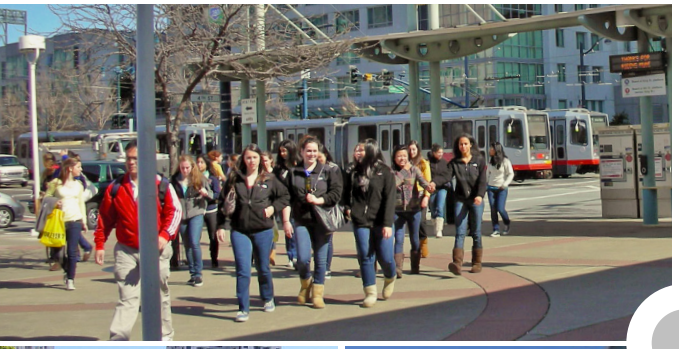
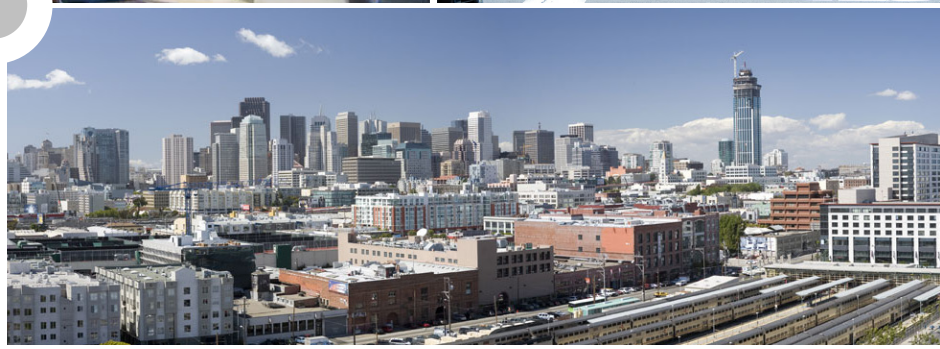
CENTRAL CORRIDOR PLAN





SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW
APRIL 2013

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SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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CENTRAL CORRIDOR PLAN

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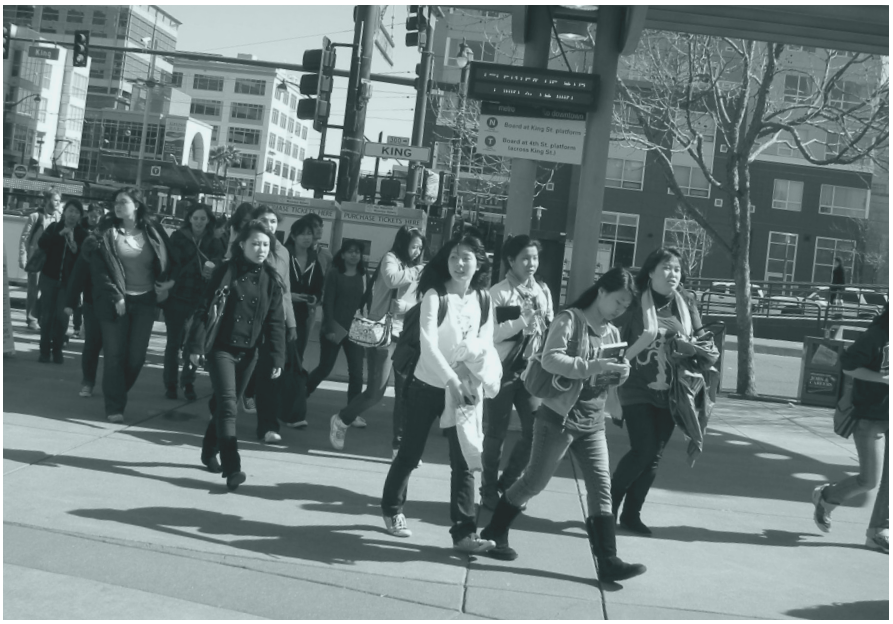
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1 INTRO-DUCTION

The Central Corridor Plan provides the vision and the strategies to support positive change along and around the Fourth Street transit spine, while maintaining SoMa's diverse social and economic mix.

Since its reconstruction after the 1906 Earthquake, the South of Market area has been home to an eclectic population, blend of uses and character. Today SoMa exists as a rich depiction of San Francisco's past and future – industrial warehouses operate adjacent to new technology offices, historic Victorians share party walls with contemporary lofts, mainstream museum culture mixes with experimental street art, longstanding communities coexist with recently arriving professionals, and visitors to music venues share sidewalks with mothers pushing strollers.

And its evolution continues. A new subway along Fourth Street will transform the central portion of SoMa with a major transit spine improving connections to SoMa from Downtown, Mission Bay and beyond. Internationally known companies seek space in the district, while growing start-ups flourish in near proximity. Co-working facilities are sprouting up, and entrepreneurial events spur innovation almost nightly. Artisanal food production is occurring in bakeries and on rooftop gardens, food trucks flock to the area daily. More bikes and pedestrians than ever move through SoMa's streets.

At the same time the City is facing growth pressures - the Bay Area's population is expected to grow by 2.1 million people and 1.1 million jobs in the next three decades, and San Francisco is projected to attract a significant portion of that growth. SoMa's evolution provides an opportunity to plan for that growth in a way that is consistent with our Transit First Policy, our transit-oriented development policies, and our economic development goals.

But policy guidance and public improvements are needed to steer this progression on its best path forward. Unsated demand means rising housing and office costs, yet unchecked development could damage the area's diverse balance. Sidewalks are narrow, and fast-moving cars overwhelm pedestrians and cyclists. SoMa is divided by a freeway, and its southern portion is dominated by asphalt, lacking green.

The Central Corridor Plan provides the vision and the strategies to support positive change along and around the Fourth Street transit spine, while maintaining SoMa's diverse social and economic mix. Increased access to jobs and to housing, safer streets and more public spaces, strong neighborhood character, economic vitality, and 24-hour livability – the Central Corridor Plan aims to ensure SoMa serves a local neighborhood as well as a global one.

Project Area Boundary

The name of the subway project – Central Subway – and the location of the area in SoMa – spanning portions of both East and West SoMa -- have led to the name for this plan – the "Central Corridor." The Central Subway transit line, an extension of the 3rd Street light rail line that runs up the southeast side of the City and through Mission Bay, will branch at King Street and continue north up Fourth Street through the South of Market neighborhood to Chinatown. The northern section of this new subway runs through the dense, relatively built-out neighborhoods of Chinatown, Union Square and Downtown, and is planned to relieve pressure from heavily-used bus lines. The southern stretch of the railway spans the Yerba Buena area as well as less intensively developed portions of SoMa, where it is expected that the line could support additional ridership brought by new development.

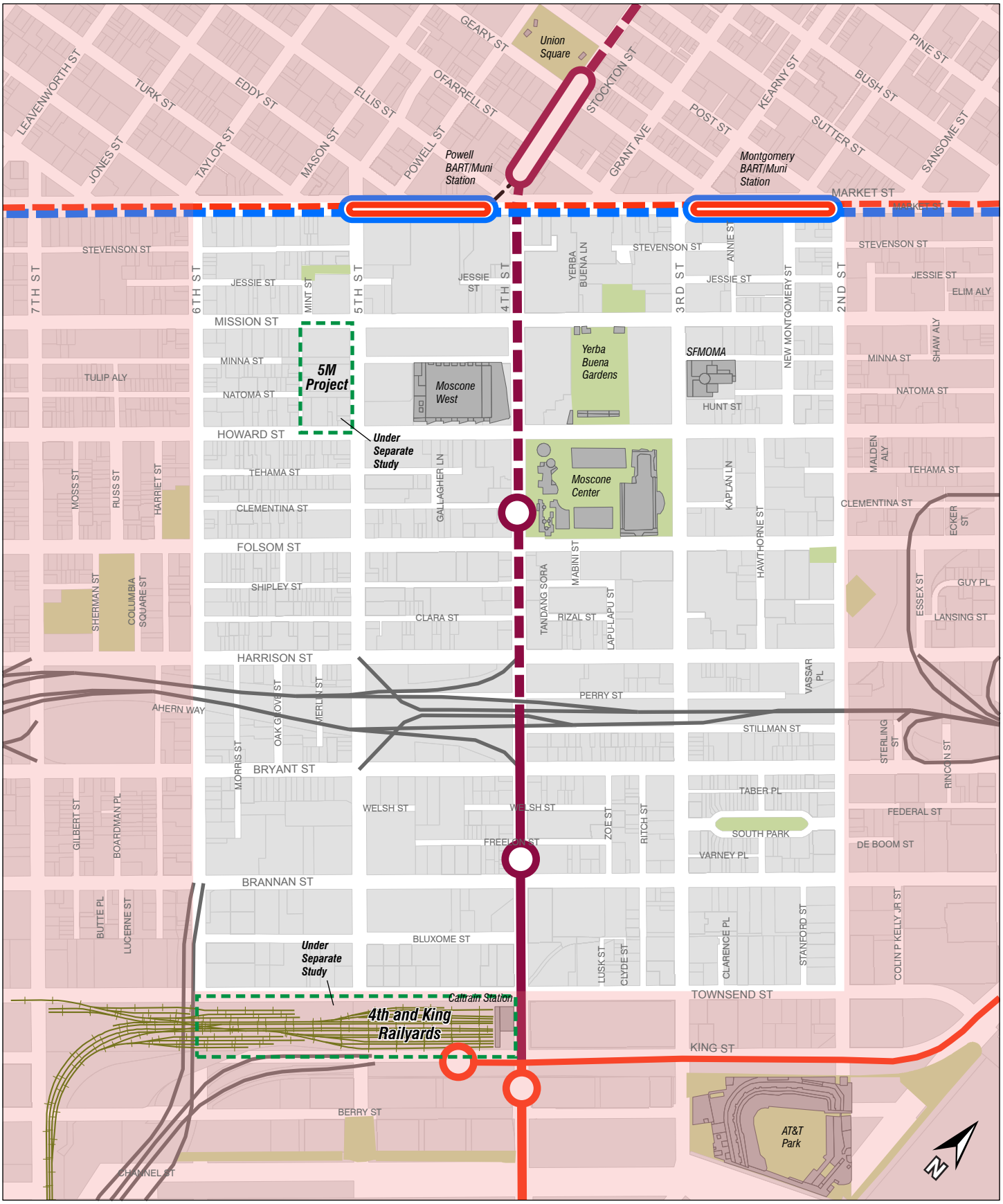
The Central Corridor Plan focuses on this southern portion of the new railway line, in areas where changing land use patterns could complement and capitalize on the new transit infrastructure. Its goal is to provide an integrated community vision that builds on this synergy of transportation and land use opportunity to promote new development, improve the public realm and provide other community benefits. The Plan aims to synthesize a number of past and current planning efforts in the vicinity, including the East SoMa and Western SoMa Area Plans, the former Sixth Street and Yerba Buena Redevelopment Plans, the nearby Mission Bay Redevelopment and Transit Center District Plans, and ongoing studies related to the future of the Caltrain station and yards at 4th and King Streets, by providing a comprehensive lens in which to view the area's transformation with regards to land use, transportation, open space, and urban form.

Plan Rationale

The desire for a Central Corridor Plan began during the Eastern Neighborhoods planning process, which in 2008 adopted new land use controls and proposed community improvements for industrially-zoned land in the City's southeastern sector. The Planning Department decided to defer the rezoning of an important swath of land along the Central Subway– the current Service Light Industrial (SLI) zoning district- and recommended it be addressed in a focused planning process that takes into account a comprehensive study of the City's growth needs, as well as the transportation opportunity represented by the Central Subway.

Since that time, the City's growth needs have become much clearer. The adoption of Senate Bill 375, which required regions as a whole to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) by linking growth to transit, resulted in increased pressure on San Francisco to accommodate a major portion of the region's growth. And while the City has performed significant planning intended to direct housing towards areas supported by transit, it has been less proactive in planning space for jobs. With remaining space in Mission Bay to be built and new space planned to be added in Transit Center District, the City does have some transit oriented areas planned for job growth. However, given regional growth projections and the City's own economic goals, there will be demand for significantly more space than can be accommodated in those locations, and the current low vacancy rates and high rents in SoMa indicate an area of high demand.

Also in the intervening four years, Central Subway plans have developed, with more information available on the Subway's capacity, the exact location of stations, and the potential to link increased density to transit improvements. The Central Subway is expected to move 76,000 daily riders through the corridor by 2030, with a peak hourly capacity of almost 5,000 riders in each direction. Stations will include new underground facilities in Chinatown, at Union Square/Market Street, and at Moscone Center/Folsom Street, with a new above-ground station at Brannan Street. In addition to the subway, other transportation improvements are planned to address SoMa circulation needs including the Downtown Rail Extension which will extend Caltrain underground through the study area to the Transbay Transit Center, MUNI improvements such as transit-only lanes along Mission Street, and anticipated improvements to the Bicycle Network such as new cycle lanes along 2nd and 5th Streets.



Caltrain BART Muni Central Subway

Solid lines represent surface rail, dashed lines represent subway.

CENTRAL CORRIDOR PLAN AREA

1,000 Feet

Contributing Factors

There are both regional and local factors that contribute to the need for this plan at this time. Regionally, we are facing a need to plan near transit. In the Bay Area, transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), with passenger travel in cars and light trucks causing more than 40% of those emissions. Transforming some of that passenger travel to transit, biking or walking will not only support environmental goals like reduction of energy consumption, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and less air pollution, but also economic and social ones such as increased physical activity, lower vehicle accident rates, and lower household transportation expenses.

Locating jobs near transit will be a critical component of reducing GHGs. That is, commuters are most likely to use transit when stations are very close to their jobs, more so than when transit is close to their homes. While concentrating both jobs and housing near major transit centers reduces auto travel, research has consistently shown a notably stronger correlation between transit usage and the proximity of jobs to transit than housing to transit.[1] Research has also shown significant ridership increases with increases in employment density along rail lines.

Locally, we need more transit-accessible job space. The City's 2007 Economic Strategy, currently undergoing an update, set a path for more economic development and opportunity, more and better jobs for middle-and lower-income residents, and growing tax revenue to fund City services. Its key recommendations relating to land use are to 1) provide sufficient real estate for strategic priorities, 2) maximize San Francisco's accessibility to a local and regional workforce, and 3) work to reduce the cost of residential and commercial development.

Attracting more jobs is a challenge - San Francisco's job base has been growing more slowly than the rest of the Bay Area for the last forty years; and despite a few finite periods of major job growth in the late 1970's and late 1990's, San Francisco hasn't seen a significant net increase in jobs over the past half century. But there are signs of hope - San Francisco's percentage of regional jobs has increased since 2005[2]; and that increase coincides with a national movement of businesses back to transit-oriented locations in center cities. While the overall number of jobs in the City hasn't substantially increased, the makeup of the job base has, with a substantial decline in traditional industrial and manufacturing jobs and compensating substantial increase in the number of office-based "knowledge" sector jobs which are partial to transit-oriented locations that provide access to a workforce from around the City and region. This explains why, though overall jobs have not increased much, downtown and SoMa have grown substantially over the past 25 years.

The success in build-out under the Downtown Plan means there is little capacity left for growth in that area. And companies are demonstrating a growing preference for flexibly designed space that supports team-based work styles over the typical executive office suite model provided in traditional Financial District high-rise buildings. Among San Francisco's districts, the Central Corridor area provides a unique opportunity to create more job space at locations readily accessible to both regional and local transit. Its location, framed by BART to the north, Caltrain on the south and connected by new Central Subway as well as other local bus routes, represents an almost ideal intersection of local and regional transit. Its adjacency to the major job centers of Downtown and Mission Bay make it a natural next step to focus job growth, and it is already home to some of technology's biggest players, which is a strong attraction for new and growing companies in that sector. Finally, its capacity for new development combined with its existing building stock provides the opportunity to expand not only the amount, but the types of workspace San Francisco has to offer.

1 For instance, "Making the Most of Transit," (Kolko, 2011, Public Policy Institute of California); "Characteristics of Rail and Ferry Station Area Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area: Evidence From the 2000 Bay Area Travel Survey," (Metropolitan Transportation Commission, 2006); "Land Use Impacts on Transport" (Litman, 2012, Victoria Transport Policy Insitutute).

2 San Francisco Commerce & Industry Inventory, November 2012.

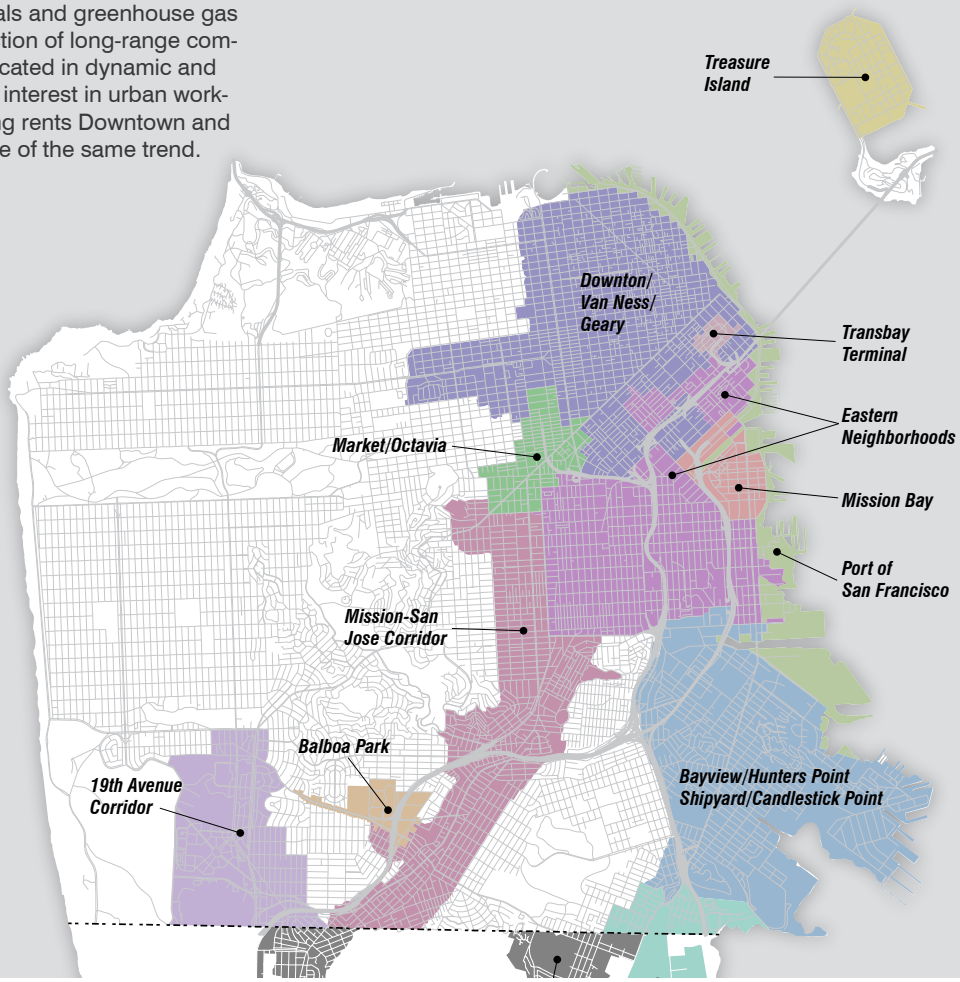
PLANNING FOR GROWTH

For the first time ever, in spring 2013, the Bay Area will be called upon to adopt a plan that coordinates land use and transportation on a regional basis, and links them to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through travel. Plan Bay Area grew out of California Senate Bill 375, the California Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008. The resulting Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) will direct future growth towards Priority Development Areas (PDAs) - locally identified, infill development opportunity areas near transit.

Plan Bay Area relies on San Francisco to accommodate roughly 15% of the region's growth, projecting an additional 92,410 housing units and 191,000 jobs in the City by 2040. This growth allocation for San Francisco is ambitious, and San Francisco's projected job growth relative to the region represents a significant shift, as San Francisco has been outpaced by job growth in less urban parts of the region for the last 30 years. However, those first 20 years coincided with the national movement of offices, particular major companies, to the suburbs; and in 2005 San Francisco's share of job growth swung upwards. Throughout the country in recent years, factors ranging from smart growth goals and greenhouse gas reduction targets, to a workforce rejection of long-range commuting, to a growing demand to be located in dynamic and collaborative settings, have increased interest in urban workspace. Local job growth and increasing rents Downtown and South of Market provide local evidence of the same trend.

San Francisco has engaged in significant planning to manage this growth so that it is served by transit and accompanied by amenities. Plans & projects in San Francisco's PDAs (shown above) provide the collective capacity for over 65,000 new residential units and almost 100,000 new jobs. The new growth enabled through the Central Corridor's proposed changes would bring us significantly closer to ensuring the majority of growth occurs in planned areas.

As a transit nexus, job center, and home for almost 450,000 workers, San Francisco has a regional responsibility to plan for projected growth – but that growth must occur in complete communities, with transit, open space, and other necessary amenities. Significant funding will be required to realize this and other plans for growth. Fortunately, numerous regional, state and federal funds for transportation and urban development have been targeted for implementation of SB 375, and past planning efforts, as well as the potential of the Central Corridor, will position the City well to secure some of this funding.



SAN FRANCISCO PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Plan Goals

While the seeds of the Central Corridor Plan began under the basic tenet of supporting transit-oriented development, the Plan's participants quickly recognized that managed growth could bring with it a number of tools to transform and improve the neighborhood. Infill fabric, if designed with high quality architecture and active ground floors, could increase visual quality as well as safety of the areas streets. New development could include accessible jobs, affordable housing & public benefits. The transportation changes needed to support growth could tame local streets, and bring opportunity for the kind of street life SoMa often lacks. Community members saw the possibility for slower traffic, a new park, and neighborhood gathering spaces. All of this potential led to a set of plan goals much broader than, and in some ways more critical than, simply supporting growth.

Based on community input, the Central Corridor Plan sets forth the following overriding goals:

GOAL 1

SUPPORT TRANSIT-ORIENTED GROWTH, PARTICULARLY WORKPLACE GROWTH, IN THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR AREA.

The Central Corridor area lies just south of Market Street, San Francisco's main drag, adjacent to existing centers of commerce, housing, and visitor activity in Downtown and Mission Bay. It is linked regionally and locally by a strong and diverse transportation network including BART, Caltrain, MUNI and the coming Central Subway. And it is already an area of demonstrated demand, in a part of SoMa that has seen more growth and economic activity than any other City neighborhood in the last ten years. From a location, transit, and market demand perspective, it is a logical growth center. Allowing a wide and flexible range of uses, increasing allowed densities, and strategically raising height limits are the Plan's key strategies to enable increased development potential.

