

Central SoMa Draft Policy Document
Preservation of Existing Buildings

March 2015

Introduction

The Historic Resources and Social Heritage chapter (Chapter 6) of the draft Plan states that “historic resources should be retained and protected for the enjoyment of future generations and to maintain the rich diversity of the built environment” (Principle 1). The Urban Form chapter (Chapter 3) of the draft Plan states that “the diverse scale of buildings in the Plan Area should be maintained, particularly areas with a fine grain concentration of smaller lots and buildings” (Principle 6). The discussion below seeks to convey how the Plan could support the implementation of these principles.

Summary

Based on the goals and objectives of the Area Plan, as well as the priorities identified by the Historic Preservation Commission, some buildings determined significant for their historic, architectural, social or cultural associations will be proposed for local designation. Local designation enables these properties to take advantage of two significant incentives, participation in the City’s transferable development rights (TDR) program and the Mills Act. The Planning Code sections that govern local designation are Articles 10 and 11.

A number of the remaining buildings that were found not to be significant exhibit a high level of visual cohesion and shared architectural expression. The Plan finds value in the retention of these buildings as a means to foster adaptive reuse, promote sensitive and creative context-based design, and further the broader sustainability goals of the Plan. For these buildings, limitations will be set for lot consolidation, and projects which retain and include existing buildings as part of the new development will be credited for the square footage they maintain against their TDR requirements.

Background

South of Market’s history is one of a constantly evolving commercial, industrial and residential area. This history has created an urban landscape composed of buildings that reflect an eclectic diversity of types, styles, sizes, and uses. These existing buildings play a key role in the unique character of this neighborhood.

The [draft Plan](#) proposed a number of strategies to implement the goals of retaining and protecting significant historic resources as well as maintaining the rich diversity and character of the built environment, including:

- Designating buildings at the local level for the preservation of significant historic resources:
 - A selection of properties identified for their significant historic, architectural, cultural or social associations with San Francisco will be proposed for inclusion in Article 10¹ and Article 11² of the Planning Code (Implementation Strategy 1.2 of the Historic Resource and Social Heritage Chapter of the Central SoMa Plan (IS 1.2)); and
 - An extension of the locally-designated South End Landmark District (IS 1.3) will be proposed for inclusion in Article 10 of the Planning Code to incorporate a number of previously unrecognized and unprotected buildings.
 - A newly identified California-Register eligible district, the Mint-Mission District, will be proposed for inclusion in Article 11 of the Planning Code at a Conservation District to protect the architectural character of buildings adjacent and in proximity to the Old Mint.
- Supporting the economic viability of historic buildings by incentivizing their preservation and adaptive reuse by:
 - Expanding the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program into the parts of Central SoMa that are not already zoned as downtown “C-3” (IS 1.4);
 - Continuing to make them easier to tenant by allowing a wider range of uses (IS 1.5) and providing a number of special exemptions from the Planning Code (IS 1.9) and eligibility for use of the California Historic Building Code (IS 1.10); and
 - Continuing to encourage the use of tax break programs for existing buildings, such as the Mills Act (IS 1.6), federal tax credits (IS 1.7), and façade easements (IS 1.8).
- Reducing incentives to demolish existing buildings that contribute to the overall visual character of the area by

¹ Article 10 of the Planning Code authorizes the landmark designation of an individual structure or other feature or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a local landmark. Article 10 designation provides oversight to ensure that the City’s history is preserved for the enhancement of property values, the stabilization of neighborhoods and areas of the City, the increase of economic and financial benefits to the City and its inhabitants, and the promotion of tourist trade and interest; preservation and encouragement of a City of varied architectural styles, reflecting the distinct phases of its history: cultural, social, economic, political and architectural and; enrichment of human life in its educational and cultural dimensions in order to serve spiritual as well as material needs, by fostering knowledge of the living heritage of the past. The Historic Preservation Commission’s (HPC) role is to ensure that work to City Landmarks is appropriate and consistent with the review standards outlined in Article 10 of the Planning Code and widely accepted preservation guidelines and practices.

