

October 26th Open House – Questions and Answers

Affordable Housing Bonus Program

How many additional stories could be allowed in addition to existing zoning regulations?

The Local AHBP program offers up to two stories (20 feet) of residential development than currently allowed under existing zoning regulations. The 100% Affordable Local AHBP program offers up to three additional stories (30 feet) of residential development than currently allowed under existing zoning regulations. The State AHBP never offers no more than two stories (20 feet) of residential development than currently allowed under existing zoning regulations.

These projects would be subject to the AHBP Design Guidelines.

How can I be involved in the project review and approval process?

AHBP projects are subject to the existing project review and approval process. The following opportunities exist for community members to be involved in the process:

- Participation at the [Pre-Project Application Meeting](#) (noticed and hosted by the Project Sponsor)
- Input to the during project review and Entitlement process – (noticed by the San Francisco Planning Department; public comments heard by Planning Commission)
- Input to the environmental review process - (noticed by the San Francisco Planning Department: 1) conducting environmental review; and, 2) draft environmental documents published)

Adjacent property owners, Neighborhood Groups, and interested parties are notified of a proposed project during each of these stages in the project review process.

Will rent-controlled units be preserved?

Any proposed demolition of a rent controlled unit under the AHBP program would be subject to state law AB 2222. This law requires that all rent control and affordable units are replaced by like affordable housing. The total number of affordable units in the replacement project must be greater than the number of existing rent control or affordable units. The new replacement units, which would be permanently affordable, would count towards the affordability requirement.

Some commenters have suggested that the replacement requirements should be higher than the baseline program. For example, they assert that a 20 unit building that proposes to demolish two rent control units, should have a higher affordable housing burden than a 20 unit building proposed on a vacant parcel. Others feel that the total number of affordable units in the new project, should be greater than the existing building.

The need for a clear city policy around balancing the maintenance of existing rent control units with the production of new affordable units is clear. Recent development proposals, and other planning processes, such as the Mission Action Plan 2020 effort have identified this as a central issue. Accordingly Department staff intends to work with decision makers to develop a more robust rent control unit requirement that will be driven by these general principles:

- Demolish of rent control units should be limited to cases where overall affordability is greater in the replacement project.
- Projects that demolish rent control units should be subject to some type of replacement requirement.
- All affordable and replacement units will be permanently affordable Below Market Rate Units, not 'replacement rent control units'.
- Tenants of rent control units that are demolished shall be afforded additional benefits, for example a right to return to the completed building, neighborhood preference for affordable units, etc.

What does "under-utilized" (or soft site) mean?

Under-utilized parcels are those that are not developed to or near the full capacity that existing zoning regulations allow. For example, a vacant lot in a zoning district that allows for a four-story development is considered an under-utilized site. The Planning Department generally reviews sites that are using less than 5 percent of their zoned capacity as soft.

Will existing neighborhood character and aesthetics be preserved?

All AHBP projects will be reviewed under existing design guidelines, including the Urban Design Element, the Draft Ground Floor Residential Design Guidelines, and the Residential Design Guidelines. In addition, Exhibit 6 of this case report include the AHBP proposed design guidelines which include new guidelines, some existing design guidelines that do not currently apply citywide, and some guideline for review of projects in historic districts.

The four new AHBP specific design guidelines will apply to all AHBP projects. These guidelines are limited to considerations that are unique to AHBP projects, primarily providing direction around the integration of larger buildings in existing neighborhoods both midblock and on corner lots.

The four AHBP specific design guidelines:

1. Create a gracious, well-defined ground floor
2. Ensure tops of buildings contribute to neighborhood quality
3. Articulate sidewalls
4. Express Exceptionally Complimentary Architectural Character

The AHBP Design Guidelines also include several existing design guidelines from recently completed planning processes that address massing, articulation, ground floor treatment and streets. Eventually these design guidelines will be incorporated into citywide design guidelines, but until such time they will

be used to review all AHBP proposals. These guidelines were selected to ensure that the all AHBP projects achieve a higher quality of design. Finally, while the AHBP program area includes some historic districts. Accordingly the AHBP design guidelines include ten guidelines for infill development in historic districts that speak to 1. Materials, features and forms; and 2. Complementary and differentiated design.