However, any increases in development capacity need to be balanced with other Plan goals - respecting the rich context, character and community of SoMa, providing benefits for its existing residents and workers as well as the services needed for new ones, and growing sustainably.

GOAL 2

SHAPE THE AREA'S URBAN FORM RECOGNIZING BOTH CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXTS.

As noted above, the Central Corridor area plays a significant role as a job hive, cultural center and transit nexus in our City, but it also is a unique place with a rich history and a fabric of diverse buildings and mix of activities that give it its local and international dynamism. Famous for its brawny warehouses, eclectic mix of commercial buildings from throughout the 20th Century and fine-grained alleys, growth should reflect this character while accommodating the broader growing needs of tomorrow and the next generation.

Urban design provides a tool to address overall neighborhood livability and character, particularly regarding the scale of the streetwall, lot fabric, sunlight to open space, and historic resources. This plan sets forth a proposal for a mostly mid-rise district, based on an overall base height set by the width of the area's streets. The plan uses a number of urban design strategies, from lowering heights to preventing lot mergers, to protect assets like existing open spaces, residential enclaves, small-scale neighborhood commercial clusters and historic districts.

GOAL 3

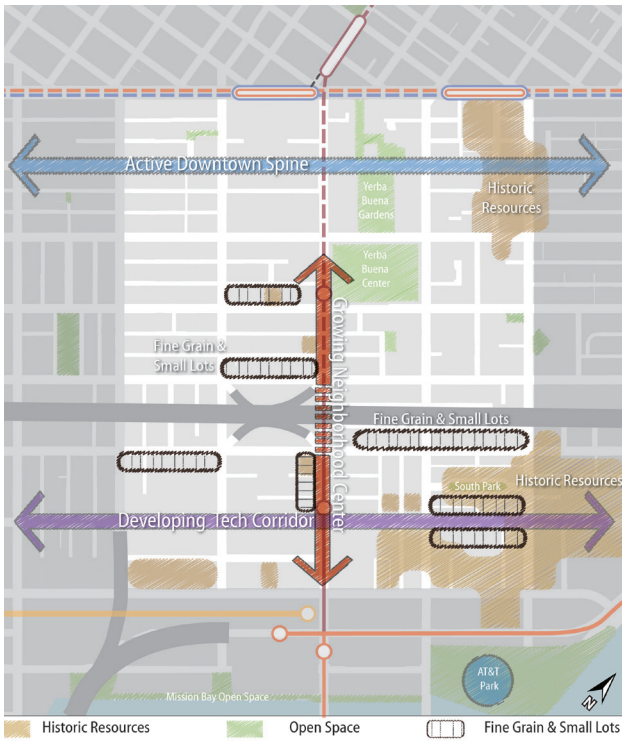
MAINTAIN THE AREA'S VIBRANT ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL DIVERSITY.

SoMa is one of the most vibrant areas of the City. The Central Corridor Plan area incorporates an incredibly diverse cross section of San Francisco's population, uses and buildings. Within the Plan Area there are multiple mini-neighborhoods where one use might be more predominant than others, numerous communities with longstanding heritage in the area, and a wide range of residents, from singles to families, at a range of incomes.

A key goal of this plan is to maintain this vibrancy through land use strategies that support and build upon existing diversity, by protecting existing residential areas

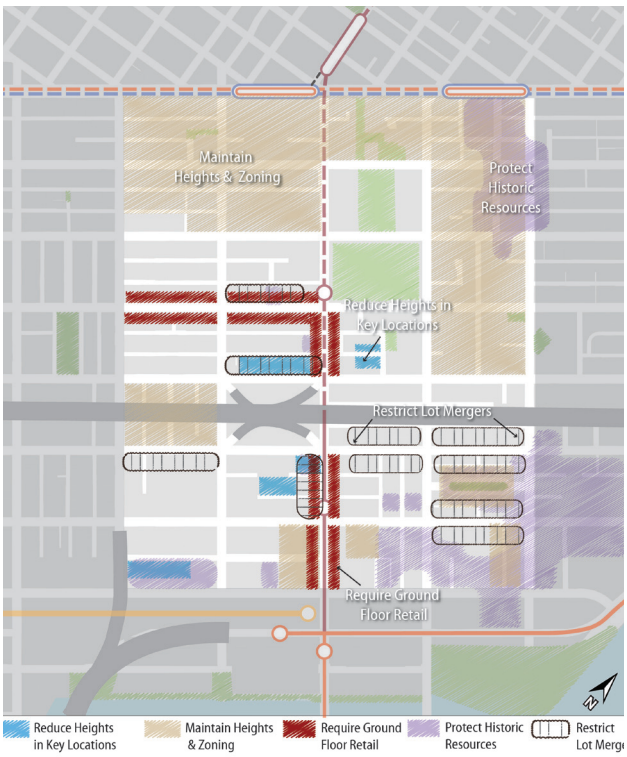
Identifying Attributes

Some of the area's key assets include a broad range of cultural and recreational locations, a developing neighborhood center along Fourth Street, pockets of historic buildings and stretches of fine-grained fabric.



Protecting Assets

Along and north of the freeway, few changes to height and zoning are proposed. In other areas, ground floor retail requirements, restrictions on lot mergers, reduced heights, and building sculpting along alleys will protect the area's unique features.



Increasing Opportunity

Through removal of restrictive zoning requirements, the Plan Area is opened to a more flexible range of uses. And by strategically increasing heights, development opportunity is increased near multiple transit nodes.

Supporting Growth

The combination of flexible zoning and strategic height increases yields significant opportunity for growth, taking pressure off other, less transit-served, neighborhoods.

from major change or displacement, by fostering the continued mix of uses – offices, housing, retail, hotels, industrial, and entertainment -- sitting side by side, by preserving important historic buildings, and guiding the sensitive design of new ones.

GOAL 4

SUPPORT GROWTH WITH IMPROVED STREETS, ADDITIONAL OPEN SPACE, AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF "COMPLETE COMMUNITIES".

The healthiest kind of neighborhood is one where people can live, work, move, and thrive. As a neighborhood that has been in transition for a number of years, SoMa still lacks many of the kinds of services and amenities that would make it a truly "complete" community for its residents and workers. For example, the Central Corridor area is currently served by a diverse set of public open spaces and facilities, particularly surrounding Yerba Buena Gardens. But the uneven distribution of these community assets leaves portions of the area underserved, and the Plan proposes a number of strategies to provide new public open space. Its large blocks, poor pedestrian conditions, few biking facilities and fast moving traffic are proposed to be transformed into complete streets that support walking, biking, and transit, and function as a welcoming component of public realm.

In addition to public realm and circulation improvements that address the area's needs for physical infrastructure, the plan also includes consideration of programs that can enhance access to community services, affordable housing and work opportunities. Impact fees will fund not just open space and street improvements, but also child care and library facilities. Increased housing requirements will expand the amount of affordable housing in the area, and citywide economic development tools will help broaden access to the area's jobs.

GOAL 5

CREATE A MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH.

At the same time that new growth adds demand to our water, energy and waste systems, state and local environmental goals mandate that we reduce greenhouse gas emissions, energy use and stormwater output. Eco-Districts provide a way of looking at water and energy conservation and waste reduction on a neighborhood or district level, by bringing neighbors, community institutions, and businesses together with the public sector to develop innovative projects to reduce the ecological footprint of the neighborhood.

A pilot Eco-District in the Central Corridor can illustrate how a significant rezoning effort can be linked to sustainable growth. Several of the components planned for the Central Corridor can support Eco-District development – new infrastructure in the area can be designed to assist in achieving energy, water or ecosystem goals; new buildings can be designed to the highest level of environmental sustainability; and eco-friendly behavior can be supported by the Plan area's new uses, improved streets, and new communities.

Related Plans and Projects

Much of the area close to the Central Corridor has been closely scrutinized in planning efforts over the last decade. The work performed through these efforts has informed the development of this Plan's principles, recommendations, and specific capital improvements. The Plan area is a seam between these various districts and plan areas, and this Plan seeks to create appropriate transitions and responses to their contexts.

EASTERN NEIGHBORHOODS AND THE EAST SOMA AREA PLAN

Comprised of citywide objectives and policies, the San Francisco General Plan serves to guide public actions and decisions regarding the city's development. The General Plan also contains several Area Plans, which represent specific thinking about the development of certain neighborhoods of the City.

Adopted in 2008, the Eastern Neighborhoods Area Plans focused on addressing land use conflicts between residential, office and industrial uses – termed Production, Distribution and Repair or PDR - in the southeastern portion of the City, and articulated visions for the East

SoMa, Central Waterfront, Mission, and Showplace Square/Potrero Hill neighborhoods. The East SoMa Area Plan, which overlaps with the eastern half of the Central Corridor, calls for a diverse mix of uses and of income levels, including new affordable and market rate housing, offices and retail; more neighborhood-serving businesses; more jobs for local residents; safer streets, more community facilities, more open spaces and an increased variety of transportation options. A large focus of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plans was in determining which areas would be set aside as industrial protection districts where other uses (primarily office and housing) would not financially out-compete PDR uses for space. Several sizable areas, primarily in the Bayview, Central Waterfront, Showplace Square and northeast Mission neighborhoods were set aside for this purpose. Recognizing the opportunity and investment of the Central Subway, the East SoMa Plan noted that PDR businesses would not be strongly protected through proposed new zoning in this area. Though adoption of the East SoMa Plan did not include rezoning of the industrial-protection Service Light Industrial (SLI) district in the area, that Plan explicitly deferred land use change in the SLI to a subsequent, more focused, planning process. The Central Corridor Plan is that subsequent anticipated planning effort to revisit the SLI and its context. This new Plan will continue many of the goals of the East SoMa Plan, and will propose changes to land use and development controls in that area of overlap.

THE WESTERN SOMA AREA PLAN

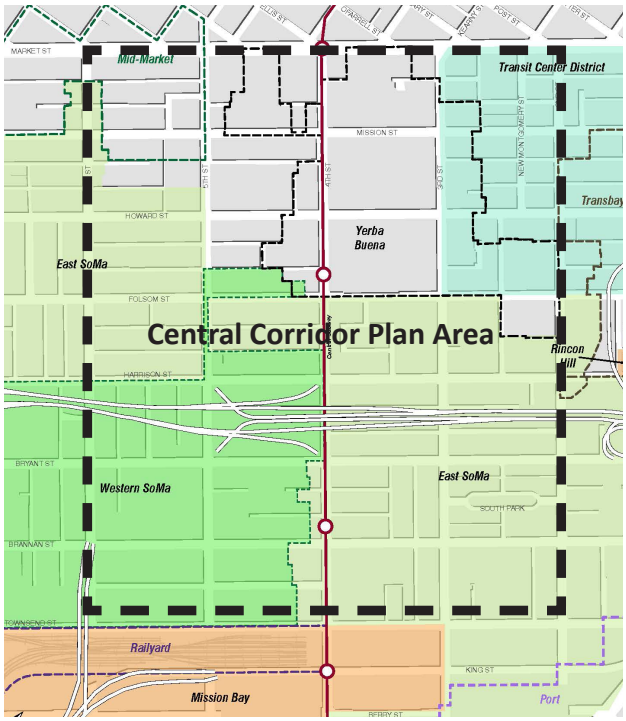
Arising out of the Eastern Neighborhoods planning process, Western SoMa was defined as a separate area in 2004, and the Western SoMa Citizens Planning Task Force was established to develop a plan. The Western SoMa Plan and its associated rezoning was adopted in March 2013. The Western SoMa Plan area overlaps the southwestern portion of the Central Corridor. The Central Corridor Plan is synchronous and consistent with many of the core policies and proposals of the Western SoMa Plan, including prioritizing capital improvements such as a new park and transformative streetscape improvements along Folsom Street. The Central Corridor Plan does, however, propose changes to land use controls to support more transit-oriented growth west of 4th Street. Further discussion of the overlap between the Central Corridor and Western SoMa Plans can be found in the Land Use Chapter.

ENTRIPS

The Eastern Neighborhoods Transportation Implementation Planning Study ("ENTRIPS") is the transportation implementation plan of the Eastern Neighborhoods Area Plans, managed by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency in coordination with the Planning Department and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority. Its final report, published in December 2011, provides recommendations for key improvement projects, most critically the Folsom and Howard Street couplet, a priority of the Eastern Neighborhoods and Western SoMa Plans. Further design refinement has been conducted through the Central Corridor Plan and environmental analysis for that project will be carried out through the Plan's Environmental Impact Report.

ADJACENT REDEVELOPMENT PLANS: YERBA BUENA, SOUTH OF MARKET AND MISSION BAY REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

The Yerba Buena Center Redevelopment Plan, which fostered much of the housing and cultural activities existing in the northern half of the Plan area, expired in 2010, reverting applicable land use controls back to the Planning Code. In some instances, the underlying zoning controls now in effect were in place decades ago and are no longer appropriate. The Central Corridor Plan proposes some changes to land use controls in that area to support the YBC Plan vision post-redevelopment. Mission Bay, located just south of the Central Corridor, was established in 1998 as a mixed-use development to support significant housing, office and biotechnology lab space as well as a new UCSF campus. While the Central Corridor Plan does not propose to affect Mission Bay's development controls, it will include improvements to enhance connections between the plan areas. The South of Market Redevelopment Project Area, bordering the northwestern edge of the plan area along Sixth Street, was created in 1990 to repair damage caused by the Loma Prieta Earthquake. This plan supported



Central Corridor Plan Area shown in relation to adjacent plan areas, including East and Western SoMa, Mission Bay, the Yerba Buena Center, and the Transit Center

implementation of the remaining alleyway improvements in the area of overlap. Redevelopment agencies in California were dissolved in early 2012 and their tax increment financing powers eliminated, though the Redevelopment Plans remain in effect to the extent that they contained explicit land use controls. The South of Market Redevelopment Plan relies on the Planning Code and there will be no further activities or projects related to Redevelopment in this area. (The Redevelopment Plan areas that continue to have tax increment-funded activities, as determined by State law, are Transbay, Mission Bay, and Hunter's Point Shipyard/Candlestick Point.)

TRANSIT CENTER DISTRICT PLAN

Adopted in summer 2012, the Transit Center District Plan (TCDP) builds on the City's renowned 1985 Downtown Plan and the 2005 Transbay Redevelopment Plan to create new land use, urban form, building design, and public realm improvements around the Transbay Transit Center. The Transit Center District Plan overlaps the northeastern corner of the Central Corridor area. The area of overlap is in the C-3 (downtown) zoning district and comprises the southwestern corner of the Financial District. The Central Corridor Plan builds on the policy foundation on district sustainability that was established in the TCDP, augmenting policies on building performance, district water, and district energy. The Central Corridor Plan will not affect the adopted land use or development controls of the TCDP.

4TH AND KING RAILYARDS STUDY

The Caltrain station at 4th&King is an essential and invaluable regional transit terminus supporting the Central Corridor and other adjacent districts. Due to continuing evolution of plans for the electrification of Caltrain and the plans for High Speed Rail, future configuration of the Railyards site is unclear. With the intensification of rail service and demands of growth affecting the immediately surrounding neighborhoods, people have raised questions as to whether the large railyards property ought not to be more efficiently used and intensively developed. This would both support the transit service and help connect the neighborhoods on either side of the yards, which forms a ½-mile long barrier to north-south movement. Most importantly, revenue from development at the yards could help fund rail investment. Consultants for the Planning Department recently completed a high-level study of the potential capacity for development on the site of the Caltrain Railyards. The study found that the potential exists for approximately 3.5 million square feet of development on the site given major changes to the rail infrastructure (and based on urban form and density consistent with Mission Bay and Central Corridor concepts), though significant additional planning and coordination with Caltrain and the High Speed Rail Authority is necessary to assess this feasibility. As a result, the likelihood of major future development on the railyards site is uncertain at this time. The Central Corridor Plan supports the ultimate redevelopment of that site consistent with coordinated planning for rail investment, and proposes compatible land use controls adjacent to the Railyards whether it stays in its current state or not, but the Plan does not direct any land use or development control changes on the Railyards site.

TODCO GROUP CENTRAL SOMA COMMUNITY PLAN

The TODCO Group, the community-based housing/community development nonprofit corporation located and working in SoMa, is developing a Central SOMA Community Plan as a community-driven alternative to this Plan. While its proposals are still under refinement, this plan aims to set forth an overall strategy for economic and office development in the area, while focusing on maintaining and developing SoMa's special character as its nature evolves. Many of the TODCO plan's proposals have been directly incorporated into or inspired alternative concepts reflected in this Plan. Staff will continue to work with TODCO Group, and coordinate their proposals with further development of this Central Corridor Draft Plan.

Central Corridor Plan and Process

The Central Corridor process began with staff analysis of the area's characteristics and demands. This analysis resulted in the production of two background papers, the Central Corridor Background Report (May 2011), which examined trends in the housing and the economy, as well as local conditions in the area; and the Public Realm Existing Conditions Report (October 2011) which examined existing conditions of streets, sidewalks and open spaces in the area. Both documents can be found on the project website at *http://www.centralcorridor.sfplanning.org*.

In February 2011 the Planning Department began outreach to introduce the Central Corridor planning effort and initiate dialogue with the community. The Department hosted numerous activities to engage residents and stakeholders in thought about the plan area, including walking tours, a storefront charrette, a print- and web-format survey, an interactive website, and a series of community workshops. Workshops and printed materials were conducted in English, Chinese, and Tagalog. Throughout the process, the Department met with a wide range of community groups, maintained active coordination with the Mayor and District 6 Supervisor's office, and involved City and regional agencies as part of the Plan's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Based on this outreach, the Planning Department developed an initial proposal for land use, urban form and public improvements at a public workshop in June 2012. Following further public discussion of those ideas during summer and fall of 2012, the release of this Draft Central Corridor Plan represents a culmination of the initial outreach phase, and marks a key milestone in the planning process. A more comprehensive overview of the Plan's public engagement process can be found in this document's Appendix A.

Simultaneous with plan development, staff from the Planning Department's Sustainable Development Program began work on an Eco-District component of the plan. This included convening an inter-departmental Eco-District Working Group to draft City goals and objectives and to identify possible sustainable development projects for the Central Corridor. It also included hosting an Eco-District Presentation Series, as a forum for discussing issues relating to Eco-District development in the City. Over the course of 2013, the City will establish a Central Corridor Eco-District taskforce with representation from area residents, non-profits, businesses, property owners, developers, utilities, infrastructure specialists, and design professionals to draft an Eco-District policy document and implementation framework.

Plan Contents

The Plan chapters that follow are each structured according to a series of core principles, addressing land use, urban form, streetscape and circulation, open space, historic preservation, sustainability, and funding. Each principle leads to specific recommendations for action, which will be translated into Planning Code changes, guidelines for new development, or improvement projects to be advanced through the City's capital facilities implementation process.

THE CENTRAL SUBWAY PROJECT

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's (SFMTA) Central Subway Project will construct a new 1.7-mile extension of Muni's T Third Line. With stops in South of Market (SoMa), Yerba Buena, Union Square and Chinatown, the Central Subway will vastly improve transit options for the residents of one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the country, provide a rapid transit link to a burgeoning technology and digital-media hub, and improve access to premier commercial districts and visitor attractions.

The Central Subway Project is the second phase of the Third Street Light Rail Transit Project. Phase 1 of the project constructed a 5.1-mile light-rail line along the densely populated 3rd Street corridor. The first segment of the T Third Line opened to customers in April 2007, restoring light-rail service to a high transit-ridership area of San Francisco for the first time in 50 years.

Rendering of the Yerba Buena/Moscone Station.

Rendering of the 4th/Brannan Station.

THE CENTRAL SUBWAY PROJECT

Alignment

Four new stations will be built along the alignment, the southern two of which are in the Central Corridor Plan Area:

- **4th and Brannan Station** at 4th and Brannan streets (street level)
- **Yerba Buena/Moscone Station** at 4th and Folsom streets (subway)
- **Union Square/Market Street Station** on Stockton Street at Union Square (subway)
- **Chinatown Station** at Stockton and Washington streets (subway)

The Union Square/Market Street Station will connect to the existing Powell Street BART/Muni Station, allowing for convenient transfers to BART, the Powell Street Cable Car Line, Muni Metro lines and Muni bus routes in the area.

The Central Subway will provide rapid north-south service, in contrast to the principally east-west routes currently in service along Market Street. It will also facilitate direct transfers to local and regional transit options:

- Caltrain (and, in the future, high-speed rail service) at 4th and King streets
- BART at Powell Street Station.
- Muni Metro's J, K, L, M and N lines at Powell Street Station
- Powell Cable Line above Powell Station
- Muni bus and electric trolley routes, including the 8X/8AX/8BX Bayshore Express, the 14/14L/14X Mission and the 38/38L Geary lines

Schedule

The project has completed its full funding agreements with the Federal Transit Administration. Construction of the subway tunnel and stations commenced in 2012 and will continue through 2017. The subway is slated to open to the public in 2019.

More details on the project are available at *http://www.centralsubwaysf.com*.

Next Steps

With the release of this Draft Plan document, the planning process will embark on its second phase: review, revision and refinement. Over the next year, staff will continue public outreach efforts to foster discussion and comment on this Draft Plan, further develop key details, and gain feedback on its proposals. In 2014, following review, revision and refinement of the plan's proposals and publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Report, final recommendations will be translated into a number of implementation actions. Land use changes described in this plan will be accomplished through changes in zoning use districts and use regulations in Planning Code and Zoning Maps. Urban form recommendations will be realized through new height and bulk designations, new form regulations in the Planning Code, and urban design guidelines for development. Improvements to streets and new open spaces will be formalized into a list of priority improvement projects for the area; furthered through the efforts of the City's Interagency Plan Implementation Committee and a neighborhood-based Citizen's Advisory Committee; and designed, developed and funded in part by the Plan's impact fees and other revenue strategies. The final Plan for adoption will also include a detailed implementation strategy to ensure its execution over its long-term timeframe, containing recommendations towards administration and monitoring. Finally, a policy framework and implementation program for a Central Corridor Eco-District will be completed, and incorporated into the Central Corridor Plan for adoption.

Simultaneously, the project will undergo environmental review per the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Planning Department has engaged a consultant to assist in the preparation, production, and completion of an environmental impact report (EIR) and transportation impact study for the Central Corridor Plan. The EIR process will be initiated upon publication of this Draft Plan document (a complete discussion of the parameters of environmental review can be found in Appendix B). The target for completion of environmental analysis, including certification of a final EIR, is late 2014, at which time the Department will work with elected officials and the community to adopt and implement the final Plan.

2 LAND USE

Housing units, offices, industrial spaces, hotels, retail spaces, and cultural and social institutions are located side-by-side...