² Article 11 of the Planning Code contains a list of buildings and districts of architectural, historical, and aesthetic importance in the C-3 Districts.² Article 11 designation provides oversight to ensure that the City’s architectural significant buildings are protected from undue demolition and insensitive alteration. The Historic Preservation Commission’s (HPC) role is to ensure that work to these properties is appropriate and consistent with the review standards outlined in Article 11 of the Planning Code and widely accepted preservation guidelines and practices.

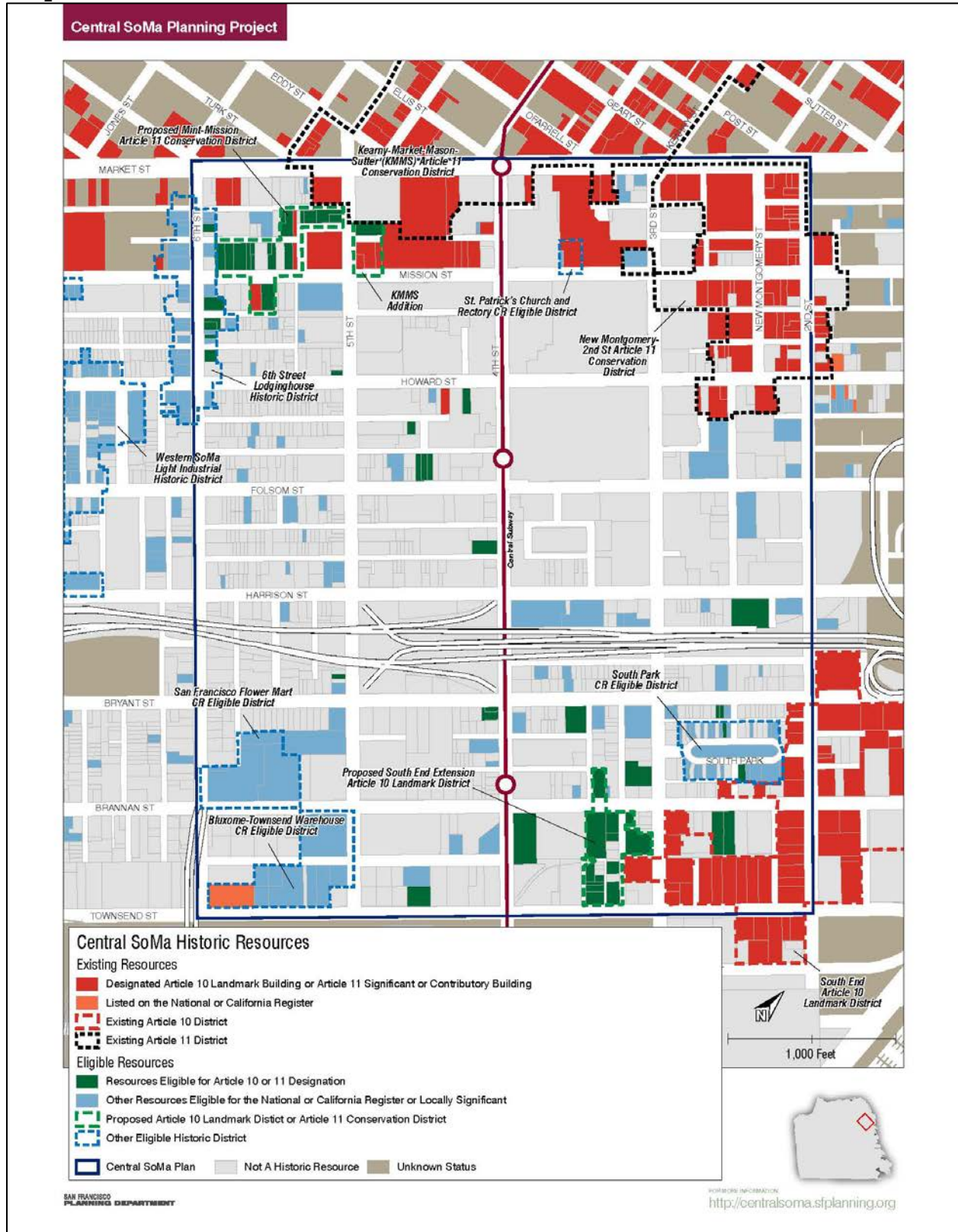
- Restricting consolidation of small lots on certain blocks in the Plan Area (Implementation Strategy 6.2 of the Urban Form chapter); and
- Creating mechanisms that encourage retention of existing building characteristics (Implementation Strategy 6.3 of the Urban Form).

