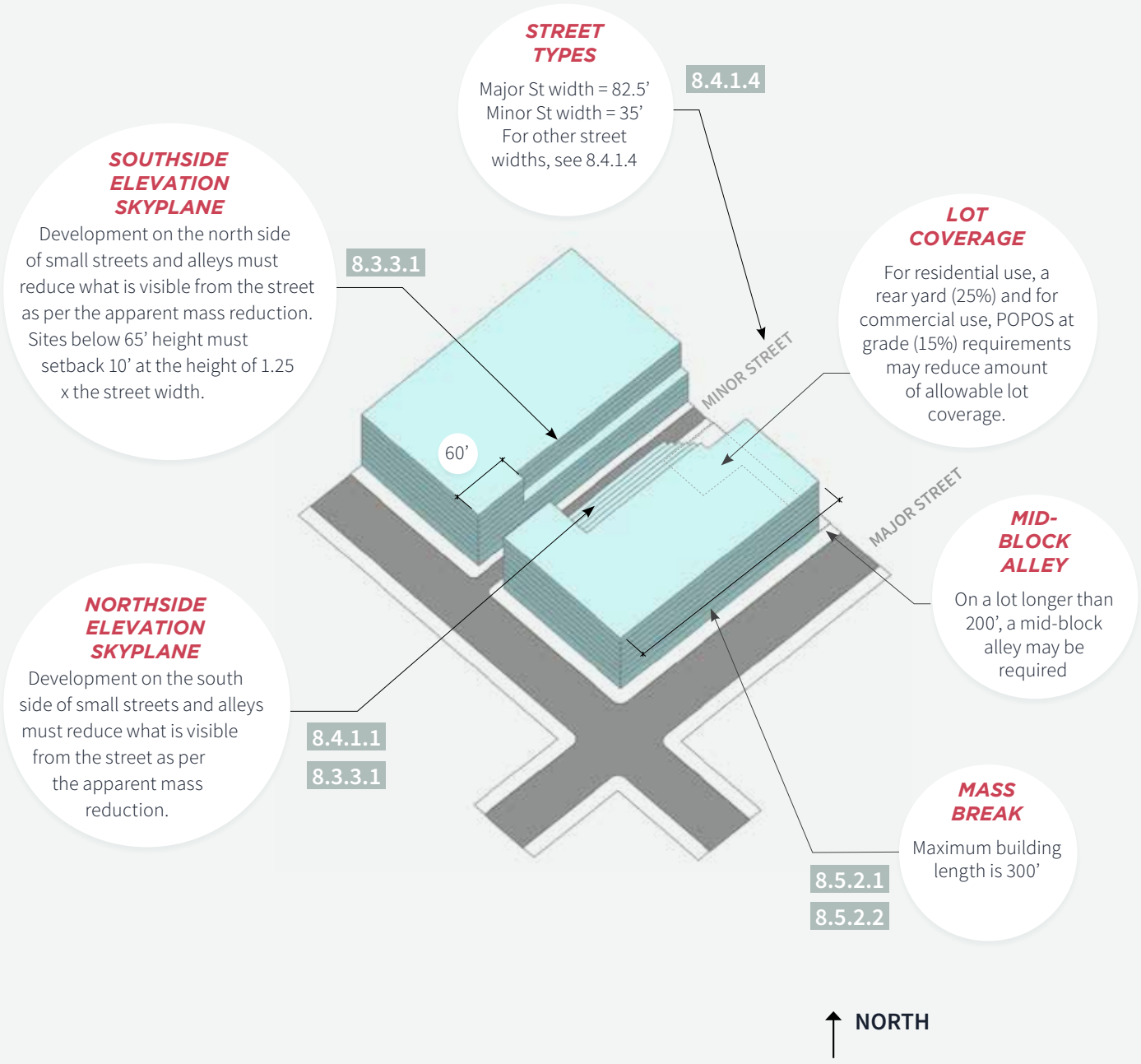
Height:	Building Face is on:	South elevation %:	North elevation %:	At height:
160’	35' wide street 82.5' wide street	**70%** **70%**	**100%** **80%**	above 35' above 85'
130’	35' wide street 82.5' wide street	**85%** **50%**	**100%** **67%**	above 35' above 85'