Background

The current fabric of the Central Corridor area reflects its diverse history. Housing units, offices, industrial spaces, hotels, retail spaces, and cultural and social institutions are located side-by-side, and sometimes even in the same building, with no single use predominating. The northern end of the Central Corridor features a concentration of higher density office, hotel, and residential uses, including a significant number of senior and affordable housing developments, as well as regionally important museums and cultural facilities. The southern end currently contains more lower-scaled development featuring primarily office, industrial, retail, and entertainment uses. This mix of uses and buildings has supported the development of unique neighborhoods in and around the Plan Area.

The Plan's land use strategy seeks to accommodate transit-oriented growth while preserving and enhancing the qualities that make the area the dynamic place that it is today. The following principles discussed support new uses, workers, residents, and visitors to the Plan area, along with commercial, recreational and community facilities that meet their everyday needs.

PRINCIPLE 1

SUPPORT SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THIS DIVERSE, TRANSIT-RICH AREA

The Central Corridor is one of the region's most walkable areas. Flat streets and a regular grid pattern make destinations easy to reach. Although the blocks are longer than those north of Market Street, they are considerably more walkable than the great majority of streets in the region. Improvements proposed by the Plan, such as wider sidewalks, more crosswalks, and more alleys, would only improve the walkability of this area (for more information, see the Streetscape and Circulation chapter of this report).

The Central Corridor is also one of the region's most well-connected neighborhoods. The area itself already contains diverse uses, including nearly 8,700 residential units and 50,000 jobs, plus local- and regional-serving retail, cultural and entertainment facilities, hotels, and institutions. Additionally, the area is within walking distance of over 200,000 jobs in downtown, Mission Bay, and elsewhere in SoMa. The area is served by some of region's best transit, including BART and Caltrain, Muni Metro and many bus lines, in addition to the Central Subway currently under construction. The area is also served by two regionally-connected highways.

Finally, there is substantial opportunity to increase density in the Central Corridor. There are numerous undeveloped or underdeveloped sites, such as surface parking lots and single-story commercial buildings. The challenge will be to enable an increase in density while maintaining the diverse uses, occupants, and built form that has made the area already an attractive location for new businesses and residents. The strategies throughout this document are intended to help facilitate such growth. In this Land Use Chapter, these strategies will include methods to support growth as well as methods to create and maintain complete communities.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1.1 *Maintain growth-oriented zoning where it exists.*

Much of the Central Corridor, particularly the area north of Harrison, contains mixed-use zoning that allows some combination of residential and commercial development. The Central Corridor Plan will maintain zoning in this area that supports such development, although some minor changes are being proposed to enable more flexibility (as discussed below).

GROWTH POTENTIAL UNDER THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR PLAN

Growth Potential[1]	*Residential Square Feet*	*Residential Units*	*Commercial Square Feet*	*Jobs*
Potential Under Existing Zoning[2]	**9,872,355**	**8,225**	**3,827,445**	**19,140**
Growth Potential Under Plan	**4,185,900**	**3,490**	**5,563,700**	**27,820**
TOTAL GROWTH	**14,058,255** *SQ. FT.*	**11,715** *UNITS*	**9,391,145** *SQ. FT.*	**46,960** *JOBS*

1 Note that growth potential varies according to height alternative and land use mix assumptions; the above table represents an average of potential heights and use mixes. The Plan's environmental analysis will review the greatest number of both jobs and housing that is likely to occur under all height alternative and mix assumptions.
2 Note that as significant portion of the existing growth potential lies in the C-3 (downtown) districts in the northern part of the Plan area, including a substantial portion of overlap with the recently rezoned Transit Center District Plan area between 2nd and 3rd Streets.

1.2 *Replace restrictive zoning with more flexible zoning in areas that can support substantial growth.*

South of Harrison Street, much of the area has zoning that restricts the development of both housing and office uses (see Existing Zoning map, page 18). To support substantial development in this area, these restrictive zoning districts should be revised to permit some combination of office and/or housing uses. Specifically, the Plan proposes to change the Service Light Industrial (SLI) and Service Arts Light Industrial (SALI) zoning in much of this area to Mixed Use – Office (MUO), a zoning district which permits a broad range of uses from office uses and housing to small-scale light industrial and arts activities (see Proposed Zoning map, page 19).

When combined with height changes and other urban form strategies, these zoning changes will add capacity for almost 28,000 jobs and 3,500 units, for an overall total buildout of 46,960 jobs and 11,715 units, as shown in the table below.

1.3 *Allow physical controls for height, bulk, setbacks, tower spacing and open space to determine density.*

In much of San Francisco, development density is not tied to height or other physical measures, meaning that locations where higher heights are appropriate are often unable to develop to their full potential. For commercial uses, this problem would be rectified by correlating the amount of allowable development (Floor Area Ratio, or "FAR") with allowable heights and bulk. For residential development, this problem would be rectified by removing residential density controls, and controlling density instead through controls on height and bulk and requirements to build a percentage of larger, family-oriented units. For commercial and residential uses, these are already common practice in the city and have been utilized in all recently adopted plan areas, such as Eastern Neighborhoods and Market & Octavia.

PRINCIPLE 2

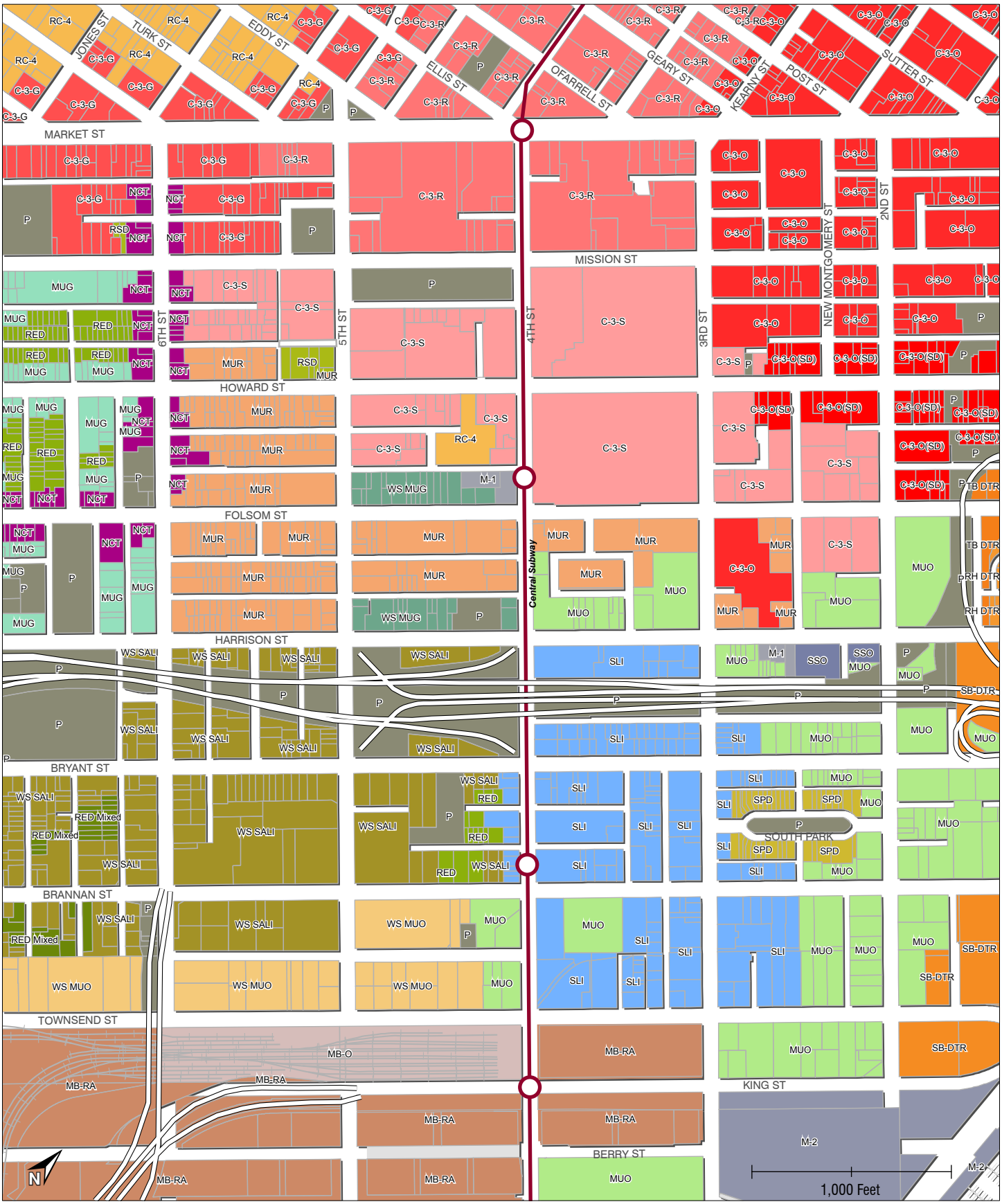
FAVOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OVER OTHER KINDS OF GROWTH.

Because the Central Corridor is generally within the Central Business District, it makes sense to support the City's job growth in this area. The most critical factor in this consideration is that the area is well served by regional transit, especially compared to other potential areas for job growth in the region. As such, it can help meet state-mandated requirements for reducing greenhouse gases in the region.

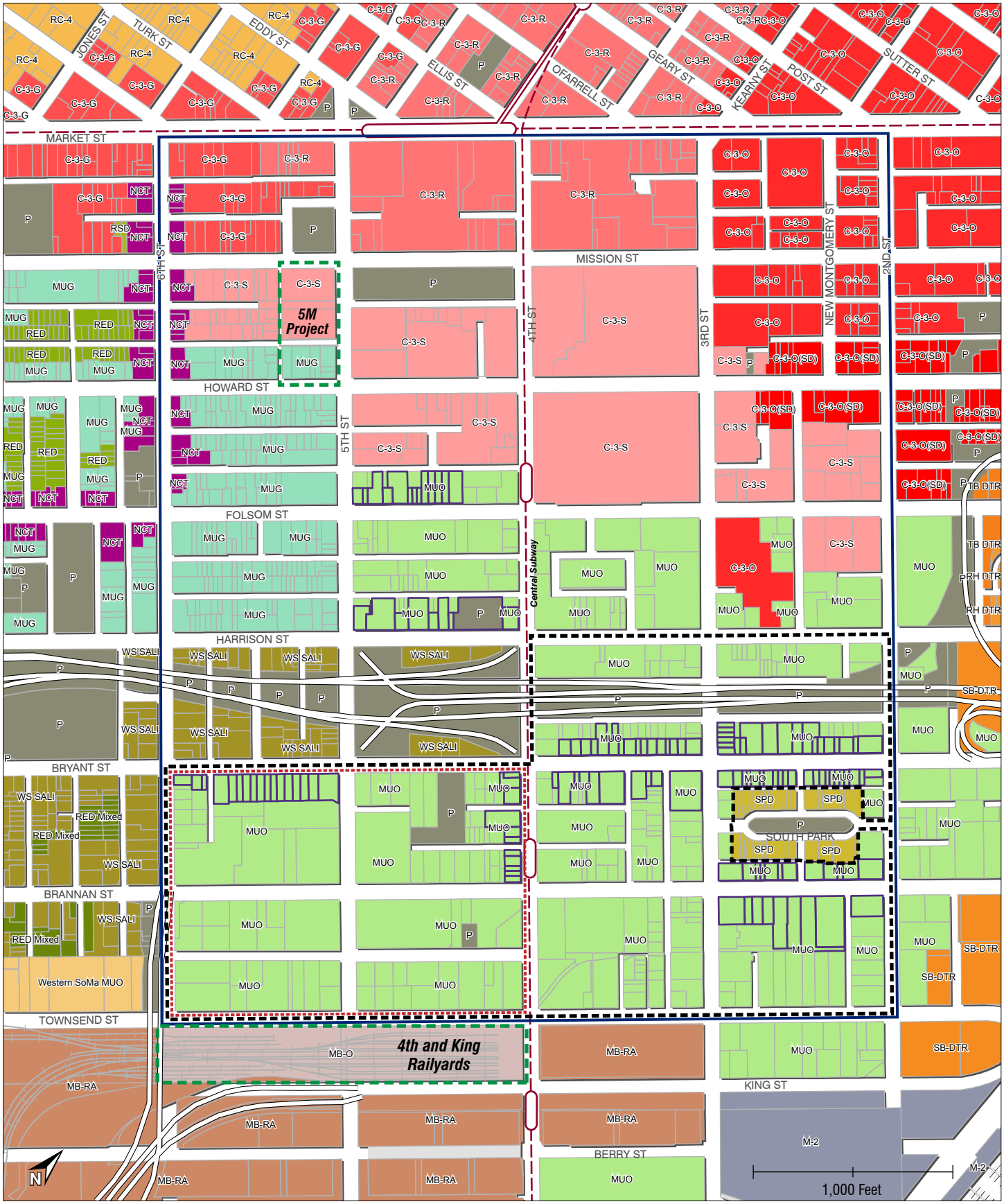
Office-oriented jobs are expected to be the strongest growing economic sector in the region. Additionally, office uses tend to have a higher worker-per-square-foot ratio than other commercial uses, increasing the importance of proximity to transit. It can also help the City provide easily-accessible jobs to its residents.

In the current economic environment, the Central Corridor area is in extremely high demand for office space, particularly by technology-related firms. These companies prefer the types of buildings common in this neighborhood, which includes many warehouse-type buildings with the large open floors conducive to a team-oriented creative environment (See Urban Form Chapter for more discussion on building typology). Moreover, these companies appreciate the economic and social diversity that South of Market provides, relative to both San Francisco's Financial District and Silicon Valley's suburban corporate campuses. They benefit from the "knowledge spillovers" and cachet of co-locating in certain neighborhoods such as SoMa, which has been an important hub of such companies since the mid-1990s. Finally, there is an increasingly demonstrable desire by employees and talent pool of these industries to both live and work in the City, instead of either living in more suburban areas or enduring the long commute down the Peninsula (even on free corporate shuttles).

Because these technology firms provide high-paying jobs relative to education, it is a goal of the City to attract and retain such firms, which would be facilitated by



EXISTING ZONING



Central Corridor Plan Area
SoMa Entertainment SUD
South SoMa SUD
Restricted Lot Consolidation
Sites Under Separate Study

PROPOSED ZONING

CONNECTING THE CITY TO JOBS

A key part of San Francisco's economic strategy, and a cornerstone of Mayor Lee's administration, has been to attract, retain and grow new emerging industries and jobs. By expanding development opportunities in SoMa, the Central Corridor Plan will expand the City's ability to incubate new startups, keep our home-grown companies, and lure established companies to San Francisco by integrating a "jobs corridor" into a 24/7 neighborhood. Zoning changes in the area will diversify the types of office space available to companies, in turn allowing us to attract emerging industries.

The City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) will help drive job creation by connecting emerging and established companies to new development opportunities. OEWD will also work to ensure that local residents are connected to job opportunities. Workforce programs include:

- **One Stop Career Link Centers**, which provide job search assistance, job preparation training opportunities and other support services. The SOMA Career Link Center is located west of the plan area.
- The City's **First Source Hiring Program**, which connects low-income San Francisco residents with construction and other related jobs generated by new public or large-scale private development.
- **TechSF**, a comprehensive effort to train and re-skill residents for IT and tech jobs in San Francisco.
- **Financial incentives and tax credits** including on-the-job subsidized training, enterprise zone tax credits and free candidate screening and referrals.

Clockwise from top left: A Career Link Job Center, a South of Market office, and residents at the New Me Accelerator

allowing their development in the Central Corridor area. However, depending on ever-fluctuating market factors, it is often the case that housing development is more financially advantageous on a piece of land than office development. Given the dearth of regionally transit-accessible locations appropriate for major concentrations of employment and the limited number of parcels large enough for new workplaces buildings, the Plan proposes measures to reduce such competition.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

2.1 *Require commercial development on large parcels.*

To ensure that opportunity sites are primarily utilized for job space, the Plan proposes a South SoMa Special Use District ("SUD," shown on the Proposed Zoning map) that would require predominantly commercial development on large parcels – although not necessarily exclusively. Such an SUD would ensure that these parcels would be available for large floorplate commercial development and could support substantial growth. While small-scale commercial buildings are occasionally built on small lots, it is rare and far less common than building housing on small lots. Further, there are so few large lots available in transit-served areas for workplace buildings, that it is important to ensure their availability for this use. The exact mechanism utilized to require commercial development will be developed as part of the zoning proposal for this Plan. However, potential mechanisms could include a requirement for all parcels over 20,000 square feet to have a minimum percentage (e.g. 50%) of new square footage built on the lot be commercial, or limiting residential development to a limited footprint.

2.2 *Rezone office-restrictive areas to enable workplace development.*

The Mixed Use – Residential (MUR) zone requires three square feet of housing for every square foot of other uses, therefore precluding the development of new all-commercial buildings. One of the essential qualities of SoMa is that it is mixed used a fine grain scale, with buildings of different uses sitting side by side -- residential buildings next to office buildings next to industrial buildings. The MUR - which would over time transform the area into more homogeneously residential with only ground floor retail-- should be rethought and retired. The Plan proposes to rezone the MUR to enable a more diverse set of uses in this area. East of 5th Street, in the area that is already more jobs-oriented, the Plan proposes Mixed-Use Office (MUO) zoning. West of 5th Street, where the area is typically more residential and fine-grained, the Plan proposes to expand the Mixed Use – General (MUG) zone, which allows small amounts of office in addition to retail and other uses, but development here is expected to still be predominantly residential.

PRINCIPLE 3

SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF A DIVERSITY OF HOUSING, ESPECIALLY BELOW-MARKET RATE UNITS.

While jobs are the primary focus of the Central Corridor Plan, housing is also an important component. Although the City has identified places for housing through its various planning processes, the regional imbalance of supply and demand means that it is important to capitalize on opportunities to provide more housing in appropriate locations. Many sites in the area are too small or otherwise inappropriate for workplace development.

At the neighborhood level, housing helps create a more diverse neighborhood, by supporting a different and often complementary range of uses in the area. Doing this effectively requires enabling and supporting a diversity of housing types and residents, most importantly ensuring inclusion of housing priced below the market rate. Such housing requires subsidization, which is difficult during times of fiscal constraint at all levels of government.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

3.1 *Maintain housing-friendly zoning where it exists.*

Mixed-use zoning that permits housing in the Plan Area will be maintained, enabling new infill residential uses.

REDUCED HOUSING VARIANT

Within the Central Corridor Plan area west of 4th Street, the WS SALI and WS MUO zoning districts adopted as part of the Western SoMa Plan do not permit new housing (see Existing Zoning map). As discussed in Land Use Implementation Measures 1.2 and 3.2, the Draft Central Corridor Plan proposes to rezone much of those Districts to MUO, which permits housing and thereby enables a more lively 24-hour neighborhood. (Note that the Draft Plan also proposes the South SoMa SUD for this area that would limit new housing to smaller parcels or components of commercial projects on large lots). However, there is community concern that any allowance for new housing in this area could impinge upon existing and future commercial uses and could create conflicts with potential new entertainment uses that would also be permitted in this area. As such, the

Central Corridor Plan EIR will study the ramifications of maintaining a restriction on new housing in the area currently zoned WS SALI and WS MUO. This will provide more flexibility for decision makers during the Plan's adoption process. (See Appendix for more information.)

3.2 *Remove restrictive zoning in areas that can support additional housing.*

In areas where restrictive industrial zoning is removed, allow new housing, except for those large sites where the priority is to support commercial (as discussed above). However, the Plan EIR will analyze a "Reduced Housing Variant" in which new housing would not be permitted for the area west of 4th Street (See sidebar above).

3.3 *Require family-sized units.*

Consistent with current requirements in the Eastern Neighborhoods zoning districts per Planning Code Section 207.6, housing development in the non-C-3 portions of the Plan area will be required to provide at least 40% two-bedroom units or 30% three-bedroom units.

3.4 *Require increased levels of affordable housing in areas where housing was not previously permitted and where development capacity is substantially increased.*

Removing industrial restrictions on land and allowing other, higher-paying uses will substantially increase its value, as would major increases in height limits. To ensure that the public from this action, the Central Corridor Plan proposes to increase the percentage of below-market units required to be built in any housing development. The City's current requirement is for 12%[1] of the units in new housing development to be below market rate (i.e. for people earning up to 120% of the Area Median Income) if provided on site, or 20% if off-site or paying through an in-lieu fee. By contrast, the Plan proposes to increase those requirements in areas proposed to be rezoned from SLI or SALI (which do not permit housing) to MUO or other districts that permit housing, as was done in the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan. The Plan may also increase that amount in areas that receive a significant increase in residential development potential through a major change in heights. See the Funding Public Improvements Chapter for more discussion. The Plan will additionally maintain already existing increased requirements, including those in the SoMa Youth & Family Zone and elsewhere.

1 The voter approval of Proposition C in November 2012 lowered on-site inclusionary requirements by 20%, from 15% to 12%. Proposition C allows future increases in this amount in newly adopted Plan areas that are broadly upzoned and on individual sites where development capacity is increased by at least 20% as measured by height.

PRINCIPLE 4

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE EXISTING HOUSING, ESPECIALLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

The Plan Area has a number of strong residential communities, especially north of the freeway. These communities include a substantial stock of affordable housing, including older housing and newer housing that has been built with subsidies or otherwise permanently affordable. The Plan aims to preserve this housing and to protect tenants who occupy this housing.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

4.1 *Continue implementing the suite of controls that protects existing housing.*

The City has a number of laws in place to protect tenants in existing housing. These include rent stabilization, eviction protections, and restrictions on unit demolition or merger.

PRINCIPLE 5

REINFORCE SOMA'S MIXED-USE CHARACTER BY PERMITTING A DIVERSITY OF LAND USES.

As discussed above, the diversity of land uses in the Plan Area is essential to its vibrancy and identity. Such uses must have the opportunity to remain and thrive even as the neighborhood evolves around them. The Plan intends to support and enhance that vibrancy by continuing to allow a wide range of uses that support and attract a diverse population, including people of different ages, economic segments, and preference for different times of day. At the same time, 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.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

5.1 *Permit Production/Distribution/Repair uses.*

Historically, SoMa has been an area for production, distribution, and repair (PDR). However, in recent decades, PDR businesses have decreased in prominence in San Francisco as industrial uses chose to locate in lower cost regions within the United States and overseas, and as local PDR businesses face competition for space from higher paying uses such as office and residential.