These proposals have been informed by the documentation of the history of Central SoMa. This documentation includes:

- The [Downtown Plan](#) (adopted in 1985),
- The [SoMa Historic Context Statement](#) and [South of Market Historic Resources Survey](#) (adopted in 2010);
- The [Transit Center Historic Context Statement](#) and [Transit Center Survey](#) (adopted in 2008), and the
- [Central SoMa Historic Context Statement](#) and [Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey](#) (expected to be adopted in Spring of 2015).

These surveys have collectively examined the entirety of the Plan Area in an effort to determine which properties are eligible as historic resources at the local, state, and federal levels and those properties which are ineligible for designation per national, state and local guidelines but may warrant special consideration in local planning. A summary of the results of these surveys can be found in the map below.

Map 1 – Central SoMa Historic Resources



Proposal

The vision of the Central SoMa Plan is that “historic resources should be retained and protected for the enjoyment of future generations and to maintain the rich diversity of the built environment”,³ and that the diverse scale of buildings in the Plan Area should be maintained, particularly areas with a fine grain concentration of smaller lots and buildings”.⁴ To implement this vision, the Planning Department is proposing to adopt all of the strategies identified in the draft Plan. The following discussion further clarifies how this implementation could occur, as well as describes additional proposals to incentivize and preserve historic resources.

Designate buildings to Article 10 to prevent demolition or insensitive alterations of the significant historic and cultural resources

As discussed in I.S. 1.2 and I.S. 1.3, the Central SoMa Plan proposes utilize local designation through Article 10 of the Planning Code in Central SoMa, including an expansion of the locally-designated South End Landmark District. With completion of the Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey, the Planning Department is able to make a specific proposal as to which buildings would be locally designated through addition to Article 10 as part of the adoption of the Central SoMa Plan. These buildings are contained in the table below:

Table 1 – Proposed Additions to Article 10

APN	Address	Year Built	Historic Name	Landmark District
3763105	645 Harrison St.	1947	A. Carlisle & Company Building	
3775039	95 Jack London	1951	Gran Oriente Filipino Masonic Temple	
3775058	104-106 South Park St.	1907	Omiya Hotel/ Gran Oriente Filipino	
3775085	457 Bryant St.	1909	Pile Driver, Bridge and Structural Iron Workers Union #77	
3777001	500-504 4th St.	1908	Hotel Utah	
3776151	434 Brannan St.	1929	Scovill Manufacturing Company Building	South End Extension
3787005	630 3 rd St.	1924	Colgate Building	South End Extension
3787013	224 Townsend St.	1935		South End Extension
3787017	18 - 28 Clyde St.	1907		South End Extension
3787018	228 Townsend St.	1909	Pullman Hotel*	South End Extension
3787019	45 Lusk St.	1922		South End Extension
3787021	36 Clyde St.	1923		South End Extension
3787033	425 Brannan St.	1924		South End Extension
3787036	322 Ritch St.	1906	Morgan Oyster Co. Stables	South End Extension
3787040	330 Ritch St.	1920	Old S.F. Pie Co.	South End Extension
3787048	415 Brannan St.	1923		South End Extension
3787151	435 Brannan St.	1910		South End Extension

*Also eligible as an individual landmark

³ Principle 1 of the Historic Resources and Social Heritage chapter (Chapter 6) of the draft Central SoMa Plan.

⁴ Principle 6 of the Urban Form chapter (Chapter 3) of the draft Central SoMa Plan.