Bulk Controls for Buildings 85’ or Shorter

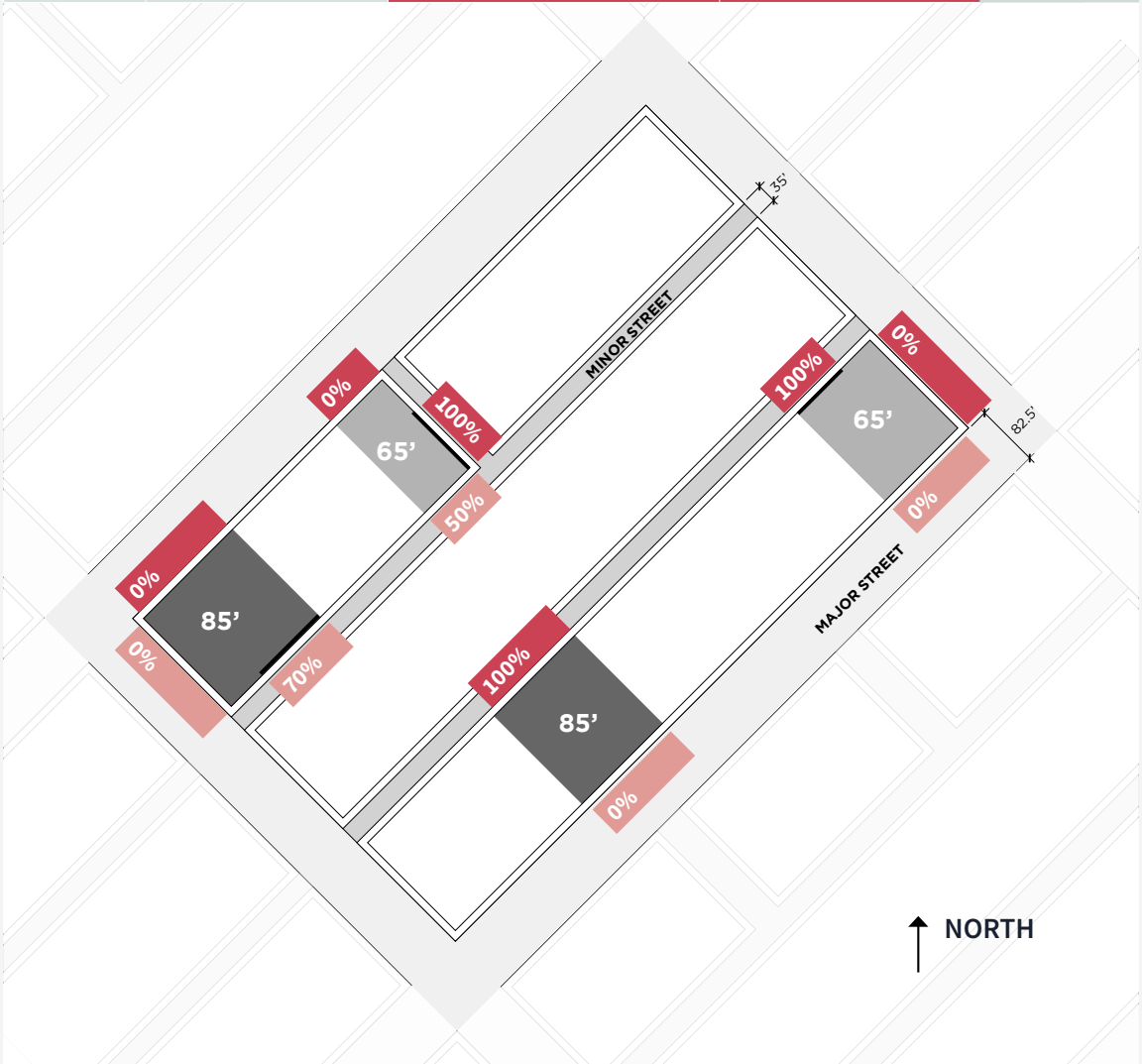
Small streets and alleys in Central SoMa offer special neighborhood character. To maintain this character by supporting light, air, and sun access to these streets, the Plan includes:

Below is a majority but not complete depiction of Implementation Measures (referenced by number that may affect the building envelope.



SKYPLANE APPARENT MASS REDUCTION %

Height:	Building Face is on:	South elevation %:	North elevation %:	At height:
85’	35' wide street	**70%**	**100%**	above 35'
65’	35' wide street	**50%**	**100%**	above 35'
< 65’	35' wide street	**10’ at 1.25x St width**	**100%**	above 35'