Nevertheless, the City recognizes that PDR uses are still critical to the economy, job diversity and culture of San Francisco. Recognizing this, the City has instituted a comprehensive strategy for promoting and supporting PDR. Most importantly, in 2008 the City adopted PDR zoning districts in large swaths of southeast San Francisco. The PDR Districts are designed to ensure that PDR businesses have a location to grow, invest, and thrive in San Francisco by eliminating competition from office and residential uses and limiting competition from retail, institutional, and other uses. In addition to these PDR Districts, the City has reduced impact fees for development of net new PDR uses, created a position at the Office of Economic and Workforce Development to work specifically with the PDR community, and worked closely with SFMade, a non-profit supporting the real estate and small business needs of local manufacturing firms. PDR uses continue to be allowed in many parts of the City, including throughout the Central Corridor Plan Area. Finally, to support workers at PDR businesses that may be displaced by new development, the City has instituted multiple job training programs (see the "Connecting the City to Jobs" sidebar).

The Plan's proposed changes have sought to balance the often competing demands of locating high density uses near transit, enabling a range of new job opportunities, preserving existing uses, and preserving existing workforce jobs. Given the ongoing transition of SoMa and the number of areas in other locations preserved for PDR uses, including parts of the adjacent Western SoMa

Photo courtesy of Flickr by *dutchbaby*

Photo courtesy of Google

Photo courtesy of Flickr by *Tours of the Tales*

THE FLOWER MART

The Flower Mart is San Francisco's only wholesale flower market. It has existed since 1924. Since 1956, it has been at its current location, located on the block between 5th, 6th, Bryant, and Brannan Streets.

Over the decades, the nature of the wholesale flower industry, and the Flower Mart itself, have changed substantially. In the past, most flowers sold in San Francisco were grown in the Bay Area, and sold by the growers at the Flower Mart. Now, the flowers predominantly come from elsewhere in the state, as well as from outside the United States. Additionally, the rise of direct internet sales, grocery chains selling flowers, and other improvements in logistics means that only a small percentage of flowers sold in San Francisco pass through the Flower Mart. Today, the vendors at the Flower Mart are largely wholesalers, and no longer grow flowers themselves. The Flower Mart itself is not a singular facility or property, as it is comprised of multiple buildings spread across multiple properties and owned by different entities.

The result of these changes is that the wholesale flower industry and the California flower-growing industry has been in substantial contraction and transformation for some time. While it may be desirable to maintain a wholesale flower center in San Francisco into the future, there are questions as to whether the current facility matches the needs of the industry as it exists today or whether a consolidated, re-organized, and/or relocated facility would aid in its long-term viability.

To help ascertain a strategy moving forward, the Planning Department and Office of Economic and Workforce Development will be undertaking an analysis of San Francisco's wholesale flower industry, including its size and locational needs.

This analysis will consider the needs of and involve the input of the Flower Mart's property owners, individual vendors, and consumers. The Central Corridor Draft Plan recommends including analysis of rezoning the property to MUO in the Plan EIR, which would enable intensification and re-development of this major site should the future of the Flower Mart include a smaller footprint or another location.

Plan Area, the Plan has not sought to maintain PDR protections in all parts of the Plan Area, and as a result, some PDR jobs will face increased risk of displacement due to changes in zoning that are intended to increase overall opportunities for jobs and housing.

For further discussion of PDR, see the "Responses to Questions & Concerns" section in the Appendix.

5.2 *Permit retail, but not stand-alone big box.*

Retail uses are already integrated into the community fabric of SoMa, including stores, restaurants, and personal services like beauty salons and dry cleaners. These uses support the diversity and vibrancy of the neighborhood by creating an active street life while helping meet the needs of residents, workers, and visitors.

This Plan aims to support the success of existing retail, and to enable more retail to open as development occurs in the Plan Area. To do so, retail will continue to be permitted throughout the Plan Area - although large retail stores will be permitted only if they contribute to the mixed use character of the neighborhood by not being stand-alone big box stores.

In addition, along the neighborhood's burgeoning retail corridor along 4th Street between Folsom and Townsend as well as along Folsom Street west of 4th Street, ground floor retail will be required in all new development. This can help create a "neighborhood commercial" character while still allowing offices uses above - which is typically not the case in the city's Neighborhood Commercial Districts. To further support this neighborhood's existing small-scale retail district, the Plan proposes a reduction in height limits along the west side of 4th Street between Bryant and Brannan.

5.3 *Permit larger hotels.*

Hotels are an important resource in our city, supporting our critical tourism and business travel sectors. The Plan Area already has numerous hotels, large and small, primarily in the Yerba Buena area, which serve the downtown and Moscone Convention Center. For a neighborhood, these hotels often provide the best characteristics of residential and commercial uses by providing 24-hour activation of the nearby streets, helping support nearby retail and restaurant uses, caring for street appearance and maintenance, and sometimes providing their own retail and entertainment venues.

Currently, most of the Plan Area allows hotels, although in the MUO district hotels are limited to 75 rooms and are required to receive a Conditional Use Authorization from the Planning Commission. To enable more hotel uses in the Plan Area, the Plan proposes to remove the room restriction.

5.4 *Permit and support community facilities.*

Community facilities such as schools, child care, community centers, and public services (like police and fire) are an essential part of any complete community. Such uses will continue to be permitted throughout the Plan Area. The Planning Department will work with other City agencies to provide adequate provision of these facilities within the Plan Area. Additionally, incentives such as FAR exemptions or bonuses should be considered to encourage creation of such facilities in new construction. Special attention should be paid to incentivizing such facilities in the existing SoMa Youth & Family Special Use District.

5.5 *Permit entertainment uses where appropriate.*

Entertainment is an integral component of life in a dense, central city mixed-use district. However, operational conflicts may arise when residential uses are located proximate to entertainment uses. These conflicts may occur both from noise and vibration emanating from an entertainment facility and/or patrons coming to and leaving the club.

As such, the Plan proposes to enable new entertainment uses in a limited area south of Harrison Street between 4th and 6th Streets. Currently, this area does not contain a significant amount of entertainment or residential uses. Therefore, there is an opportunity to address potential conflicts before they occur, through soundproofing and policing measures already required by the City.

CENTRAL CORRIDOR'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WESTERN SOMA PLAN

The Central Corridor Plan's geography includes areas within easy walking distance of the SoMa portion of the Central Subway, two blocks on either side of the subway's 4th Street alignment. It overlaps a number of existing and/or ongoing Plan Areas, including Western SoMa. The Western SoMa Plan was developed by a Citizens Planning Task Force, and adopted in March 2013, well before the Central Corridor Plan will be considered for adoption in mid-2014.

Both the Western SoMa and Central Corridor Plans seek to build on and enhance key characteristics of this portion of the South of Market. There are numerous ways, in terms of both process and substantive proposals, in which the Central Corridor Plan builds off the Western SoMa Plan and planning process for this area. These include:

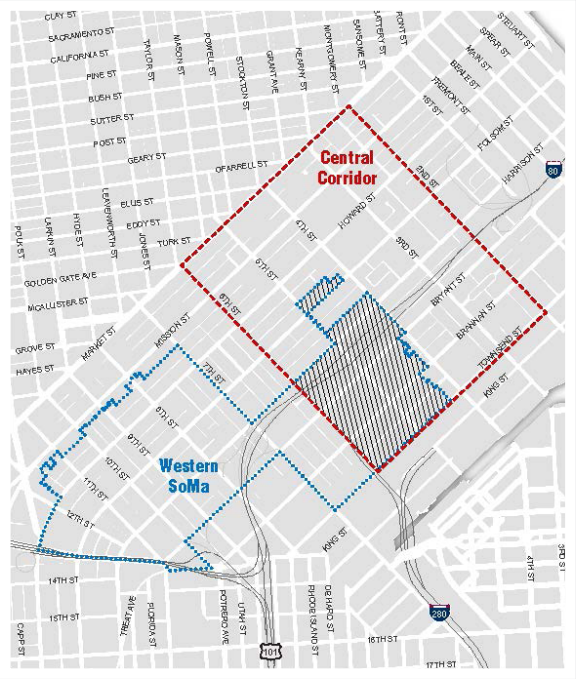
- Using the Western SoMa Plan proposals as the starting point for all discussions of land use, height, and other controls since inception of the Central Corridor planning process, throughout 2011 and 2012, even though the Western SoMa plan had not been adopted. (It was adopted in March 2013)
- Supporting the adoption of the Western SoMa Plan as proposed up through its adoption in March 2013.
- Presenting the draft Central Corridor Plan concepts for discussion at multiple Western SoMa Task Force meetings over 2011-2012.
- Engaging in ongoing detailed discussions and meetings with key Western SoMa Task Force members since the inception of the Central Corridor Plan process.
- Responding in writing to questions and concerns expressed by Western SoMa Task Force members.
- Developing concepts for an improved public realm, including better and safer streets, parks, and sidewalks, to serve existing and new residents, workers, and visitors, as well as new impact fees to implement such improvements.
- Utilizing the Central Corridor Environmental Impact Report to examine and hopefully enable improvements to Folsom and Howard Streets envisioned in the Western SoMa Plan.
- Proposing to permit entertainment and PDR uses throughout the plan overlap area.
- Supporting more jobs for people without a 4-year degree.
- Investigating innovative means to protect historic resources throughout the South of Market, such as Transfer of Development Rights.
- Developing urban form and land use controls that respect the neighborhood fabric (e.g. varied lot pattern, diverse land use) and existing SoMa patterns.
- Supporting environmental sustainability objectives by enabling growth to occur in transit-oriented walkable neighborhoods, and through such efforts as the Central Corridor's proposed Eco-District.
- The adopted Western SoMa Area Plan does recognize the need to continue evaluating land use in this overlap area consistent with the themes of this Draft Central Corridor Plan. The Western SoMa Area Plan states the following:

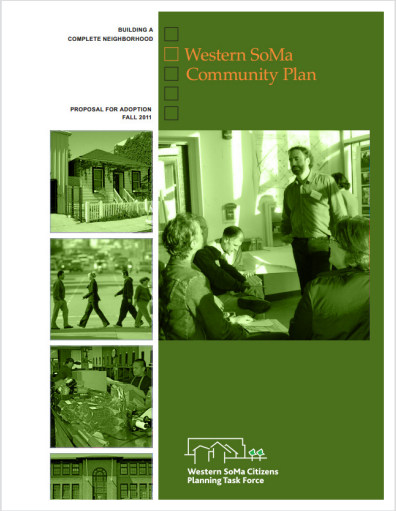
OBJECTIVE 1.5
SUPPORT CONTINUED EVALUATION OF LAND USES NEAR MAJOR TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE IN RECOGNITION OF CITYWIDE AND REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE GROWTH NEEDS.

The easternmost portion of the plan area is rich with existing and planned public transit infrastructure, including the SFMTA's Central Subway project, Caltrain (planned for improved High-Speed Rail-like service through electrification), and myriad Muni transit services planned for enhancement. This area is also adjacent to existing burgeoning job, housing, and visitor areas in East Soma, Yerba Buena, Transit Center, and Mission Bay. The City must continue evaluating how it can best meet citywide and regional objectives to direct growth to transit-oriented locations and whether current controls are meeting identified needs.

POLICY 1.5.1
Continue to explore and re-examine land use controls east of 6th Street, including as part of any future evaluation along the 4th Street corridor.

CENTRAL CORRIDOR'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WESTERN SOMA PLAN





In addition, the Planning Department is actively working with the Entertainment Commission and the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development to craft a long term strategy to accommodate varying types of new nighttime entertainment uses in this area, and to develop a larger strategy for fostering such uses throughout the City and ensuring that they can flourish successfully. The intention is to have such a strategy completed in time to inform the final zoning and controls in the Central Corridor Plan Area.

Despite these conflicts, to support this use, both the Western SoMa and Central Corridor Plans would permit nighttime entertainment and Limited Live Performance uses in the areas south of Harrison Street between 4th and 6th Streets. The Western SoMa Plan would facilitate new large entertainment venues that might benefit operationally from being geographically separated from residential uses. The Central Corridor Plan would also permit new residential uses in part of this area, to enable new housing in this part of the central city in order to create a neighborhood environment that is active on weekends and evenings and to provide additional opportunity for transit-oriented housing. However, in recognition of this ongoing debate and to provide maximum flexibility to decision-makers, the Central Corridor Plan EIR will include analysis of a Reduced Housing Variant in which new housing would not be permitted in the areas currently zoned WS SALI and WS MUO. (See sidebar titled "Reduced Housing Variant" and Appendix section titled "Environmental Analysis.")

5.6 *Evaluate the Western SoMa SUD for consistency with the objectives of this Plan in the area of overlap.*

A thorough evaluation of the Western SoMa SUD should be conducted to determine whether its provisions would be in conflict with achieving the objectives and specific proposals in this Plan, particularly in inhibiting development on key sites. The final Plan rezoning may simply modify the boundary of the Western SoMa SUD to exclude the area of overlap with the Central Corridor, or may retain the boundary but modify certain provisions as they apply in the overlap area.

3 URBAN FORM

In shaping future growth and change, we must consider urban form principles and rules that not only enhance the existing landscape but add new elements reflective of the area's physical and cultural position in the City.

The Central Corridor Plan area is physically very diverse -- from the high-rise district at the north, to intimate pockets of small buildings on alleys, to large blocks of mid-rise industrial and commercial buildings toward the south. In shaping future growth and change, we must consider urban form principles and rules that not only enhance the existing landscape but add new elements reflective of the area's physical and cultural position in the City.

When we speak of "urban form" we are speaking of the physical configuration of individual buildings – their height, breadth, and articulation – as well as the combined effect of the City's buildings experienced together. These large and fine scale considerations have an incredible effect on the function of districts -- such as how activities are concentrated in relation to supporting infrastructure -- and also on our daily personal experiences and lasting mental impressions of our City.

The Urban Form Recommendations of the Plan are based on high-level objectives that are further articulated by detailed principles.

OBJECTIVE 1

ENHANCE THE CITY SKYLINE IN HARMONY WITH AND RESPECTFUL OF THE CITY PATTERN, INCLUDING VIEWS ACROSS SOMA TO AND FROM THE HILLS, BAY, AND DOWNTOWN.

San Francisco is renowned for its physical beauty and unique sense of place. These qualities are defined by buildings and streets laid upon hills and valleys, the San Francisco Bay and Pacific Ocean, and signature landmarks poised at picturesque locations. The city's urban form at this scale is an essential characteristic of San Francisco's identity. The city's urban form:

- Orients us and provides a sense of direction;
- Imprints in our minds the physical relationship of one place to another, through features of topography, landscape, access, activity, and the built environment;
- Distinguishes one area from another; and
- Grounds us, providing reference points and reminding us of where we are.

When changes to the cityscape are considered, the goal is to build on and reinforce existing patterns and qualities of place that provide the city with its unique identity and character. The natural topography of the city is augmented by the man-made topography of its skyline. Changes to the skyline, such as significant changes in allowable building heights, must be considered as if reshaping major elements of the city's natural topography of hills and valleys, for this is the scale of change to the visual landscape that they represent.

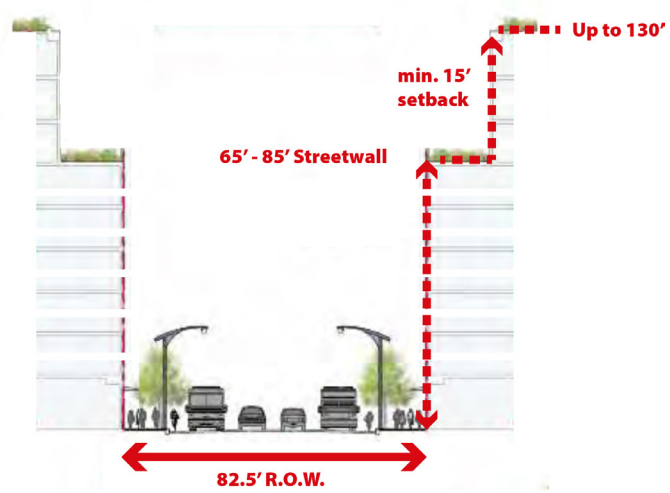
The undifferentiated spread of tall buildings without appropriate transitions, or without deference to the larger patterns, iconic and irreplaceable relationships, or to key views of defining elements of the area's landscape, can diminish and obscure the city's coherence and the collective connection of people to their surroundings.

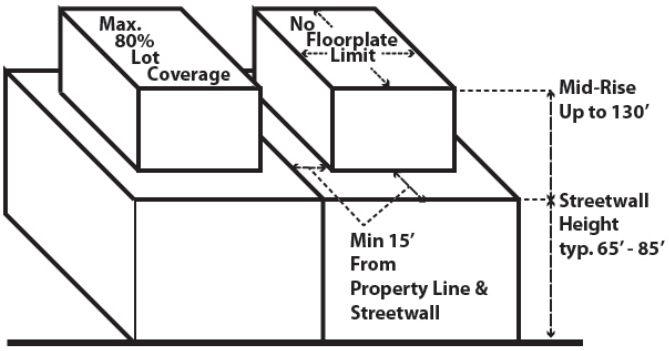
The critical factors in the cityscape when considered at this broad scale are building height and bulk and the specific placement and orientation of tall buildings. While a particular building design may be gracious, well articulated, and artistic in its own right, its placement, scale and orientation relative to the overall cityscape is equally, if not more, important. The height proposals in this Plan are based on a broad three-dimensional consideration of the placement and scale of buildings and potential development sites relative to their location.

OBJECTIVE 2

BASE HEIGHT LIMITS SHOULD BE REFLECTIVE OF THE WIDTH OF ADJACENT STREETS.

One of the main reasons why the street environment in the South of Market feels overwhelming to pedestrians is that the major streets are very wide (82.5 feet) and the scale of the buildings is comparatively low (1-4 stories). Urban design experience shows that people feel most comfortable on urban streets where the height of buildings is between ¾ and 1 ¼ times the width of the street, creating an "urban room" that has a pleasing, but not overwhelming, sense of enclosure and intimacy. The Plan proposes that the base height limits along all major streets in the Plan area should be 85 feet, lowering to 65 feet toward the western edge of the Plan area and in historic areas, such as the South End and near South Park. While in some areas the Plan proposes to allow buildings to rise above the 85-foot base height (generally to 130 feet), these upper stories would be required to set back by at least 15 feet in order to maintain the perception of the lower streetwall. (See proposed Height Limits maps for details on height limits, including locations where maximum height limits exceed the base height.) As a result, smaller sites that could not reasonably accommodate such stepbacks may not exceed the base height of 85 feet. This scale is also consistent with both





the traditional form and character of SoMa's significant commercial and industrial buildings as well as aligning with the desire for larger floorplate, open floorplan, mid-rise buildings most desired by contemporary new economy companies. (See "SoMa Workplace Typology" sidebar on page 33 for more discussion). A subsequent Design Guidelines document will provide further detail and refinements on required setbacks and conditions where such stepbacks may not be necessary.

OBJECTIVE 3

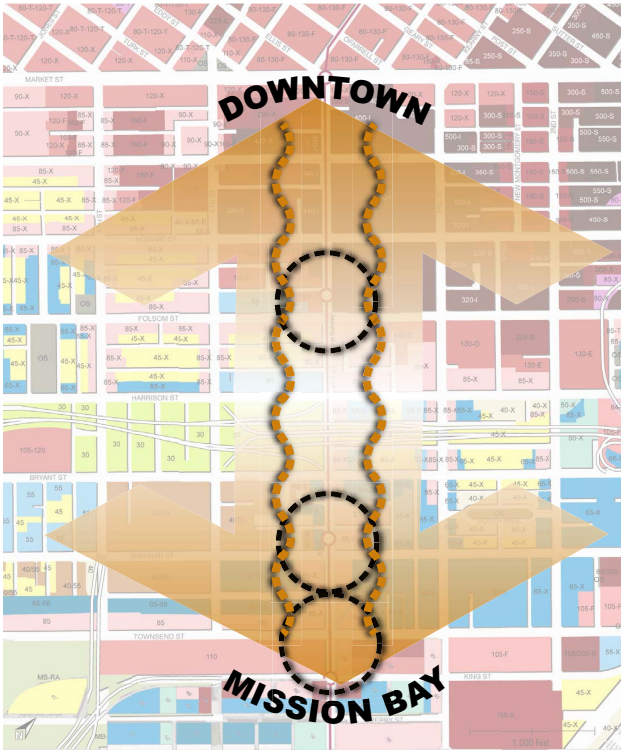
THE 4TH STREET CORRIDOR AND RAIL STATIONS SHOULD BE REINFORCED BY ADDITIONAL HEIGHT.

The Central Subway, running along and under the 4th Street corridor, with stations at Folsom and Brannan Streets, should be the primary organizing feature of the urban form of this part of the City. Greater height along the corridor and immediately at the stations relative to the surroundings serves to orient people to the location of this major transit line as well as locate higher-density uses most proximate to transit access in order to maximize transit usage.

OBJECTIVE 4

HEIGHT SHOULD BE FOCUSED AT THE NORTH AND SOUTH, WHERE THERE IS THE GREATEST REGIONAL TRANSIT.

The greatest concentrations and nodes of transit access should be reflected both on the skyline for orientation purposes and in the arrangement of density to maximize transit usage. Over 40% of the jobs in San Francisco are held by people who commute from outside of the City, and a similar number of San Francisco residents work outside of the City. Studies have shown repeatedly that requiring commuters to transfer between transit lines or transit systems substantially reduces ridership, as well as a high sensitivity to the proximity of people's jobs from a regional rail station. At the northern end of the corridor is Market Street, with BART, Muni Metro and countless Muni and regional bus lines. At the southern end is Townsend Street with the Caltrain station and a nexus of Muni Metro and bus lines. From a skyline standpoint, heights in the corridor should also offer transitions to the downtown high-rise district is at the northern end of the corridor and Mission Bay at the southern end, where residential towers of 160' are common.



PRINCIPLE 1

HEIGHTS SHOULD BE SCULPTED MINDFUL OF VIEWS THROUGH AND ACROSS THE AREA FROM SURROUNDING AREAS WITH VIEWS OF THE BAY, EAST BAY HILLS, AND OTHER KEY FEATURES.

PRINCIPLE 2

THE PREDOMINANT CHARACTER OF SOMA AS A MID-RISE DISTRICT SHOULD BE RETAINED, AND THE PRESENCE OF HIGH-RISES REDUCED BY LIMITING THEIR DISTRIBUTION AND BULK.