Expand Article 11 into Central SoMa and reclassify buildings to Article 11 to prevent demolition or insensitive alterations of significant architectural resources

As discussed in Implementation Strategy 1.2 of the Historic Resources and Social Heritage Chapter of the draft Plan (I.S. 1.2), the Central SoMa Plan proposes to expand the use of local designation through Article 11 of the Planning Code into the rest of Central SoMa (i.e., to districts other than C-3), so as to afford the significant buildings in this area a similar level of protection and ability to participate in the City’s transferable development rights (TDR) program (see below for more on this). With completion of the Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey, the Planning Department is able to make a specific proposal as to which buildings would be locally designated through addition to Article 11 as part of the adoption of the Central SoMa Plan. These buildings are contained in the table below:

Table 2 – Proposed Additions to Article 11 outside of the C-3

APN	Address	Year Built	Historic Name	Proposed Rating
3704050	47-55 6th St.	1912	Hillside Hotel	III
3725007	194-198 5th St.	1912	Hotel George	III
3725026	169-183 6th St.	1912	Alder Hotel	III
3725061	157-161 6th St.	1907	Sunset Hotel	III
3725063	139-149 6th St.	1909	Mint Hotel	III
3725064	135 6th St./495 Minna St.	1913	Sunnyside Hotel	III
3725079	117-125 6th St.	1911	The Rose Hotel	III
3733019	844 Folsom St.	1923	Victor Equipment Company	III
3733020	850 Folsom St.	1923	Victor Equipment Company	III
3752010	360 4th St.	1925	Southern Police Station	I
3760012	480 5th St.	1925		III
3763105	645 Harrison St.	1947	A. Carlisle & Company Building	I*
3775039	95 Jack London	1951	Gran Oriente Filipino Masonic Temple	III*
3775058	104-106 South Park St.	1907	Omiya Hotel/Gran Oriente Filipino	III*
3775084	461 Bryant St.	1912		III
3775085	457 Bryant St.	1909	Pile Driver, Bridge and Structural Iron Workers Union #77	III*
3776008	566-586 3rd St.	1907	Central Hotel	III
3776041	539 Bryant St.	1912	Shreve & Company Factory	I
3777001	500-504 4th St.	1908	Hotel Utah	I*
3777002	508-514 4th St.	1925	Murschen & Hoelscher Building	III
3786015	340-350 Townsend St.	1906	Paul Wood Warehouse	I
3787013	224 Townsend St.	1935	Worthington Company Warehouse	III
3787018	228 Townsend St.	1909	Pullman Hotel	III*
3787052	601 4th St.	1916	Heubline Wine Distribution Warehouse	I
3788024	361-365 Brannan St.	1928		III
3733020A	854 Folsom St.	1926		III
3788024A	355 Brannan St.	1928		III

*Also eligible for Article 10 designation

With completion of the Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey, the Planning Department is also able to make a specific proposal as to which buildings already in the C-3 District should be reclassified for designation under Article 11. These buildings are contained in the table below:

Table 3 – Proposed Additions to Article 11 within the C-3

APN	Address	Year Built	Historic Name	Proposed Rating	Proposed Conservation District
3704003	44-48 5th St	1907	Oakwood Hotel	I	Mint-Mission
3704013	936-940 Mission St.	1915	Chronicle Hotel	IV	Mint-Mission
3704017	948 Mission St.	1907	Piedmont Hotel/Alkain Hotel	IV	Mint-Mission
3704019	966 Mission Street	1922		IV	Mint-Mission
3704020	968 Mission Street	1930	Toledo Scale Co.	IV	Mint-Mission
3704021	972-976 Mission Street	1925	Dohrmann Hotel Supply Company	IV	Mint-Mission
3704022	980-984 Mission Street	1924		IV	Mint-Mission
3704024	986 Mission/ 481 Jessie Street	1907	Hulse Bradford Carpets & Draperies	IV	Mint-Mission
3704028	471 Jessie Street	1912		IV	Mint-Mission
3704029	431 Jessie Street	1912		IV	Mint-Mission
3704034	14-16 Mint Plaza; 54 Mint Street	1907		IV	Mint-Mission
3704035	440-444 Jessie St.	1924	Wobbers Printing & Engraving	IV	Mint-Mission
3704059	443 Stevenson Street	1914		IV	Mint-Mission
3704079	2 – 4 Mint Plaza	1926	Hale Brothers warehouse & offices	IV	Mint-Mission
3704113	10 Mint Plaza	1924		IV	Mint-Mission
3704144	6-8 Mint Plaza	1924		IV	Mint-Mission
3705039	55 5th St.	1913	Lankershim Hotel	IV	KMMS Extension
3725088	953-957 Mission St.	1915	Ford Apartments / Mint Mall	IV	Mint-Mission
3733088	821 Howard St.	1921	Bake Rite Oven Manufacturing / Southern Police Station	III	
3733137	357 Tehama St.	1910	Spaulding Pioneer Carpet Cleaners	III	