PART 4: NEIGHBORHOOD RENDERINGS

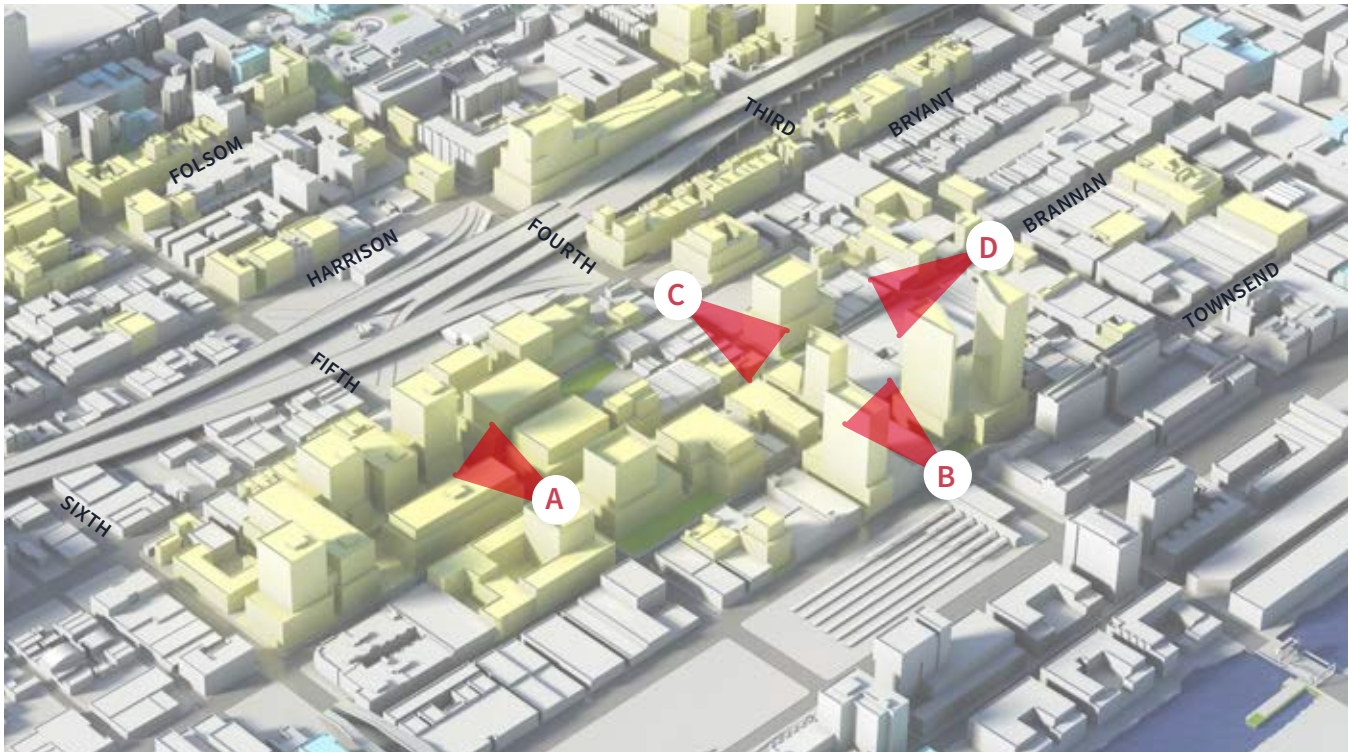
This section contains simple renderings of how the Plan Area might look from street level after development of a substantial number of its anticipated buildings. It is intended to depict the scale and definition of the urban room and not specific building or street design. It includes views from the following vantages:

A **Fifth and Brannan** looking northwest

B **Fourth and Townsend** looking northwest

C **Fourth and Bryant** looking southeast

D **Third and Brannan** looking southwest



View key locations of renderings found on the following pages.

Rendering by SOM; Diagram by SF Planning

A.1 View from Fifth and Brannan looking northwest (existing).

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning

A.2 View from Fifth and Brannan looking northwest (potential). This view, looking towards Market Street, depicts both tower and mid-rise projects that will better frame the urban room, complemented by wider sidewalks and more greening.

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning

B.1 View from Fourth and Townsend looking northwest (existing).

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning

B.2 View from Fourth and Townsend looking northwest (potential). looking northwest of development potential. This view looking towards Market Street is next to the highest tower height in the plan area. The visual experience of the tower is more from a distance (see view on opposite page) than from the street.

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning

C.1 View from Fourth and Bryant looking southeast (existing).

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning

C.2 View from Fourth and Bryant looking southeast (potential). This view, looking towards the Caltrain station, again shows how new and old can co-exist and maintain the neighborhood's diversity of building types and architecture.

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning

D.1 View from Third and Brannan looking southwest (existing)

D.2 View from Third and Brannan looking southwest (potential). This view, looking towards the Flower Mart, depicts the potential to add a substantial amount of development potential while maintaining many of the existing buildings and openness to the sky.