The South of Market sits at a critical location in the city's landscape. SoMa is a large expanse of flat land at the center of the east side of the City, sitting as an important balance and counterpoint to the dramatic hills that surround it, including the man-made "hill" of the downtown high-rise district, creating a dramatic amphitheater. With relatively low buildings in comparison to the hills and high-rises around it, the South of Market allows expansive and cherished views to extend across it to and from the surrounding hills, districts and the major features of the region beyond. In order to preserve this essential characteristic and preserve views across the area, height limits taller than 130 feet are generally kept to the southern portion of the Plan Area (Brannan Street southward), limited in distribution and widely spaced. It is important to note that mid-rise buildings are not necessarily synchronous with low densities. On the contrary, buildings heights of 65-130 feet combined with the larger floorplate buildings characteristic of the area can easily reach Floor Area Ratios (FAR) of over 6:1. (By comparison, the core of the downtown averages 9:1.) Finally, the essential historic character that defines the South of Market is that of the large commercial and industrial warehouse mid-rise building.

Because the number of potential buildings taller than 130 feet is limited to strategic locations adjacent to transit stations and their locations generously spaced, these buildings will be prominent from all directions and serve as local landmarks. While modest in scale compared to the core of the downtown high rise district, these buildings will be punctuations rising above the district and not buried in a landscape of tall buildings. Therefore their bulk and form will be of key consideration. Elegant, sculpted profiles will be critical to ensuring that these few tall buildings enhance, and do not detract from the character of the area.

As such, the Draft Plan proposes that tower taller than 130' in height should not exceed a floorplate of 12,000 gross square feet for residential or hotel uses and an average of 15,000 square feet for commercial uses. Outside of the downtown core, typical tower separation requirements are 115 feet to ensure light, air and views between tall buildings. Such controls should be considered here. Tower separation less than 115' might be considered where adjacent towers are very slender (e.g. 8,500 gsf) and adjacent towers vary in height by a significant amount (e.g. 50' or more).

THE SOMA WORKPLACE TYPOLOGY

The building stock constructed by the large-scale industrial and warehouse uses that populated much of the South of Market in the 20th Century have proven to feature characteristics that are very flexible and desirable for a range of uses, including contemporary office uses. The South of Market, particularly the area around the South End Historic District and throughout the Plan Area, has developed over the past 15 years into the nucleus of the City's and the region's high tech, "new economy" and design industries. Commercial buildings in this district now command rents that often equal or surpass those in high rises of the downtown Financial District.

While the architectural texture and patina of old brick and timber buildings are attractive for some businesses seeking workspaces with more character than many contemporary office buildings offer, there is of course a finite supply of such old buildings. However there are basic physical features of these buildings that are both replicable and attractive to the types of businesses that relish the function of the old building stock as well as the ambiance of the district.

These include:

- Large, flexible floorplates with open floor plans and service cores placed on the perimeter, rather than in the center, of the building.
- High ceilings (12'-15' clear)
- 4 - 8 stories typical (65' – 120'), maximum 10-12 stories

These features offer both functional and aesthetic attraction.

The large open floor plans allow a high degree of flexibility with workspace arrangements, accommodate expansive collaborative and informal environments, and discourage the proliferation of individual offices. The large floorplates allow the ability to accommodate larger tenants on single or fewer floors that can easily be connected by stairways, rather than tenants spread out over multiple floors that limit the size of working groups on each floor and require elevator travel between work groups.

High ceilings both allow natural light and air to penetrate into the deep floor plans as well as accommodate a high degree of customization for each space. (The high ceilings, which often feature exposed utilities in a raw and "industrial" manner, is also an aesthetic preference for many new economy businesses.)

The flexible nature of this typology accommodates the rapid growth, frequent mergers, and frequent rearranging of staff teams typical of the dynamic high tech sector. Part and parcel with these characteristics are that these squatter, robust buildings tend not to be very tall. This provides both functional and cultural advantages, as many new economy businesses prefer to avoid the "high rise elevator" environment often perceived as overly staid and impersonal. An important note to this office typology is that they are often quite high-density compared to typical downtown high-rises. With few private offices and mobile employees working at shared tables and workstations, the typical contemporary workplace environment can reach occupancy densities of more than one employee per 200 square feet, far denser than the historic high-rise density of one employee per 275 square feet.

475 Brannan Street

Foundry Square (Howard/1st Streets)

Market Square (1355 Market Street)

501 2nd Street

PRINCIPLE 3

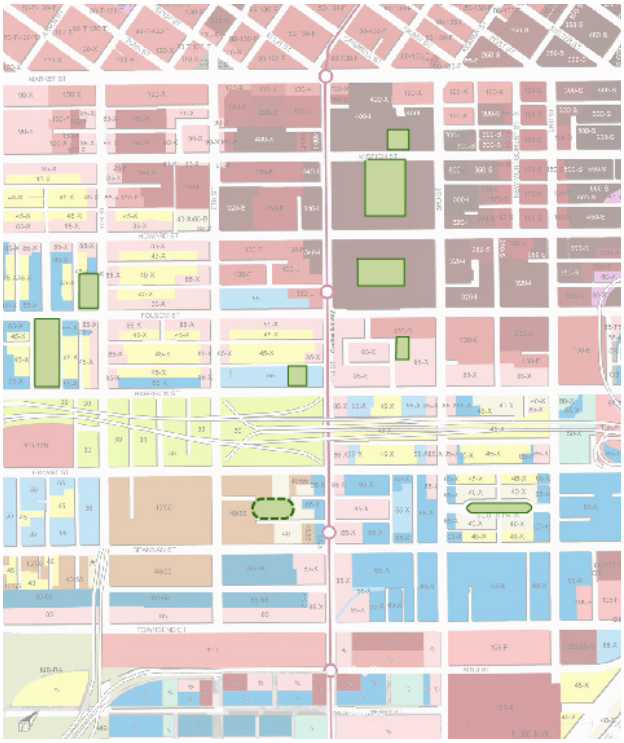
ADDITION OF SIGNIFICANT NEW SHADING SHOULD BE AVOIDED ON PUBLIC OPEN SPACES TO THE EXTENT FEASIBLE, BALANCED WITH OTHER CORE OBJECTIVES.

Sunlight is an important factor in people's attraction to and enjoyment of public spaces. Planning Code Section 295, adopted pursuant to Proposition K in 1984, protects Recreation and Park Department parks from new shading that might be significant and adverse to the use of those parks. South Park is the only Recreation and Park Department property in the Plan Area. However there are other important public open spaces under the jurisdiction of other agencies that require attention as well despite a lack of formal protection.

Many adjustments to the Plan's building height proposals were made expressly to reduce shadow impacts to public spaces. The limits in the Draft Plan's height proposals have been sculpted to avoid adding any more shading to South Park than existing height limits entail. Other notable adjustments to proposed height limits to protect sunlight on public spaces include:

- Yerba Buena Gardens – Height limits to the west/southwest of the complex's open spaces were kept below heights that would add major shading.
- Alice Street Community Garden and Proposed Expansion Area on Lapu Lapu – Some height limits along Rizal and Lapu Lapu to the southwest of the garden were lowered to 45 feet.
- Bessie Carmichael School Yard (824 Harrison Street) – Height limits were sculpted and kept low to all sides of the school to preserve sunlight to the yard of this middle school.
- Potential park site on Block 3777 -- The Plan identifies a potential opportunity for a new public park on this block bounded by 4th/5th/Bryant/Brannan Streets (See Open Space chapter for further details.) Height limits surrounding the core of the block were sculpted in anticipation of the potential park to create a comfortable and intimate scale at 45 feet (similar to South Park), while supporting substantial new development on the perimeter of the block appropriate for the transit-oriented location and necessary to not just activate the park but also to help fund its creation. The "Higher Height Limit Alternative" is sculpted on this block to feature the tallest heights of 160' to the west of the potential park, while keeping the heights due south of the park site relatively lower at 130' to maintain some sunlight benefits during certain times of the year.

While the Plan's intent is to minimize shadows, the Plan proposes to do so without sacrificing other important objectives, especially those regarding urban form and optimizing land use. Further, just as the potential for some modest shading from key buildings should not override the ability to achieve the Plan's core objectives, neither does a lack of shading from potential development sites justify height increases inconsistent with other major objectives, such as enhancing the coherence of the city's urban pattern, focusing the tallest heights and greatest densities where they are most adjacent to transit stations, preserving public views, and maintaining or enhancing neighborhood character. No one objective is ignored or violated, but each is balanced to achieve the optimum benefit of all essential Plan objectives and principles.



Notable public spaces for sunlight protection

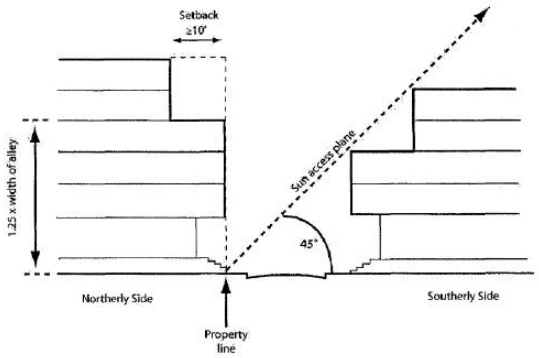
PRINCIPLE 4

BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS SHOULD BE ADJUSTED IN AREAS WITH A HIGH CONCENTRATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND UNIQUE CHARACTER.

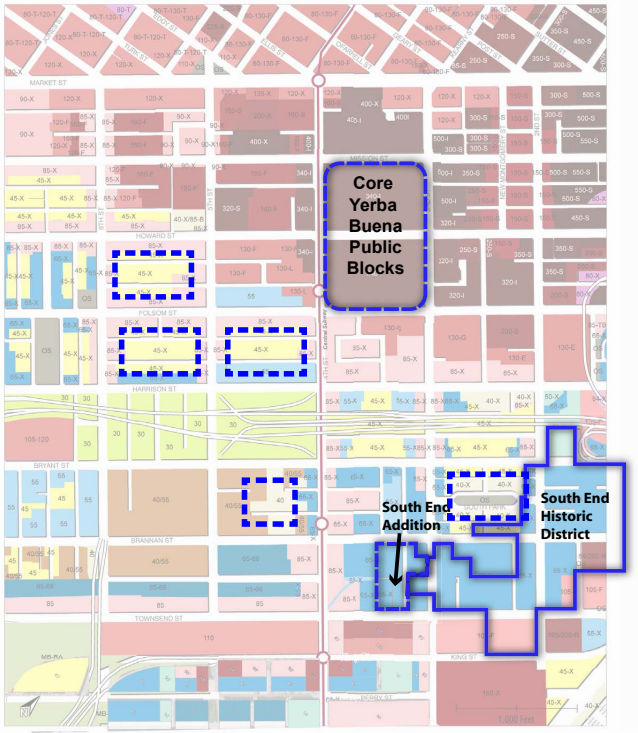
The southeastern portion of the Plan Area features two unique concentrations of historic resources -- the South Park block and the western portion of the South End Historic District. In order to preserve the unique character and scale of these areas, the Plan does not proposed to increase height limits in either area, including the area identified in the South of Market Historic Resources Survey for expansion of the South End Historic District. While the Plan does propose to increase height limits outside of these areas on parcels that have identified historic resources as part of the Plan's overall program, the Plan proposes protection for these individual resources through designation in Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code and ability by their owners to sell Transferable Development Rights to development sites. (See the Historic Preservation Chapter for more information.)

The west side of 4th Street between Bryant and Brannan contains one of the few cohesive blocks of small-scale neighborhood retail in the Plan area. The block face is characterized by small lots with modest-scale buildings, and is anchored at its north end by the Hotel Utah, a 4-story historic structure. Further, these buildings back up to a small enclave of fine-grain 2-4 story older residential buildings. The Plan proposes to reduce the height limit on this one-block frontage of 4th Street from 65 feet to 45 feet.

A key feature of the South of Market neighborhood fabric is its alley network. Much of the life of the South of Market happens on its alleys because of the refuge they provide from the traffic, noise, and bustle of the major arterials that dominate the area. Many alleys feature residential enclaves and a pattern of fine-grained smaller buildings. The Plan seeks to maintain and enhance the intimate scale and sunlight on many alleys in the Plan Area, particularly the ones that feature existing residential enclaves, by stepping down height limits along several alleys, such as along Clara, Freelon, and Welsh Streets. Additionally, Planning Code Section 261.1, which requires further sculpting and upper story stepbacks along narrow streets will continue to apply throughout the Plan area. This Code section requires a minimum 10' stepback above certain heights, as well as preservation of a 45-degree sun plane on the southern side of east-west streets. In areas where height limits are 85 feet or higher, particularly in the southwestern part of the Plan area where there are fewer residential uses along the alleys, the sun angle requirement would significantly reduce the ability to achieve the land use objectives and proposed height limits; in these areas this requirement should be relaxed to instead require a minimum 10' stepback similar to the north side of the street.



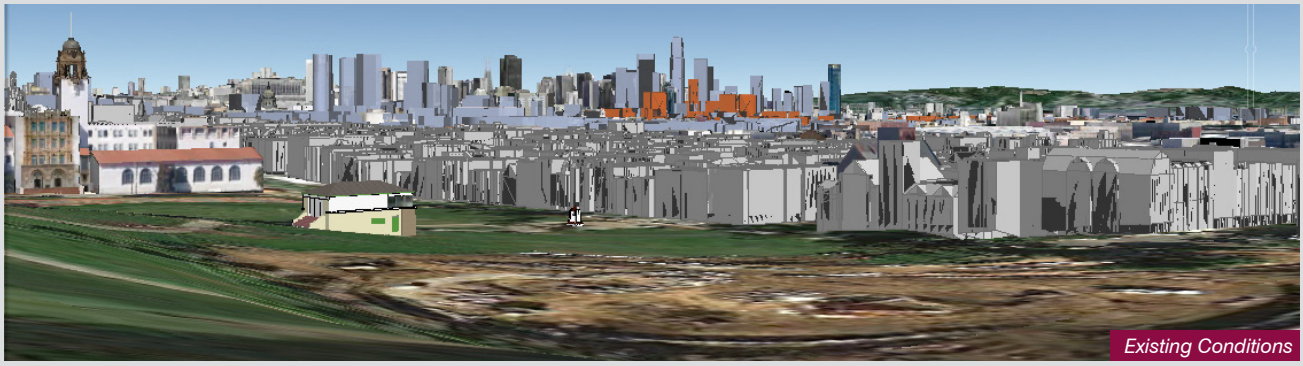
Section 261.1 Alley height sculpting controls



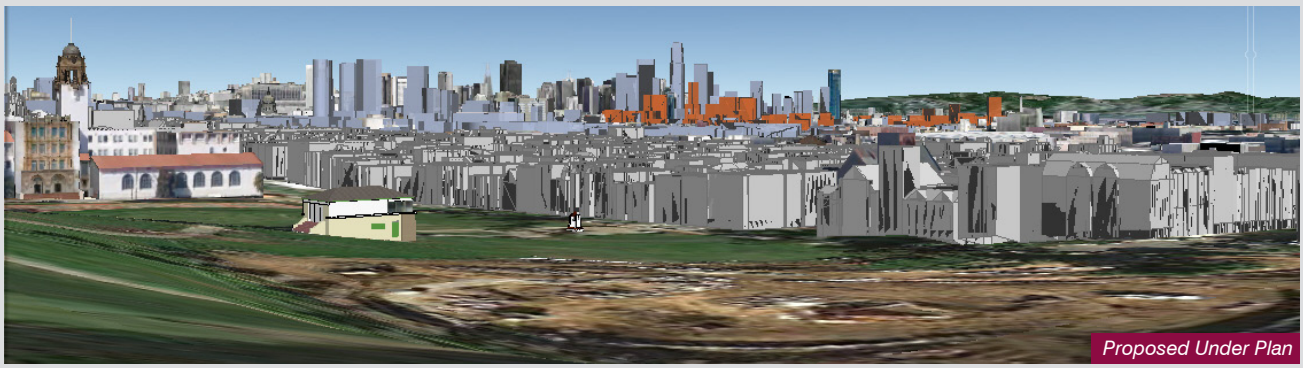
Areas of particular character for urban form consideration, including alley enclaves, historic areas, and public cultural centers.

3-D DIGITAL VISUALIZATIONS OF PROPOSED URBAN FORM

VIEW FROM DOLORES PARK (20TH/CHURCH)



Existing Conditions



Proposed Under Plan

VIEW FROM CORONA HEIGHTS PARK

Existing Conditions

Proposed Under Plan

Other potential buildings as approved or consistent with existing zoning (lavender)

Central Corridor area buildings (orange)

3-D DIGITAL VISUALIZATIONS OF PROPOSED URBAN FORM

VIEW FROM BAY BRIDGE

Existing Conditions

Proposed Under Plan

VIEW FROM BRANNAN / 6TH (LOOKING EAST)

Existing Conditions

Proposed Under Plan

PRINCIPLE 5

HEIGHT LIMITS SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE CENTRAL CITY LOCATION AND TRANSIT ACCESS, AND SHOULD SERVE TO DIMINISH THE DOMINANT PRESENCE OF THE FREEWAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

The elevated I-80 freeway, which slices through the Plan Area, creates a powerful physical separator dividing the Plan Area and an imposing and inhospitable psychological barrier to walking north-south. While the freeway structure is relatively low (30-50 feet) in the Plan area, it looms large above the low-slung buildings on either side. In addition to perpetuating the overwhelming presence of the freeway as a divider of the neighborhood, these low buildings heights are lower than is generally warranted on major SoMa streets in such a transit-oriented location. The low-scale buildings also keep activity light near the freeway, thus adding to the inhospitality to pedestrians. Allowing buildings adjacent to the freeway to rise above the level of the freeway will help integrate the areas on either side of the freeway, create a more active and inviting environment, diminish the presence of the freeway, and support the transit-supportive land use objectives of the Plan. The Plan proposes a base height limit of 85 feet along the freeway in areas east of 4th Street where the proposed land use controls would allow more intensive mixed-use development.

EIR ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS

The Central Corridor Environmental Impact Analysis (EIR) will evaluate the following height limit scenarios: (1) the Mid-Rise Alternative as proposed in this Pan (EIR Alternative A) and the High Rise Alternative with some variation (EIR Alternative B). The analysis of the High Rise Alternative will include consideration of height increases on certain sites as requested by individual project sponsors of those sites, which in some cases exceed or differ from the High Rises Alternative proposed in this draft Plan. See the "Environmental Analysis" section in the Appendix for more information.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

5.1 *Revise height and bulk limits.*

The above principles add together to create a recommended urban form program that, while representing an intensification of certain parts of the Plan area, is intended to build on and replicate the essential qualities that define the South of Market – a predominantly mid-rise district typified by the older large commercial and industrial buildings, textured throughout with smaller buildings and fine-grain alley enclaves. Taken together, the key principles related to skyline, workforce development, historic character, and livability all converge at height recommendations that steer the district toward a largely mid-rise form. This form represents a sensitive intensification of the area built on its unique character, rather than a replication of development patterns in either the downtown or Mission Bay.

Within this framework, the Plan sets forth two height alternatives, the Mid-Rise Alternative and the High Rise Alternative.

The Mid-Rise Alternative heights proposal is generally made up of 65-to-85-foot base height limits throughout the Plan area, stepping back to 130 feet in opportunity areas, with a limited number of buildings taller than 130 feet to punctuate the area adjacent to the Brannan Street Central Subway Station and at the Caltrain Station. This alternative enables up to 31,100 new jobs at maximum, and would significantly expand the amount of space the City would have in the Mid-Rise workplace typology (described on in the "SoMa Workplace Typology" section above), providing up to 16,000 of those jobs in floorplates larger than 20,000 square feet.

The High Rise Alternative variation follows the same general base height limits, but amplifies height limits in certain areas, expanding opportunities for buildings taller than 130'. Because of necessary bulk and shadow requirements for taller buildings, this alternative enables only slightly more workplace square footage than the Mid-Rise Alternative, for a total of up to 31, 800 jobs at maximum, trading mid-rise office space for more traditional tower-office space.

PRINCIPLE 6

THE DIVERSE SCALE OF BUILDINGS IN THE PLAN AREA SHOULD BE MAINTAINED, PARTICULARLY AREAS WITH A FINE GRAIN CONCENTRATION OF SMALLER LOTS AND BUILDINGS.

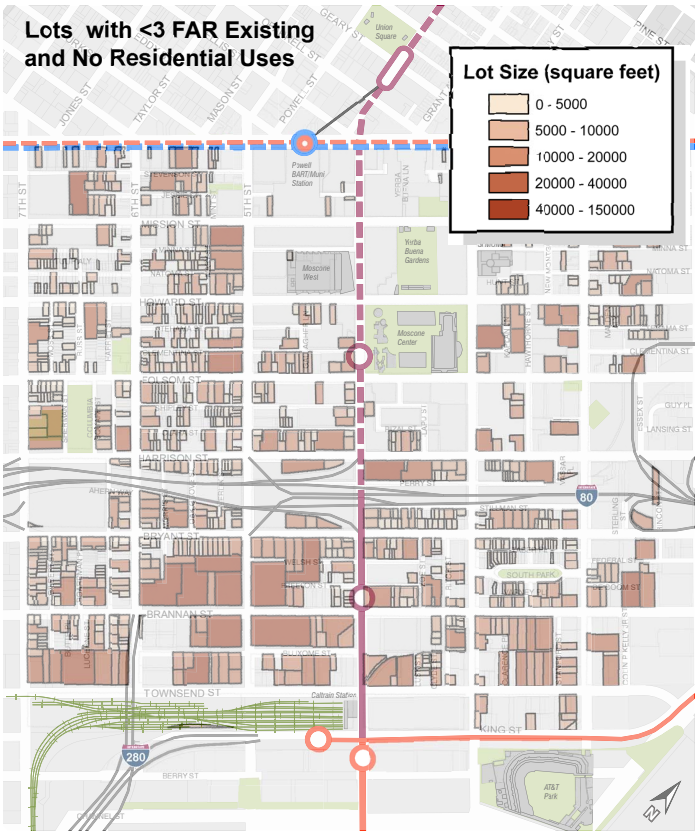
Due to the South of Market's history as a constantly evolving commercial, industrial and residential area, the urban landscape is defined by a mixture of very large, medium, and small parcels and buildings. This is matched by a wide variety in building types and styles. Combined, these give the SoMa its eclectic and dynamic character. New development in the area should maintain this mixture and preserve the few areas that maintain a pattern of small lots and buildings.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

6.2 *Restrict consolidation of small lots on certain blocks in the Plan area.*

In most of the Plan area, the pattern of lot ownership, the presence of existing housing (which is strongly protected from demolition), the zoning, or the prevailing scale of large lots naturally restrict the ability or desirability of consolidating lots. The Plan proposes to institute restrictions on lot consolidation where the proposed zoning and changes to height limits would create pressure for consolidation. A Conditional Use would be required on certain blocks (indicated on the Proposed Zoning map in the Land Use chapter) where a lot frontage greater than 100 feet would be created by the consolidation of two or more parcels that have 50 feet or less in lot frontage.