In addition to the buildings identified in Tables 2 and 3, individual property owners may request to be reclassified for designation under Article 11 by the Historic Preservation Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Expand the TDR Program to Central SoMa

The City enables buildings designated under Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code to sell their unused development rights to any “development lot” through the City’s Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, as elucidated in Planning Code Section 128. Currently, this program is limited to buildings in the C-3 Districts that are designated landmark buildings and/or listed in Categories I-IV of Article 11. As stated in I.S. 1.4, the Central SoMa Plan proposes to create value for more historic buildings by amending Section 128 of the Planning Code to enable buildings listed in Articles 10 or 11 in the rest of the Central SoMa Plan area to sell their TDRs.

Restrict Lot Consolidation

Currently, there are no constraints to lot consolidation within the Plan Area. This could threaten the development pattern, should many small- and medium-sized lots become consolidated into larger development sites. As a means to support the small fine-grain quality of the Plan Area, merger of any lot that meets all the following criteria will be prohibited:

- The lot contains one or more historic buildings (i.e., buildings with a California Historic Resources Status Code beginning with a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) or neighborhood character-enhancing building (i.e., buildings with a California Historic Resources Status Code of 6L),
- The frontage that could potentially be merged is less than 200 feet along a public right-of-way, and
- The lot is not in a C-3 Zoning District.

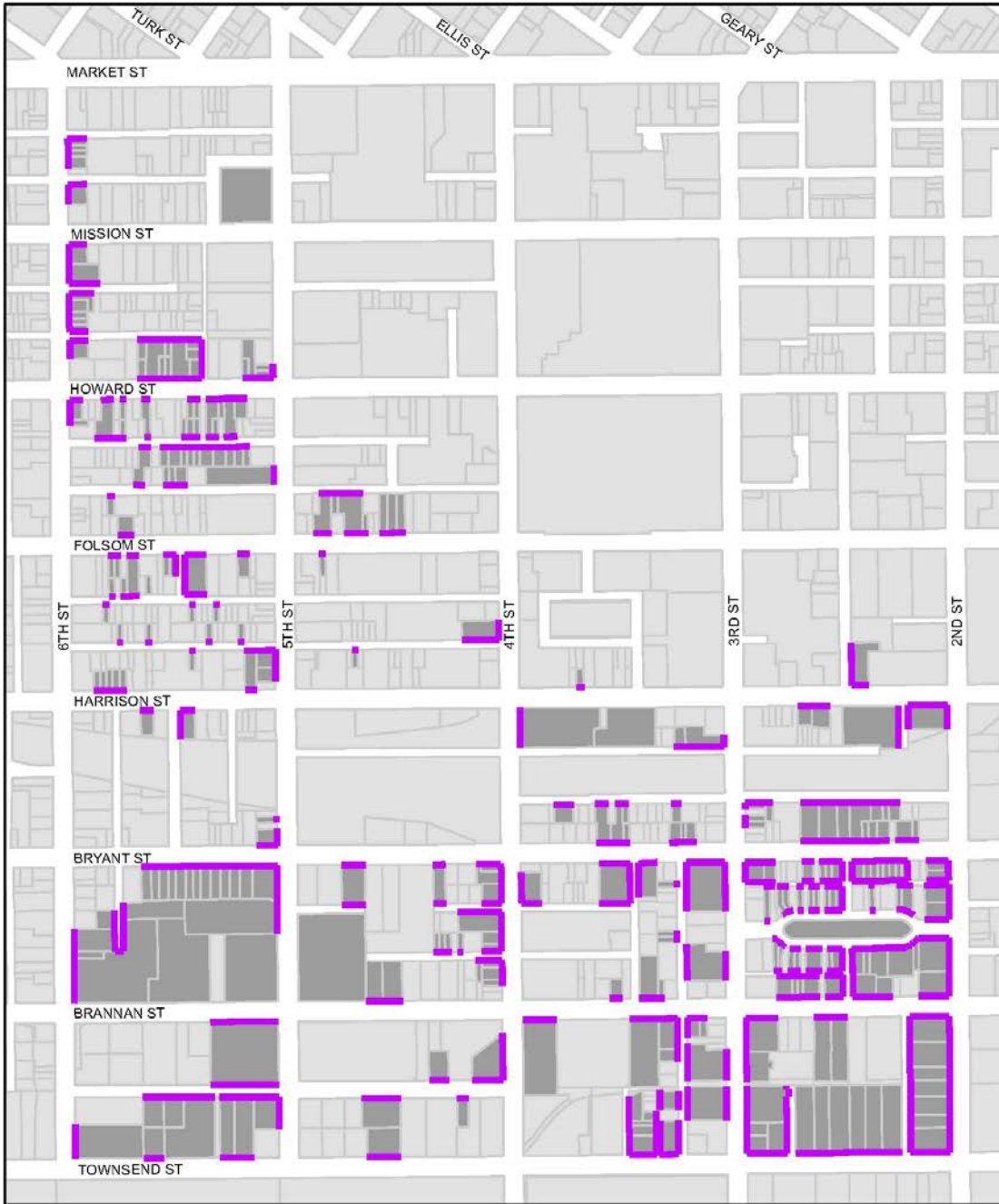
The lots and lot frontages affected by this prohibition are shown in the map on the next page.

