



SHOWPLACE/SOMA NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS + COORDINATION STUDY (SNACS) PUBLIC MEETING #1 SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The first public meeting for the SNACS was held on Tuesday, November 19, 2018 from 6-8 p.m. at the Seven Stills Brewery and Distillery at 100 Hooper Street. Approximately 75 people were in attendance.

The meeting began with a brief presentation by Jeremy Shaw, the project manager of the Study. Jeremy provided an overview of the study's scope and the purpose of the meeting. A few attendees asked for clarifications of production, distribution and repair (PDR), on the potential for open space, and about the logistics of the evening. After the presentation, meeting participants reviewed ideas on 12 different information boards, discuss them with city staff standing nearby, and submitted feedback either directly on the boards, via written comment forms, or later online.



The boards presented background information on the study area; proposed land use and urban design principles for the area; and maps of the "public realm" (i.e. open space and streets). Background information included a history of plans and planning processes in the area, a summary of large projects in the development pipeline, background information on PDR, and information on the historic character of the district. The main boards for public input focused on land use (e.g. housing, office, industrial, retail etc.) and urban. They included broad principles to guide growth in the area, as well as graphic representations of how those principles would apply to the study area. The final two boards previewed the topics of the next public workshop: the public realm, focusing on open space and bicycle connections.

OUTREACH TO DATE

Throughout the fall, San Francisco Planning staff met with neighborhood organizations, Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs), city agencies and others to establish the scope of the project. Questions were asked about elements of the plan, the extent of scope, its relationship to other plans, and the final deliverables. The project scope, objectives and language were clarified as a result of this initial feedback.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Despite a variety of viewpoints at the meeting, there was broad agreement among a significant number of attendees around open space, connections to surrounding neighborhoods, neighborhood-serving ground floors, human-scale buildings and other urban design principles. A general consensus also emerged on topics related to PDR, view corridors, streets and transportation. The clearest divergence of opinions was related to housing and heights in the study area. Community comments are summarized by topic below. The list begins with the topic with the broadest agreement and consensus – open space – and concludes with housing and heights. The further down a topic is on the list, the wider the range of opinions were on that topic.



Open Space

More open space. A clear majority of public comments were in favor of more open space in the study area. Many comments called for additional parks and recreation areas to serve today’s needs and were especially concerned about the effect of future housing and jobs on the open space amenities. The points were underscored by critiques about park construction being second priority to building construction. The Railyards, Recology site and railroad rights-of-way around Mission Creek were all identified as potential future park sites.

Quality parks. Concerns were expressed about the quality of existing and future parks. Several comments preferred a park of significant size (e.g. Duboce park), parks away from freeways, as well as parks with fewer shadow or wind impacts.

Creating a cohesive neighborhood

Neighborhood services and active ground floors. Open space was the highest priority in terms of amenities that would help “complete” the neighborhoods in the study area. Several participants also noted the need for active ground floors with neighborhood services. There was a general acknowledgement that the area needed basic [neighborhood amenities](#) – equivalent to other San Francisco neighborhoods – including libraries, recreation centers, and transit access.

Connections

Better connections to and through the area. A majority of transportation comments also supported better transit, bicycle and pedestrian connections between Mission Bay and SoMa. Feedback included general comments, such as considering impacts on traffic and transportation to Mission Bay North, as well as specific comments like “direct bus link to 16th Street BART” and “better pedestrian crossing at 7th and Channel.” A general understanding that traffic was unsustainable for residents and a significant barrier for local employees underlied most transportation conversations. Employee parking and parking for PDR-related businesses was also of critical importance, but to fewer workshop participants. Other participants did not want to add any parking at all, preferring to focus on sustainable transportation modes, open space and community amenities.

Completing a fine-grained street network In calling for better pedestrian and bicycle connections, several comments addressed the need for a finer-grained network of streets or specific connections needed to complete that network. A 5th Street pedestrian bridge and connection across any future Railyards development were cited frequently. Others were most concerned with the pedestrian network, whether via streets, or on alleys, pedestrian paseos, parks, and trails. Freeways were frequently noted as barriers to pedestrian safety and comfort. One

participant proposed a “Makers Walk” to capture the unique history of the railroad, working waterfronts, and manufacturing that have shaped the area.

Land Use principles

The feedback generally supported the core land use principles proposed by City staff. Comments on the principles (shown at right) generally underscored the feedback above, in particular about open space and neighborhood amenities. Land use comments also included support for a better jobs-housing balance, more evening activity, and ensuring transit-oriented development benefits low-income households.

LAND USE PRINCIPLES

1. Encourage housing near jobs and transit
2. Plan for a range of possibilities at the railyards
3. Maintain PDR Zoning
4. Increase Parks and Access to open spaces

PDR

The majority of comments agreed with the existing PDR-protective zoning and supporting PDR businesses. The major PDR concern related to changing Eastern Neighborhoods (EN) zoning and straying from the core policy goals of the EN plans: a balance between PDR and housing. Comments were made about the need to make PDR spaces more affordable. Other comments, while fewer in number, preferred a future in which PDR policies did not dominate or come at the expense of housing and neighborhood amenities.

Urban Design Principles

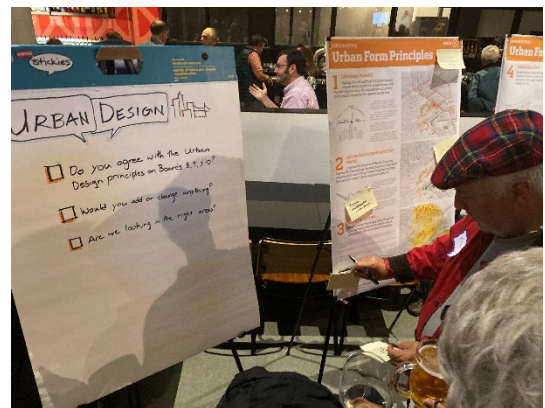
There was general support for the high-level urban design principles proposed at the workshop (shown at right). Some workshop attendees had additional comments and support for specific principles, including the scale of buildings and blocks, and the subject of views.

URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. Landmark Transit
2. Anchor public views and open spaces
3. Shape the skyline
4. Transition Scale
5. Space Towers

Human scale. Several comments referred to the scale of blocks and buildings, emphasizing the importance of a fine-grain street network, human-scale architecture, and a welcoming pedestrian experience. This included a desire for light, air and buildings that respond to the width of the street. Some of these comments referred to recent buildings in the area that disrupted the existing urban fabric.

Subservience to natural topography. On the subject of views, subservience to the City’s hills had the most support among written comments. Others were concerned about the precedent of blocky buildings and a lack of visual interest on the skyline.



Housing and Heights

Housing and heights were the most popular topics on all of the boards and in the surveys. Most comments coupled the ideas of more housing and more height, often referring to the Recology site. The comments were approximately split evenly between support for additional housing and support for maintaining Eastern Neighborhoods plan zoning (i.e. not adding housing in PDR areas nor increasing height). Several of the comments in support of housing acknowledged the housing crisis and opportunity for dense, transit-oriented development near the rail station. Many comments in support of existing zoning expressed concern with the ability to provide the appropriate infrastructure, open space, and services for new growth.

NEXT STEPS

Following the public meeting, all presentation materials were made available online. Online surveys were posted for those who could not attend the workshop. City staff will continue to solicit feedback through the first half of 2020, after which all comments will be synthesized. Public input will help shape the urban design and land use principles and will inform any proposed changes to policy or planning code that result from SNACS. A second workshop focused on the public realm (open space and streets) is planned for February.