To ensure that the Conditional Use evaluation is meaningful, the Planning Commission would be required to make affirmative findings. Such findings could include: the preservation of one or more existing structures; new development that includes multiple individual buildings rather than one single structure; massing of new structures that emphasizes the smaller lot pattern; the creation of new public mid-block alleys or open space; and the delineation of uses (particularly on the ground floor) that echo the smaller lot pattern. Lot consolidation would not be permitted absent a development proposal that can be weighed against these criteria.

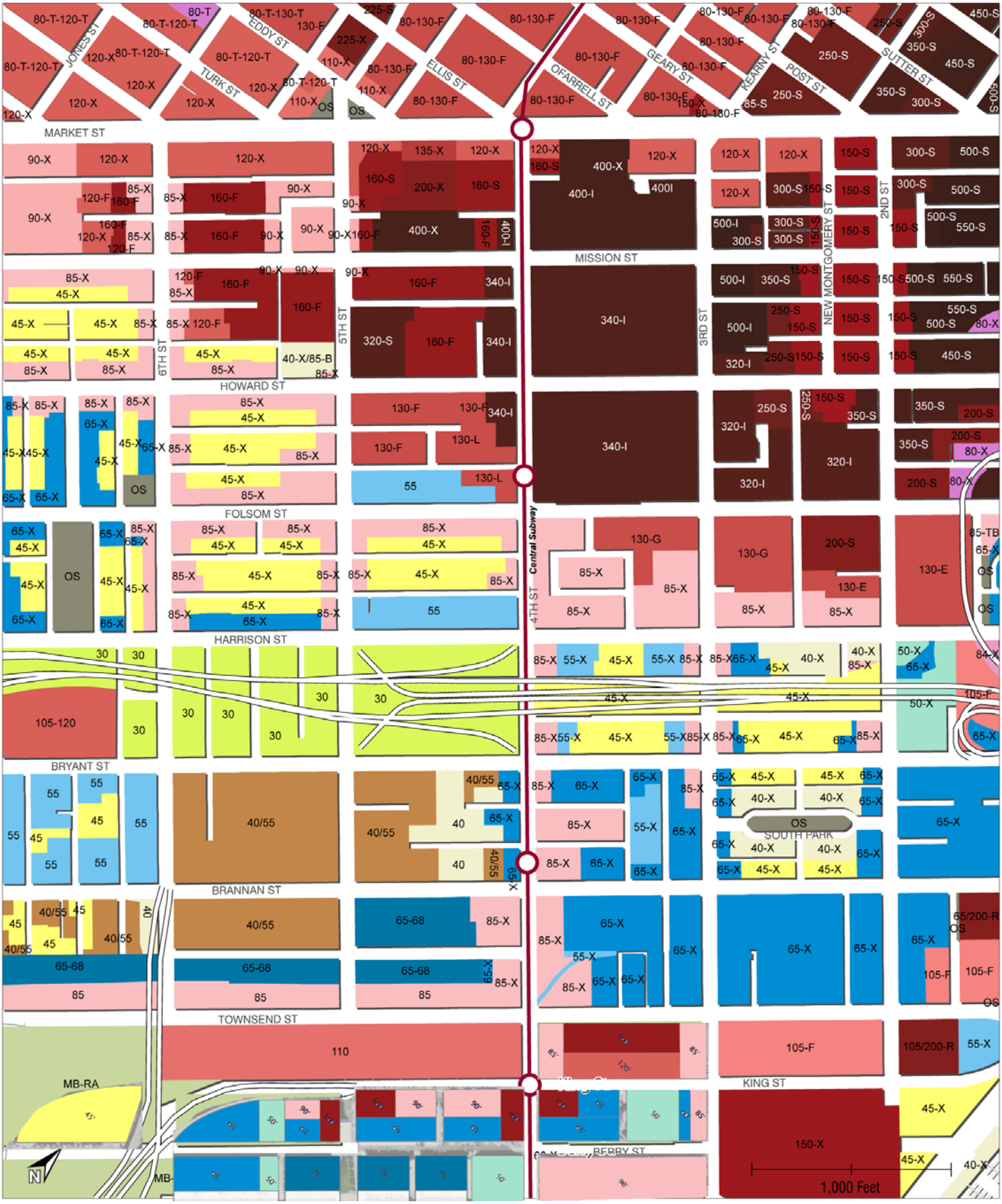


Lots that might be considered "soft sites" based on existing low-intensity development and lack of residential uses

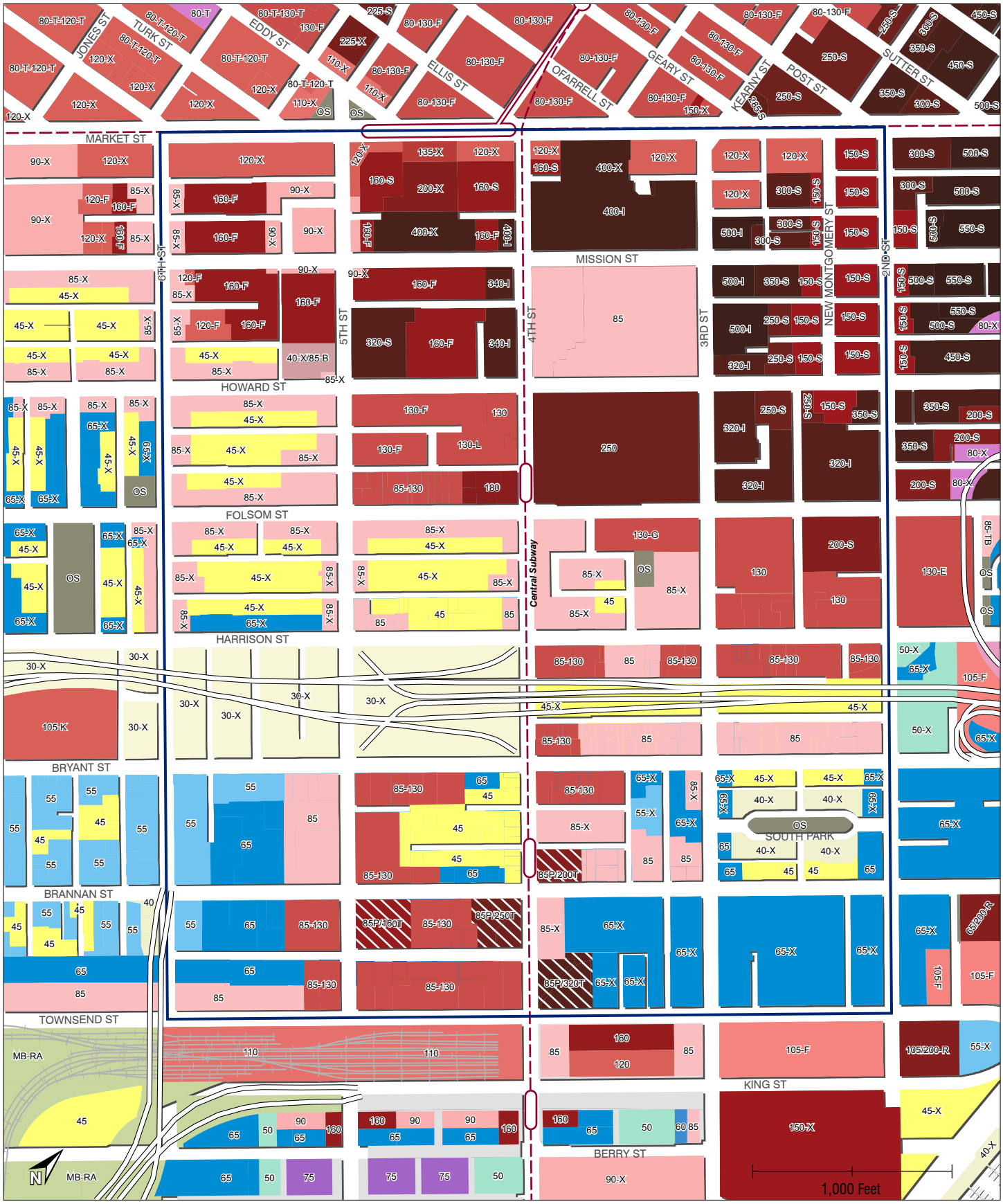
There are some key advantages of lot consolidation in many circumstances that make an outright ban undesirable. Accommodating growth in the Plan area – and enhancing the fabric of the area -- will depend on some consolidation of lots. There are numerous assemblages of contiguous lots, some of which are small, on blocks where it would be desirable to have new mid-block alleys, open space, or desirable arrangements of buildings unattainable without lot consolidation.

6.3 *Create mechanisms that encourage preservation of existing buildings characteristic of SoMa.*

In addition to notable historic or architecturally significant buildings that undoubtedly merit preservation, there are many more buildings of modest scale in the Plan Area that are attractive and that add to the texture and interest that define SoMa's characteristic "grittiness" and dynamic eclecticness. Most of these are older commercial and industrial buildings that may be unremarkable but have solid "bones." Maintaining many of these structures and encouraging significant additions to them would be preferable, and create a far more



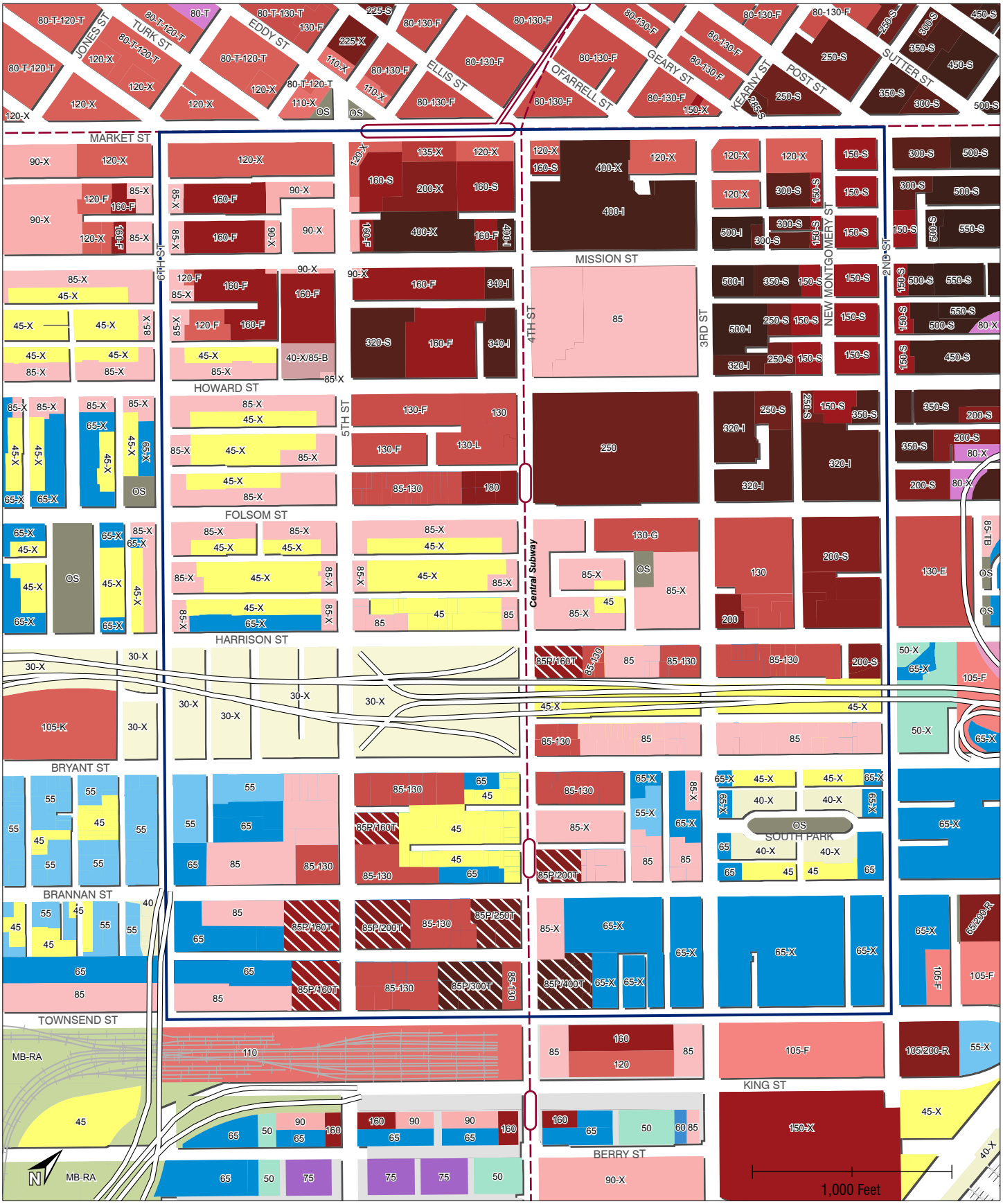
EXISTING HEIGHT LIMITS



85-130 15 foot stepback required above 85' base height

85P/160T Restricted tower floorplates above 85' base height

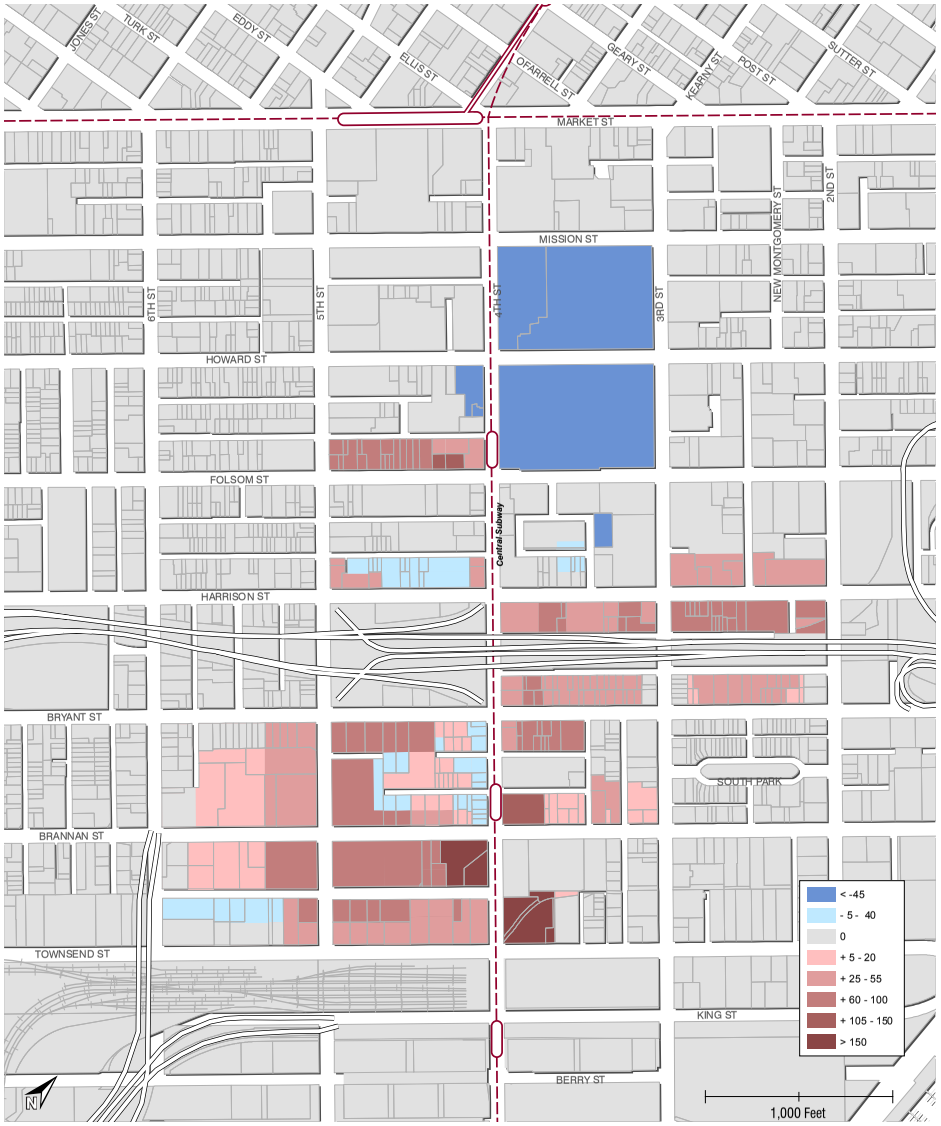
PROPOSED HEIGHT LIMITS: MID-RISE ALTERNATIVE



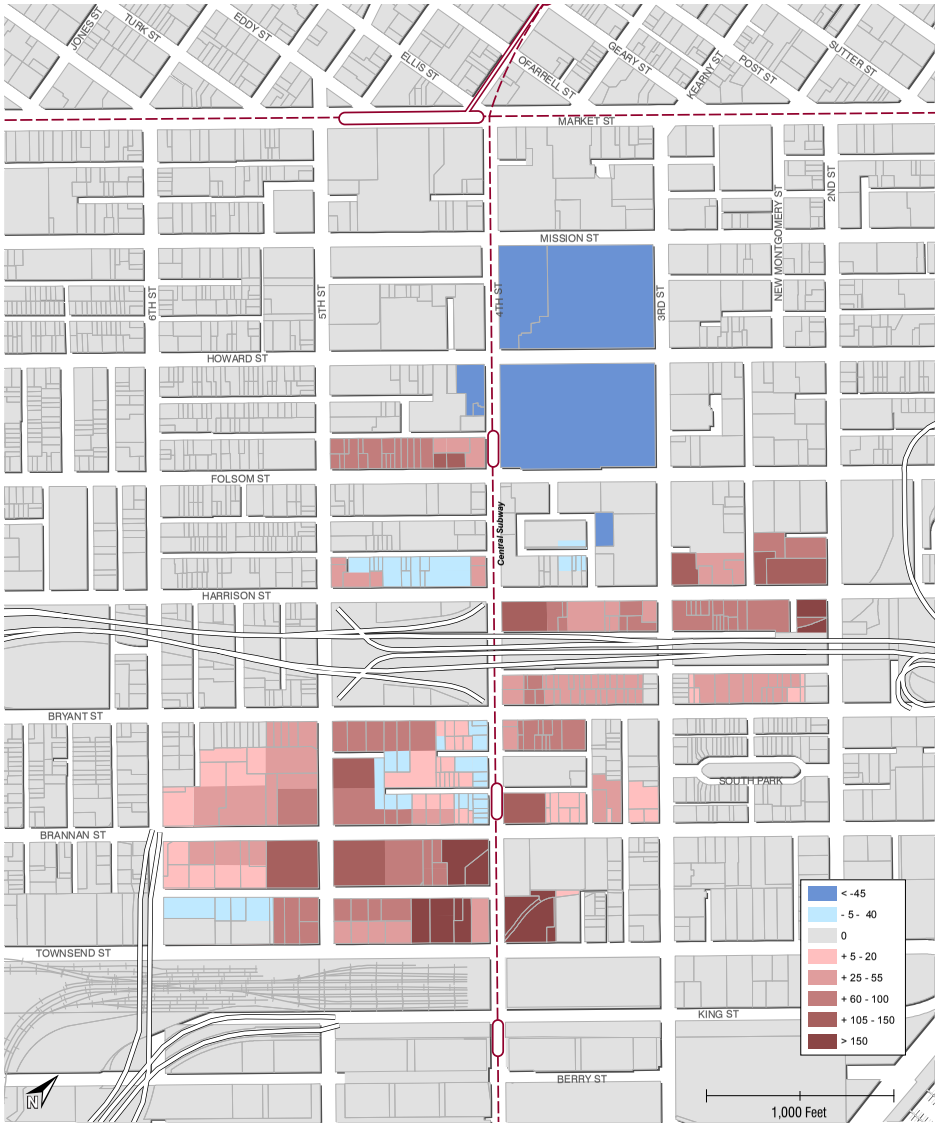
HEIGHT LIMIT VARIATION: HIGH RISE ALTERNATIVE

85-130 — 15 foot stepback required above 85' base height

85P/160T — Restricted tower floorplates above 85' base height



MIDRISE ALTERNATIVE: CHANGE FROM EXISTING



HIGH RISE ALTERNATIVE: CHANGE FROM EXISTING

interesting district, than simply facilitating their demolition and thus the wholesale transformation of the Plan area. The Plan's zoning and design guidelines will include incentives and mechanisms, possibly through FAR controls and the TDR program, to maintaining some of these buildings while achieving the growth objectives of the Plan. Current concepts under consideration to encourage preservation of buildings not specifically protected as historic resources (particularly smaller buildings) as well as discourage parcel consolidation, include:

(1) FAR bonus for preservation of existing buildings through additions rather than demolition.

(2) Higher FAR allowances for smaller lots than larger ones.

PRINCIPLE 7

MITIGATE THE SCALE OF LARGE BLOCKS AND PARCELS.

The typical block in the South of Market is very large – 825 feet by 550 feet. Each of these blocks is approximately four times as large as a block north of Market Street. This scale creates an environment that is functionally and psychologically challenging for pedestrians to navigate.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

7.1 *Maintain requirements for new mid-block alleys on large lots.*

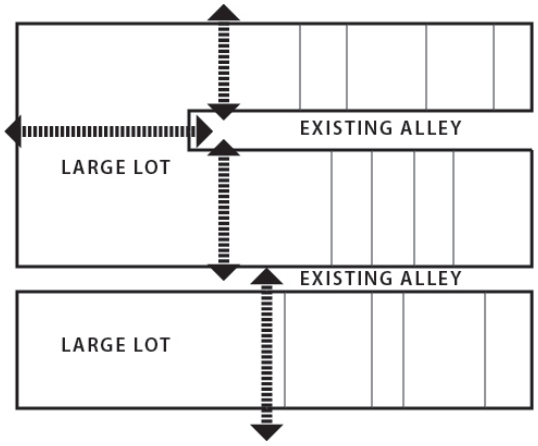
Adoption of new zoning as part of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plans included provisions – contained in Planning Code Section 270.2 -- requiring new development on large parcels on long blocks to include new publicly-accessible mid-block alleys. The requirements of Section 270.2 now apply throughout the Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed-Use Districts, the C-3, and other districts. These would apply throughout the Central Corridor area.

7.2 *Create design guidelines for development on key sites in the Plan area.*

While the Plan area contains a number of very large sites and site assemblages, there are certain locations and assemblages that present unique major opportunities or challenges to enhancing the public realm and supporting the area's circulation and livability. These sites include:

- Block 3777 (Bryant/4th/Brannan/5th). This block features a parcel owned by the SFPUC (discussed as a potential new park in the Open Space chapter), a large underutilized property owned by the Hearst Corporation/SF Chronicle, and other parcels likely to be considered for development under the proposed zoning.
- Parcels adjacent to the new Central Subway stations, particularly at the corners of 4th Street at Folsom and Brannan
- Parcels near the intersection of 4th and Townsend, adjacent to and across from the Caltrain Station
- Flower Mart/Block 3778

Adoption of the zoning recommendations and policies in this Plan should include a set of guidelines for these sites, highlighting desired locations for public open space, mid-block alleys, generalized building massing, vehicular access, and any other key factors in shaping development on these sites.