This ban unto itself will encourage the retention of small and medium sized parcels that contain buildings that contribute to the neighborhood character. An exception would be made for lot mergers that preserve, through deed restriction, the existing building(s) on the subject site.

This policy complements the existing control in Planning Code Section 270.2 that recommends the creation of mid-block alleys on street frontages longer than 200 feet, and requires them on street frontages of longer than 300 feet. It also complements the proposed bulk control of this Plan that would limit buildings to a maximum of 300 feet in length.

The Plan will recommend when it may be necessary or desirable to grant exceptions to this policy, such as for a project that demonstrates fulfillment of broader City goals and objectives.

Map 2 – Prohibition on Lot Mergers



Central SoMa
Prohibition on Lot Mergers

■ Affected Parcel
— Affected Frontage (< 200')

1,000 Feet

Provide Incentive to Maintain Existing Building Stock

The Central SoMa Plan seeks to enhance and support the existing character and diversity of Plan Area and accommodate growth. One strategy to do this is to support the retention and integration of existing building stock that exhibits a high level of visual cohesion and contextual architectural expression as part of significant development projects. To do so, the Plan proposes to allow developments that preserve existing buildings to count the square footage maintained against the development's Transferable Development Right (TDR) requirement.⁵ If this incentive proves to be insufficient to meet the policy goals, other strategies will be developed. This policy would apply to buildings not locally designated pursuant to Articles 10 and/or 11 of the Planning Code and determined eligible as contributors to historic districts through survey evaluation or that warrant special consideration by planning.⁶

⁵ The Plan's TDR requirement proposal is still being developed and will be the subject of an upcoming policy paper. It is likely to be at least one Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of development capacity for projects that exceed a certain density, and possibly more for very dense projects (akin to the recent changes in the C-3-O(SD) district. The paper will also discuss precisely how the square footage of preserved buildings will count against the TDR requirement (e.g., will it be a one-for-one ratio, or some other ratio less or more than one-for-one).

⁶ This includes buildings with California Historical Resource Status Codes of 1D, 1CD, 2D, 2D2, 2D3, 2D4, 2CD, 3D, 3CD, 5D1, 5D2, 5D3, and 6L (<http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1069/files/tab8.pdf>).