

CENTRAL CORRIDOR – DRAFT LAND USE PRINCIPLES – 11/3/11

This document contains the Draft Land Use Principles for the Central Corridor Project. It attempts to articulate the objectives that will guide the creation of the Central Corridor Plan. The principles themselves, and their accompanying “supporting factors”, were developed based on extensive conversation with community members throughout the first half of 2011, as well as our Central Corridor Background Report, the East SoMa Area Plan, and the Draft Western SoMa Area Plan.

Overall Goal: Support Growth

- Principle: Support substantial development in this transit rich-area
- Supporting Factors:
 - The Bay Area is expecting a lot of growth in jobs and housing
 - To minimize sprawl and reduce GHG emissions, SF should take on some of this growth
 - The better the transit, the better a place to develop
 - The Central Corridor Area some of the Bay Area’s best transit access – even without the Central Subway

- Principle: Favor office development over other kinds of growth
- Supporting Factors:
 - The City has recently identified appropriate locations for substantial housing development. We have not conducted equivalent processes for jobs.
 - The City needs more jobs for its new and existing residents.
 - Office-oriented jobs are expected to be the strongest growing economic sector in the region
 - The best place to put office jobs is near transit
 - From the community’s perspective, offices are considered less gentrifying than residential uses

- Principle: Support the growth of the technology sector in appropriate locations
- Supporting Factors:
 - SF is expecting to increase its amount of tech jobs, as companies seek to move here to compete for urban-oriented workers
 - These tech companies want to be in SoMa, near the existing hub of tech companies and in buildings that meet their lifestyle ideals (which are not met downtown)
 - SF wants to increase its tech jobs, as these are high-paying jobs relative to education, with large multipliers to benefit the whole economy
 - SF wants to direct these companies into appropriate locations, as they have the capital often to displace folks otherwise (e.g., dotcom era)
 - SF wants to direct firms near other firms to help everyone benefit from knowledge spillovers
 - There is a lot of development potential in the Central Corridor for firms to grow and thrive

- Principle: Support development of housing
- Supporting factors:
 - Although we have identified places for housing in the City, the Bay Area needs lots more housing to mitigate the supply/demand imbalance
 - Many sites in the area are too small or otherwise inappropriate for workplace development
 - Housing helps create a 24-hour neighborhood

- Principle: Support development of a diversity of housing, especially below-market rate units
- Supporting factors:
 - There is a need for all kinds of housing in the City, including rental and ownership, family-sized and small “affordable by design” units.
 - Most importantly, San Francisco needs wayyy more housing affordable to people at all income levels

Overall Goal: Create Complete Communities

Support Existing Uses

- Principle: Maintain and enhance existing housing, especially affordable housing
- Supporting factors:
 - SoMa, especially north of the Freeway, has a strong residential community, including important senior, Filipino, and affordable communities.
 - These communities should remain and thrive even as the neighborhood evolves.
- Principle: Historic Resources should be given the appropriate amount of protection
- Supporting factors:
 - SoMa, as one of the City’s oldest neighborhoods, has many buildings of various levels of historic importance
 - Historicity is only one of many factors determining the appropriate use of land
 - It is possible to build new buildings that are compatible with surrounding historic buildings or districts
 - It is important to maintain the existing eclectic and diverse nature of SoMa – which historic buildings help to do
- Principle: Respect recent re-zoning processes
- Supporting factors:
 - In recent years, portions of the Central Corridor have closely examined by the Eastern Neighborhoods and Western SoMa Plans
 - The Western SoMa Plan is currently rethinking the zoning in this area, and its proposal should be treated as the baseline for further consideration.
 - The Eastern Neighborhoods Plan explicitly deferred rezoning of the SLI and some other key parcels to the Central Corridor Plan. Other parcels were rezoned to support continuance of existing patterns in East SoMa, but may bear further consideration as well.

Support a Diversity of New Land Uses

- Principle: Reinforce SoMa’s mixed-use character by permitting a diversity of land uses:
 - Permit uses that support a diverse population, including different ages, different economic segments, and preference for different times of day
 - Permit community facilities
 - Permit retail, but not stand-alone big box
 - Permit live entertainment where appropriate
 - Permit industrial

- Supporting factors:
 - Much of what makes SoMa a great neighborhood is diversity
 - Existing uses have a right to remain and thrive even as the neighborhood evolves around them
 - Some uses may conflict with others when they are in very close proximity, which will require the use of zoning and other tools to try to minimize conflicts

Support a High Quality of Life

- Principle: Support open space
- Supporting factors:
 - Open space is an important amenity for creating complete communities
 - SoMa has a shortage of open space
 - Open space, even small, can provide welcome relief for pedestrians and focal gathering areas
- Principle: Support and enhance cultural and public uses, especially in the Yerba Buena Area
- Supporting factors:
 - Cultural and public uses are important to the completeness of the community
 - The Yerba Buena area has a particular concentration of regionally significant cultural (e.g., SFMoMa, YBC, Jewish Museum, MoAD) and public (e.g., Moscone Center) facilities

Principle: Development should help pay for necessary new infrastructure

- Supporting factors:
 - New uses create new impacts
 - Making new uses contribute to mitigating these impacts is established practice in SF. Yet, not all of this area is currently subject to such fees
- Principle: support an Eco-District in the area
- Supporting factors:
 - Infrastructure can help create extremely green neighborhoods
 - To the degree we need cheap land, we have some (Caltrans, SLI)
 - It can be a demonstration project to the world
 - Any premium can be supported by the tech companies who'll want to be affiliated with this
 - It's just a good idea to be eco-friendly