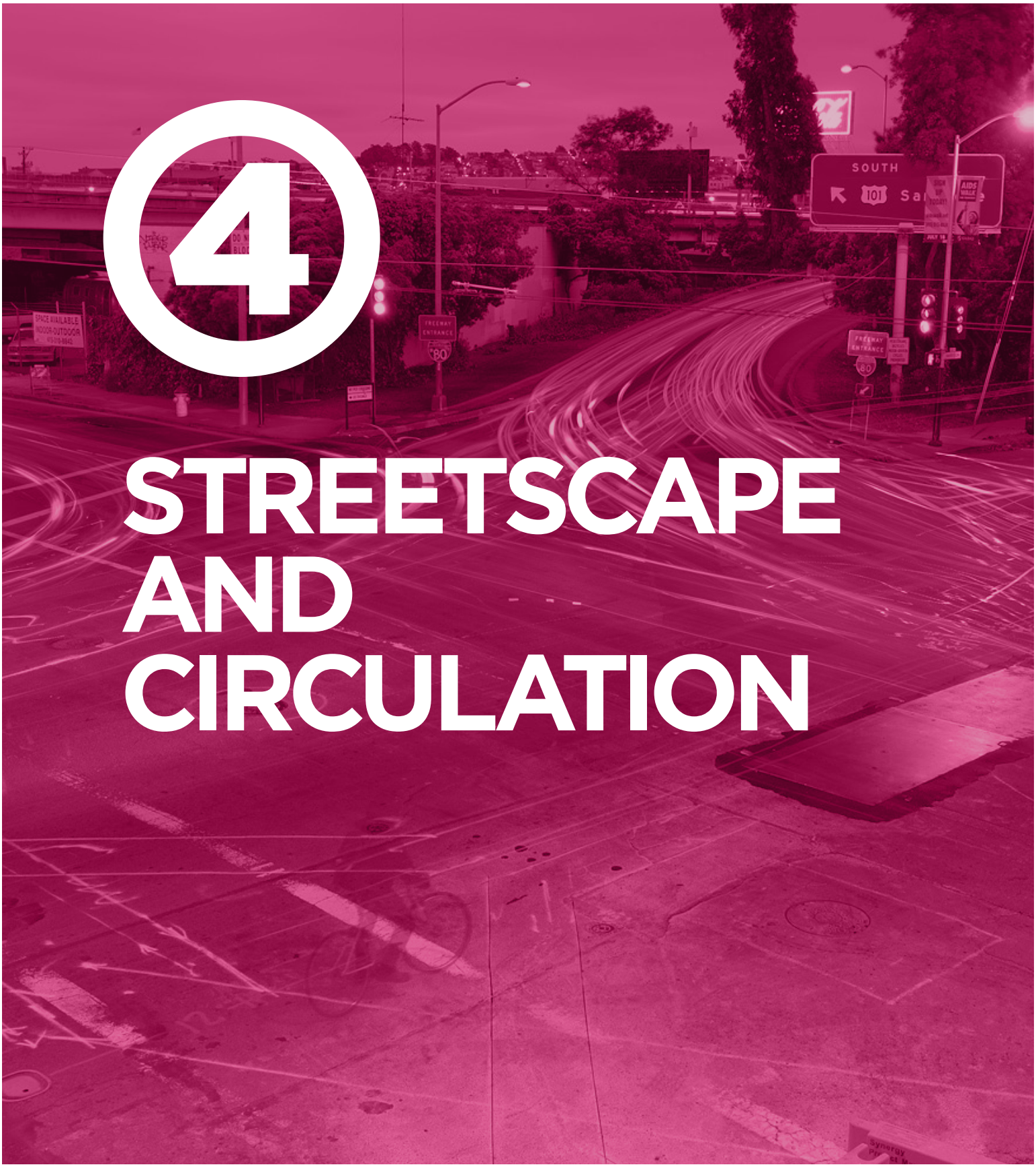
Lots with greater than 300 linear feet of street frontage shall provide a publicly-accessible mid-block alley at least 20' wide.

THE 5M PROJECT

The 5M Project is located at the northwest periphery of the plan area, integrated with the Chronicle Building in a four-acre site along Fifth Street between Mission and Howard Streets. Its goal is to create a new type of urban "cluster" specifically designed to support companies who rely on innovation and collaboration, with a mix of uses including retail, cultural, public uses, arts and event spaces, and co-working environments. As currently proposed, the project would include up to 1.8 million square feet, including 1.1MSF of office space, approximately 175KSF of retail, and up to 750 housing units. New development would combine with retention of and additions to historic structures, significant provision of common spaces inside and outside of buildings, and extensive programming in those spaces.

In many ways, the 5M Project is a vivid illustration of numerous Central Corridor's plan principles: it provides needed workspaces for technology and other innovation sectors, with the kind of floorplates and corresponding workspaces that can support collaborative work environments and growing companies; it includes a significant residential component that supports 24-hour activity on the site; and it is designed to create a dense, livable urban environment that utilizes nearby transit, particularly the Powell BART station a block away. Preliminary designs also include the types of active ground floor street frontages, mid-block alleys, on-site open spaces, and focal gathering areas recommended by the plan.

While the properties comprising the 5M Project fall within the Central Corridor Plan Area, the scale and complexity of issues embedded in the proposed development require a more tailored solution than can be provided by the Plan's rezoning. The City will continue to work with project sponsors through a more detailed, site-focused planning effort to arrive at land use controls, specific design standards and guidelines to direct the phased development of this long-term project; and staff will continue close coordination to ensure the overall program, scale, and character of the proposed project is in keeping with the developing intent of the Central Corridor Plan.



4 STREETSCAPE AND CIRCULATION

The street network is out of step with the needs of its users, and with many more workers and residents anticipated in the area by the Central Corridor Draft Plan, the need to address this imbalance is even more urgent.

Background

Highway connections and the industrial history of SoMa have resulted in major streets designed primarily to move automobiles and trucks through the district. Multiple wide lanes, widely spaced traffic signals, and one-way operations accommodate large volumes of through-traffic. This has resulted in very poor conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and transit. The street network is out of step with the needs of its users, and with many more workers and residents anticipated in the area by the Central Corridor Draft Plan, the need to address this imbalance is even more urgent. This chapter contains principles and implementation strategies to improve conditions for existing users of area streets and to support local growth in a sustainable and livable manner.

The Central Corridor area and SoMa in general are served by a widely spaced grid of major streets that form large blocks that are further divided by minor streets and alleys, in patterns that often vary from block to block. While the narrower, discontinuous minor streets typically serve only very local needs, the continuous grid of major streets connects city neighborhoods and links the city to the region via Interstates 80, 280 and 101. Discussion in this chapter centers mostly on the major street grid, while the minor streets and alleys are discussed more comprehensively in the Open Space chapter.

The Public Realm Existing Conditions Report documents pervasive deficiencies in the pedestrian infrastructure: sidewalks do not meet minimum city standards on most blocks; signalized or even marked crosswalks are few and far between; many crosswalks at major intersections are closed to pedestrians; crossing distances are long. In addition to making walking less pleasant and less convenient, the multiple wide lanes, widely spaced traffic signals, and one-way operations designed to accommodate large volumes of traffic also allow vehicles to travel at higher speeds. Widespread speeding is documented on many major streets, and the combination of speeding traffic and poor pedestrian infrastructure is reflected in the high rate of pedestrian injuries seen throughout the Plan area. Pedestrian improvements combined with traffic calming could have a distinct impact not only on livability, but on public health in the area.

With very few transit-only lanes in the Plan area, buses are often delayed by traffic. Buses traveling through the Plan Area serve not only local needs but also adjacent residential areas and major employment centers, and these frequent delays affect significant portions of the City. Growth in the Plan area and vicinity will further exacerbate these delays, and area streets will not be able to accommodate this growth if it is wholly served by private vehicle; commuters and residents will need other

viable travel options. Ensuring that traffic does not adversely affect transit reliability and speed is essential to the success of the thriving mixed-use district envisioned in this Plan.

High traffic volumes and speeding also increase risks for cyclists in mixed traffic. There are few dedicated cycling lanes in the area, although new ones are planned on 2nd and 5th Streets. Further, the existing and planned bicycle lanes place cyclists between moving traffic and parked cars, a scenario that is daunting to many potential cyclists and does not protect cyclists from right-turning vehicles. The area's flat topography and relatively good weather, if combined with a comprehensive network of high-quality bicycle routes, could result in significant mode shift toward cycling, relieving demand for additional car trips.

Policy and Planning Context

The City has adopted numerous plans and policies that aim to improve pedestrian, transit and cycling conditions and to encourage individuals to walk, use transit or cycle rather than use private automobiles. The City's Transit First Policy is the necessary, and only practical, foundation for continuing economic growth of the City. An abbreviated list of relevant adopted policies and citywide plans is included in the sidebar below. Recently adopted plans for adjacent areas include programs for substantial street improvements and circulation changes. The Transit Center District Plan includes a comprehensive redesign of streets to prioritize pedestrians and transit; the Western SoMa plan includes recommendations for traffic calming and pedestrian improvements; and the Eastern Neighborhoods Transportation Implementation Planning Study (EN TRIPS) proposes certain key streets be redesigned to prioritize transit, bicycle and pedestrian circulation.

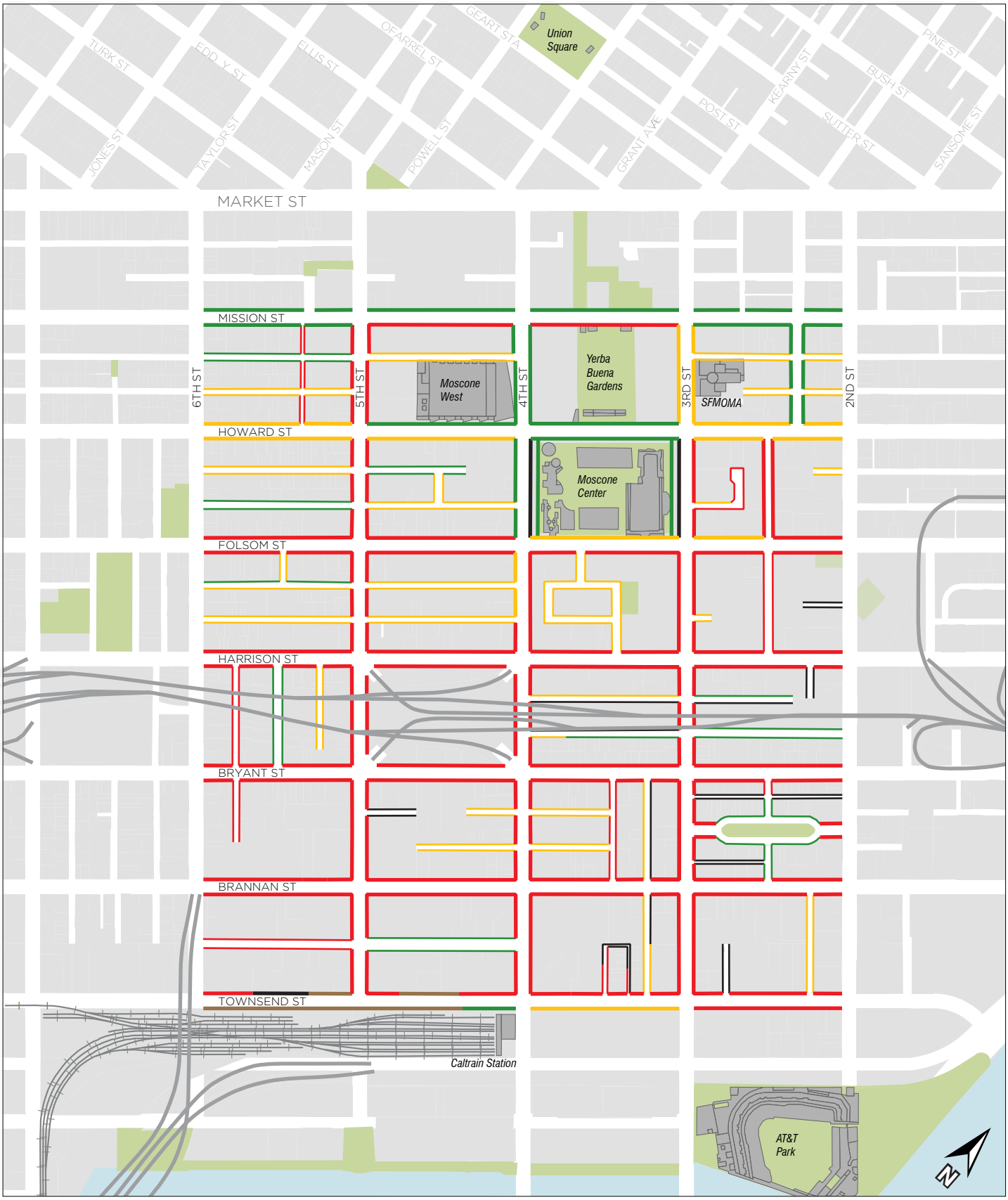
In order to bring Central Corridor streets into better alignment with City policy and serve both current and future needs, it is necessary to reconsider the existing allocation of street right-of-way between different users. Safe and convenient pedestrian, transit and bicycle access to and within the Central Corridor area is necessary for the success of the envisioned land uses. The following principles and recommendations are aimed at implementing existing City policies to improve pedestrian, transit and cycling conditions on major streets in the plan area. Where necessary they augment adopted plans, in order to accommodate the needs of new workers and residents anticipated by the Central Corridor Plan, and to better respond to more recent City policies that set necessarily ambitious mode-shift goals.

Relevant transportation policies include:

- the **Transit First policy**, (San Francisco City Charter Section 8A.115) , which prioritizes transit, walking and cycling over private vehicle use throughout the city;
- the **Mayor's Pedestrian Safety Executive Directive** of 2010, which calls for a 25% reduction in serious and fatal pedestrian injuries by 2016 and 50% reduction by 2021;
- **Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 511-10**, adopted 2010, which sets a bicycle mode-share goal of 20% by the year 2020.

Recent citywide plans include:

- the **Climate Action Strategy** for the City's transportation system, which sets the goal of roughly doubling walking, cycling, and transit as a percentage of all trips by 2030;
- the **Bicycle Plan**, adopted 2009, which proposes a citywide network of dedicated bicycle facilities;
- the **Better Streets Plan**, adopted 2010, which sets standards for sidewalk width and other aspects of the pedestrian environment;
- the ongoing **Transit Effectiveness Project**, which includes improvements to selected transit routes and restructuring or addition of new routes.



ANALYSIS OF EXISTING SIDEWALK WIDTHS

- No sidewalk
- No sidewalk, pedestrian walkway provided (no curb)
- Sidewalk width less than Better Streets Plan (BSP) minimum (12' for major streets, 9' other)
- Sidewalk width meets BSP minimum but less than recommended (15' for major streets, 12' other)
- Sidewalk width meets BSP recommended width

1,000 Feet

PRINCIPLE 1

PROVIDE A SAFE, CONVENIENT AND ATTRACTIVE WALKING ENVIRONMENT ON ALL STREETS IN THE PLAN AREA.

As a major convention and tourism destination, employment center, and residential area, the Central Corridor attracts thousands of people daily, the overwhelming majority of whom will either begin or end their trip as pedestrians. And as anticipated development occurs, new workers, visitors and residents will join the thousands already there and place additional demand on the already inadequate pedestrian infrastructure. A transformation of the public realm will be required to accommodate people on foot and give them enjoyable paths to travel, linger, shop and socialize. Streets are not just for movement, but for slowing down to socialize and take in the rhythms of the City. Creating a complete, high quality walking network is necessary to make all aspects of the transportation system function well.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1.1 *Widen sidewalks on major streets to meet Better Streets Plan standards.*

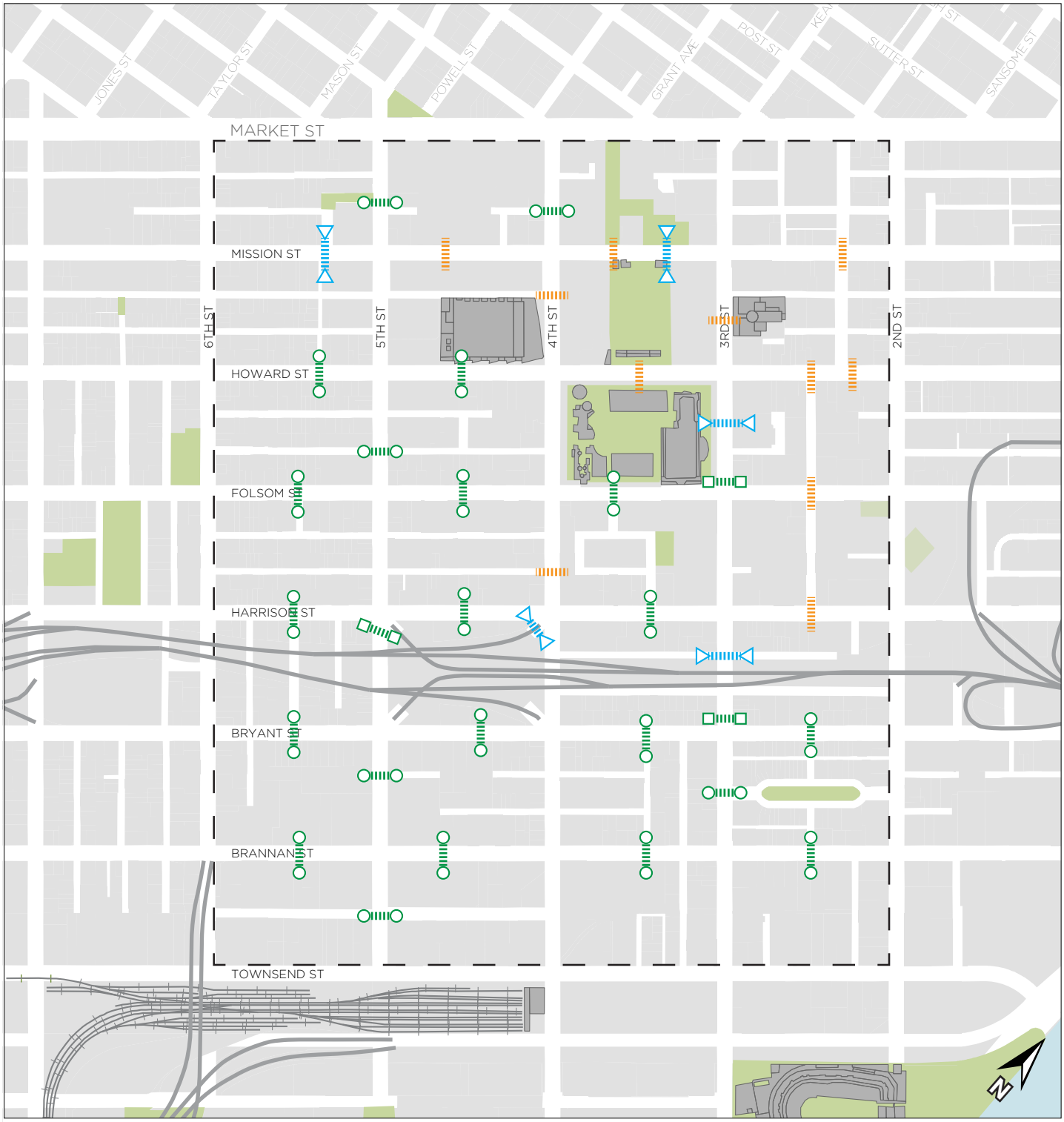
Adequate sidewalk width is an essential ingredient in making walking a safe, convenient and attractive transportation option. In addition to accommodating pedestrian movement, sidewalks should be wide enough for amenities such as trees or other landscaping and fixed or moveable seating. The Better Streets Plan sets twelve feet as the minimum recommended sidewalk width for most major streets in the Plan area, with fifteen feet as the optimal width. Some locations that attract extremely high pedestrian volumes (e.g. next to transit stops or large office buildings) should have even wider sidewalks in order to maintain safe and pleasant walking conditions.

1.2 *Provide additional signalized crosswalks across major streets.*

Long distances between crosswalks inconvenience pedestrians and reduce the viability and attractiveness of walking as a transportation option. They also provide powerful incentives for some pedestrians to risk crossing against traffic, and are thus a serious safety concern. The current practice of providing signalized crosswalks at intersections of two major streets means that crosswalks are usually over 800 feet apart on major east-west streets, and 550 feet apart on major north-south streets. North of Market Street, an area renowned worldwide for its walkability, crosswalks are at most 425 feet apart in the east-west direction and not more than 275 feet apart in the north-south direction. Providing an additional crosswalk roughly half-way between each pair of existing crosswalks would produce distances between

Narrow sidewalks, such as these on Bryant Street, are a common condition in the Central Corridor area.

Signalized mid-block crossings, such as this one on Mission Street between 3rd and 4th Streets, can help create better pedestrian connections on SoMa's long blocks.



PROPOSED SIGNALIZED PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS

- New crosswalk
- New crosswalk proposed in other plans and projects
- Closed crosswalks at existing signalized intersection, to be opened
- Existing crosswalks across major streets at minor streets (existing crosswalks at the intersection of two major streets are not shown)

1,000 Feet

crosswalks roughly equivalent to those found north of Market Street. In addition, providing crosswalks at the intersections of major and minor streets would enhance smaller streets' role in the pedestrian network. See map on the facing page for locations of recommended new crosswalks.

1.3 *Open currently closed crosswalks at signalized intersections.*

Several signalized intersections of major streets in the area prohibit pedestrians from crossing one leg of the intersection, resulting in inconvenient and potentially unsafe detours for pedestrians in dense areas and along major corridors, such as 3rd and 4th Streets. Existing City policy recommends opening all such closed crosswalks. As some of the closed crosswalks are at freeway access ramps, coordination with Caltrans may be required. See map for locations of recommended locations to open closed crosswalks.

1.4 *Provide corner sidewalk extensions to enhance pedestrian safety at crosswalks.*

Sidewalk corner extensions (bulb-outs) shorten the length of crosswalks and make pedestrians waiting to cross more visible to drivers. The Better Streets Plan recommends installing sidewalk corner extensions to enhance safety and to provide additional space for amenities such as benches and landscaping.

1.5 *Add street trees and street furnishings to sidewalks wherever possible.*

Landscaping and street furnishings, such as fixed or moveable seating, are important in creating an inviting environment for walking and public life. The Better Streets Plan establishes minimum and preferred sidewalk widths to provide sufficient space for these amenities. However, even where the minimum sidewalk width cannot be provided, the Better Streets Plan discusses strategies for locating amenities to create attractive and functional pedestrian environments.

1.6 *Expand the pedestrian network through large development lots, especially on long blocks, where possible per established City policy.*

Existing City policy and zoning regulations require mid-block paths through large lots in certain zoning districts. These requirements should be retained where they exist and extended to any new zoning districts created in the Central Corridor area. See further discussion in the Urban Form and Open Space chapters.

Closed pedestrian crossings are an obstacle and major inconvenience in the Central Corridor area, especially near Interstate 80.

Pedestrian pinch-points, such as this one on Zoe Street at Bryant Street, create poor pedestrian conditions.

PRINCIPLE 2

CONFIGURE TRANSIT ROUTES TO ADEQUATELY SERVE THE AREA AND REDESIGN STREETS THAT SERVE TRANSIT TO LESSEN THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC ON TRANSIT PERFORMANCE.

Public transportation is fundamental to accommodating the movement of large populations of workers and residents to, within and through the City. Levels of density and activity such as proposed for the Central Corridor Plan area are possible only through the majority of its workers, visitors, and residents relying on transit to move about. A circulation network that prioritizes transit will support the creation of the public spaces, walking environment and bicycle network that are envisioned for the area. Moreover, several Central Corridor streets are part of the central hub of San Francisco's and the region's transit network, and service delays or problems in the Plan area can radiate throughout the network. For these reasons it is critical to facilitate transit movements in the area.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

2.1 *Provide a robust network of dedicated transit lanes.*

Dedicated transit lanes expedite surface transit movement, improve transit travel time, and support more efficient operating costs by allowing for more reliable and consistent headways, especially during peak hours. Existing dedicated transit lanes within the plan area are located along portions of 3rd, 4th and Mission Streets. New dedicated transit lanes will be necessary on portions of 4th, Harrison, Bryant Streets and Folsom Streets.

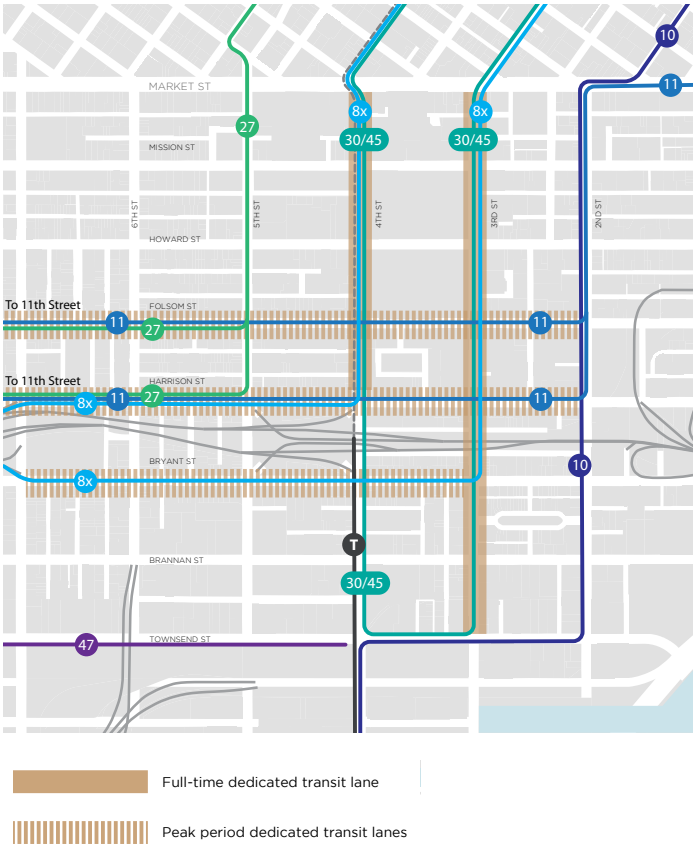
1.1 *Upgrade existing and planned dedicated transit lanes with "self-enforcing" elements.*

Dedicated transit lanes can be designed with "self-enforcing" elements such as curbs, channelizers and colored or textured pavements to discourage or prevent use by unauthorized private vehicles. Existing dedicated transit lanes are not currently self-enforcing and are often congested by automobiles which can drive in the transit lane unless manual enforcement is available. As resources for manual enforcement is limited, conflicts with vehicular traffic occur often, impacting delivery of transit service. To improve transit flow and facilitate the future movement of transit through the plan area and to and from the Transit Center, existing transit and planned lanes should be upgraded to include self-enforcing elements where possible.

2.2 *Consider the need for further adjustment of existing and proposed surface transit routes.*

As the area develops, the City should continue evaluating the transit network and levels of service to the Plan area to ensure that it adequately serves evolving needs, particularly in the area south of the freeway, which is expected to experience the most growth.

Proposed dedicated transit lanes (assuming one-way Folsom and Howard streets, showing transit lines as Proposed in the Transit Effectiveness Project. Transit on Market, Mission and Townsend Streets is not shown)



PRINCIPLE 3

MAKE CYCLING AN ATTRACTIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTION THROUGHOUT THE PLAN AREA FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

As a mode of transportation, bicycles have many advantages: they require no fuel, produce no emissions, and facilities to accommodate their use are generally less expensive and space intensive than other transportation modes. The Central Corridor area (and SoMa in general) is flat, sunny, and well situated for bicycle travel, and thus has a much higher bicycle mode share than other parts of the City despite having poor cycling infrastructure. The use of bicycles can be increased with the provision of a comprehensive network of safe and convenient bike routes, as well as destination amenities such as secure parking and shower facilities. The planned introduction of a robust public bicycle sharing program with rental "pods" conveniently located on streets throughout the downtown and Central Corridor could further boost bicycle travel.

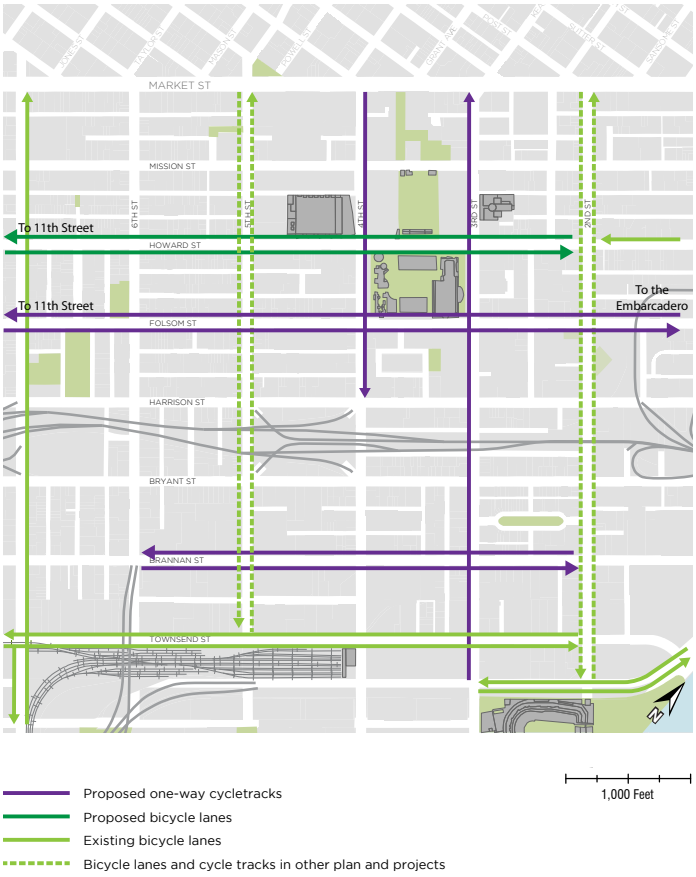
Photos courtesy of Flickr by *sfbike*

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

3.1 *Enhance existing and planned bicycle lanes.*

Within the Central Corridor there are existing bicycle lanes along Howard and Folsom Streets in one direction on each street and along Townsend Street in both directions, and the San Francisco Bicycle Plan includes new bicycle lanes along 2nd and 5th Streets in both directions. These existing bicycle lanes place cyclists between parked cars and moving vehicles, with no buffer or barrier to protect cyclists. Protected bicycle lanes, also known as "cycle tracks," offer safer and calmer cycling conditions for a much wider range of cyclists and cycling purposes, especially on streets with large traffic volumes travelling at relatively high speeds. Current City policy and national best practices call for fully-protected bicycle lanes which buffer cyclists from moving traffic and reduce conflicts with turning or parking vehicles. Existing and planned bicycle lanes should therefore be upgraded to cycle tracks or equivalent facilities.

Existing and proposed bicycle network (assuming two-way Folsom and Howard streets)



3.2 *Provide bicycle facilities on additional streets.*

The San Francisco Bicycle Plan proposes a city-wide network of bicycle lanes intended to serve as the backbone for circulation throughout the city. While the planned network is expected to provide good connectivity to and from the general Central Corridor area from other parts of the City, many locations within the area, including sites expected to receive significant development, would still be a long distance from cycling facilities. Further, high density areas like the Central Corridor and adjacent neighborhoods feature many short trips of under two miles, making an enhanced and denser network for local bike circulation important. In order to ensure that cycling is an attractive transportation option, people must be able to cycle close to their destination. The Bicycle Plan network must therefore be augmented with local bicycle facilities connecting local destinations to the city-wide network. While in principle every street should be designed to be accessible and attractive to cyclists, at a minimum bicycle routes should reach each major intersection, from which point cyclists may need to dismount and use the sidewalk to reach their final destination. This Plan recommends bicycle lanes on 3rd, 4th and Brannan Streets to ensure bicycle accessibility where most development is envisioned.

3.3 *Provide additional bicycle infrastructure, such as bicycle parking, to support ridership.*

In addition to safe and convenient cycling routes, increasing the proportion of trips taken by bicycle depends on other supportive facilities including bicycle parking. While newly proposed City and LEED standards propose to increase bicycle parking requirements, these requirements are based on a 5% bicycle mode share. Since bicycle mode share in SoMa already exceeds 5% and is expected to rise, the City should study additional methods for increasing on- and off-street bicycle parking. Space needs for bike sharing stations should be also considered as key ingredients in the design of streets as well as major new developments and open spaces.

PRINCIPLE 4

EMPLOY TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE MODE-SHIFT AWAY FROM PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE USAGE.

The City has successfully used Transportation Demand Management tools in the downtown area to achieve very high pedestrian, transit and bicycle mode shares. The Central Corridor area provides an excellent opportunity to employ state of the art TDM practices for all new development.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

4.1 *Manage off-street parking as a key component of Transportation Demand Management.*

The availability and price of parking play an important role in individual mode choice - plentiful and cheap parking encourages automobile use. Existing off-street parking maximums should be retained and strengthened, reflective of the plentiful availability of transit options and investments planned and underway. Parking for commercial uses and any parking available to the general public should meet the pricing requirements of Code Section 155(g) to discourage commuter and long-term parking. In addition, the City should study the feasibility of an area-wide parking target as suggested in the SF County Transportation Authority's San Francisco Transportation Plan overview of findings of October 2012.

4.2 *Ensure that large developments engage in Transportation Demand Management.*

Large developments, particularly employers and commercial landlords, should be required to participate in a Transportation Management Association (TMA) to coordinate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) activities, such as required by Planning Code Section 163 for some projects. The TDM requirements and activities of such TMA should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure contemporary best practices, including, but not limited to:

- Parking management and pricing, including proactive monitoring of Code requirements
- Facilitation and proactive monitoring of commuter benefit program requirements
- Coordination of private shuttle services to complement, rather than compete with, public transit service and each other.
- Coordination of car sharing and bicycle sharing distribution, discounts, and related programs

4.3 *Study the feasibility of and implement, as feasibility and necessity determines, congestion pricing of roadways as a tool to reduce overall traffic levels in the Plan area and SoMa more broadly, particularly peak-hour bridge and freeway traffic.*

Much of the existing traffic originates outside of SoMa and the Plan area and uses SoMa streets to access freeways and the Bay Bridge. Even if changes to circulation, such as being contemplated through this and other Plans, are enacted, along with proactive TDM measures and limits to auto parking, it is likely that some form of roadway pricing might be needed to reduce volumes sufficiently to achieve necessary improvements to transit, pedestrian, bicycle and public space infrastructure required to support growth contemplated in the Plan.

PRINCIPLE 5

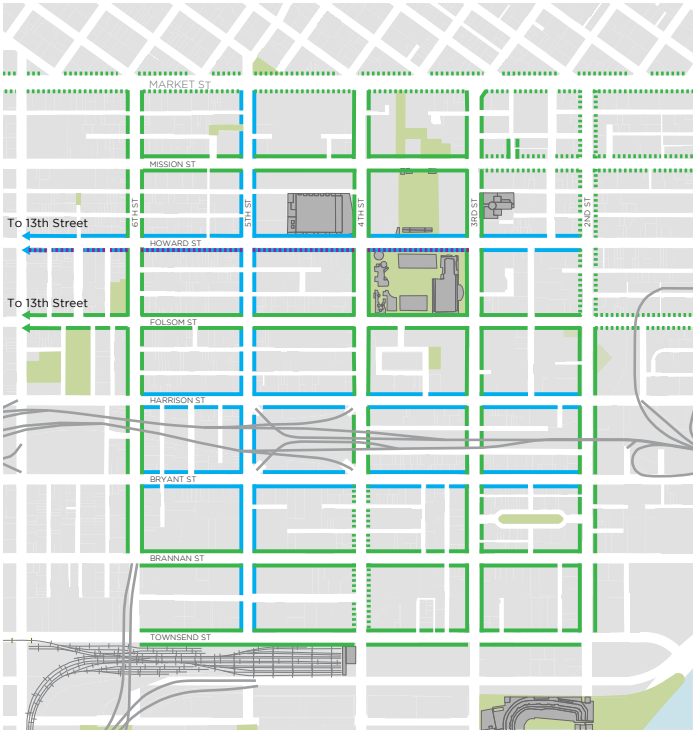
RESTRICT CURB CUTS ON KEY MAJOR STREETS TO INCREASE PEDESTRIAN COMFORT AND SAFETY, TO PROVIDE A CONTINUOUS BUILDING EDGE OF GROUND FLOOR USES, TO PROVIDE CONTINUOUS SIDEWALK FOR STREETSCAPE AMENITIES, AND TO ELIMINATE CONFLICTS WITH TRANSIT, BICYCLES AND GENERAL CIRCULATION.

As a general rule, it is preferable in active and dense areas, such as the Central Corridor, to provide access to parking and loading from alleys and minor streets instead of from major streets that are key corridors for transit, pedestrians, bicycle, and major traffic movements. Multiple curb cuts along a street can have negative effects on the pedestrian experience, transit operations, bicyclist safety, and general circulation. Not only do they create inactive building frontages, they become a significant hazard for pedestrians and bicyclists, who must maneuver around cross traffic. Curb cuts, moreover, remove valuable right-of-way space for trees, bicycle parking, landscaping, and other pedestrian amenities. By limiting curb cuts on major streets, the Plan creates a safer and more attractive environment.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

5.1 *Designate Plan area streets where curb cuts are prohibited or discouraged.*

No curb cuts to access off-street parking and loading should be allowed on key streets that are or are planned to become priority thoroughfares for pedestrians, transit, bicycles, and continuous ground-floor retail. These include Mission, Folsom, Brannan, Townsend, Second, Third, Fourth, and Sixth Streets. The Plan extends the Transit Center District Plan's curb cut restrictions on both Mission and Folsom Streets from Second Street to 13th Street, further strengthening these streets' key functions as neighborhood retail, pedestrian, transit and bicycle spines. While not prohibited, new curb cuts should be strongly discouraged and would require discretionary approval (e.g. Conditional Use authorization) on Howard (under the two-way Howard proposal), Harrison, Bryant and Fifth Streets, particularly on blocks that have alley access. Under the one-way Howard proposal, the south curb would be adjacent a the proposed two-way cycletrack, and would therefore include a prohibition of new curb cuts.



New curb cuts currently prohibited

Proposed prohibition on new curb cuts

Proposed Conditional Use for new curb cuts

Proposed Howard Street south side, 3rd to 11th Street:
New curb-cuts prohibited on one-way blocks
New curb-cuts require Conditional Use on two-way blocks.

PRINCIPLE 6

ACCOMMODATE REGIONAL AND THROUGH TRAFFIC ON A LIMITED NUMBER OF STREETS WHERE NECESSARY, BUT MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF SUCH TRAFFIC ON LOCAL LIVABILITY AND CIRCULATION.

Several streets in the Central Corridor area serve as city-wide and regional auto connections, mainly because of their relation to freeway access points. While this is an important role, it should only be given a high priority on certain streets, where it should not be allowed to exclude other necessary street functions. Increasing livability and protecting local circulation on these streets may require some reduction in vehicle capacity, a reduction which may to a certain extent be balanced by shifting local travel to other modes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

6.1 *Study the feasibility of consolidating highway access points throughout SoMa.*

There are multiple closely-spaced highway on-ramps and off-ramps throughout SoMa. The Interstate 101/80 ramps on 4th and 5th Streets in the Plan area are duplicated at 1st, Essex, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th Streets and the I-280 ramps on 6th Street are duplicated on King Street. This proliferation of ramps spreads highway-related traffic to most of the major streets in the Plan area to the detriment of pedestrian, bicycle and transit circulation and local livability. Pedestrian safety and comfort are particularly compromised at the ramps themselves, which are mostly configured as 5-way intersections with multiple turn lanes and closed crosswalks. Further, the ramps take up substantial real estate (for example the block bounded by 4th/5th/Harrison/Bryant), making for dead zones without activity. The City should study consolidating certain on-ramps and off-ramps in the SoMa area and vicinity to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, enhance transit performance, facilitate local vehicular access, and allow for improved land use and urban design treatments. Any changes to freeway ramps would necessarily involve discussion with and approval by Caltrans.

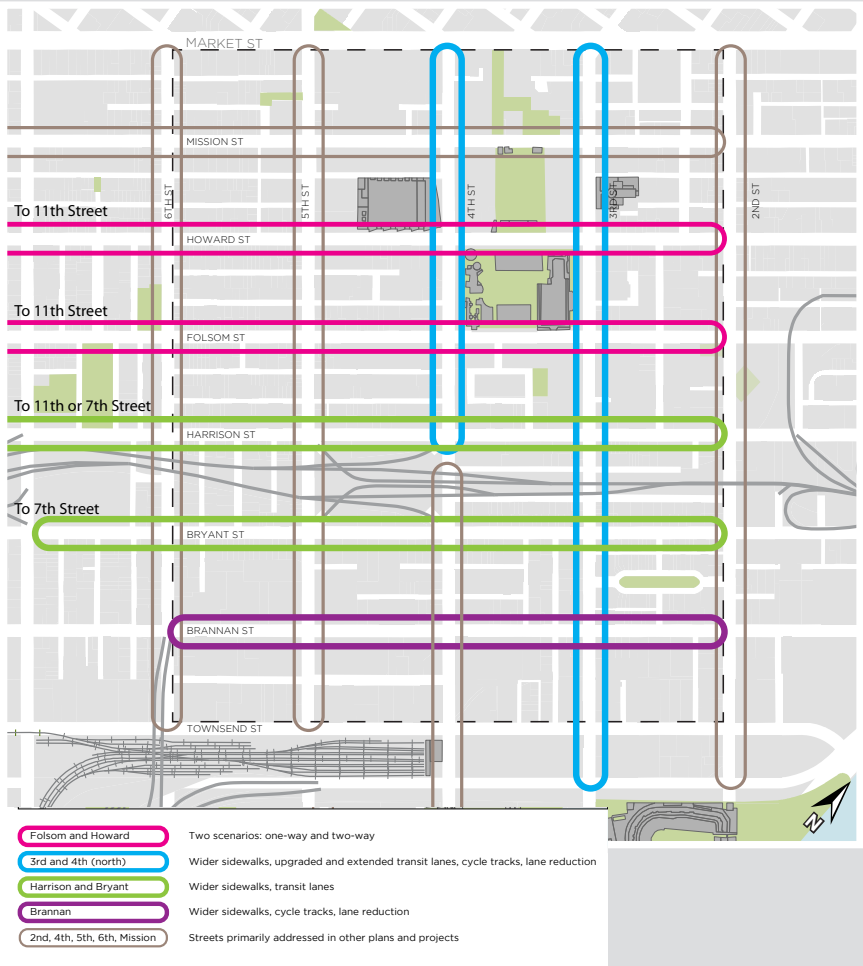
5th Street ramps in 1936 (San Francisco Public Library).

4th Street (right) and 5th Street (left) freeway ramps today.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: BALANCING NEEDS ON MAJOR STREETS

Implementation of the principles discussed in this chapter requires that the allocation of space on major streets be re-balanced to better accommodate and protect pedestrians, transit and bicycles. Planning Department and SFMTA staff have together developed general recommendations for considering the future function of most of the major streets within the Plan area (see map). These recommendations are presented on the following pages and in the New Pedestrian Crossings map in this Chapter.

In addition to these recommendations, the City is addressing other major streets in the Plan area in separate projects and planning processes. These include 2nd Street, where the original Bicycle Plan design is being modified in a new proposal to include cycle tracks, wider sidewalks, additional signalized crosswalks, and transit amenities, and portions of 6th Street, where new crosswalks and other pedestrian improvements are part of an ongoing traffic calming project. The Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP),whose environmental review is scheduled to be completed in 2013, includes a comprehensive redesign of Mission Street, while the Better Market Street planning process reimagines Market Street and may also recommend further changes to Mission Street. The portion of 4th Street south of the freeway will soon include aboveground light rail as part of the Central Subway project now under construction. Since 4th Street transit is being diverted to 5th street during construction, improvements to cycling infrastructure on 5th Street as called for in the Bicycle Plan are scheduled to follow completion of this portion of the Central Subway.



IMPORTANT NOTE ON STREET CONCEPTS:

The concepts presented in the following pages will be analyzed in the Plan EIR, and should serve as a starting point for more detailed design and refinement with both the local community and citywide stakeholders.

In a sense, they bracket the analysis to provide leeway for future implementation ranging from the status quo (no change) to what is represented here.

They also represent major investments that in their full condition as shown could only happen gradually over time. Some street improvements could be implemented in the near-term. Specifically, major reconfigurations to street operation (such as conversion from one-way to two-way operation, installation of transit and bicycle facilities, and changes in the number of travel lanes) could be initially implemented on a street-by-street or block-by-block basis using roadway striping, traffic signal modifications, corner bulb-outs, and other low-cost tools. During this initial implementation phase, much more existing on-street parking would remain than is indicated in these concepts.

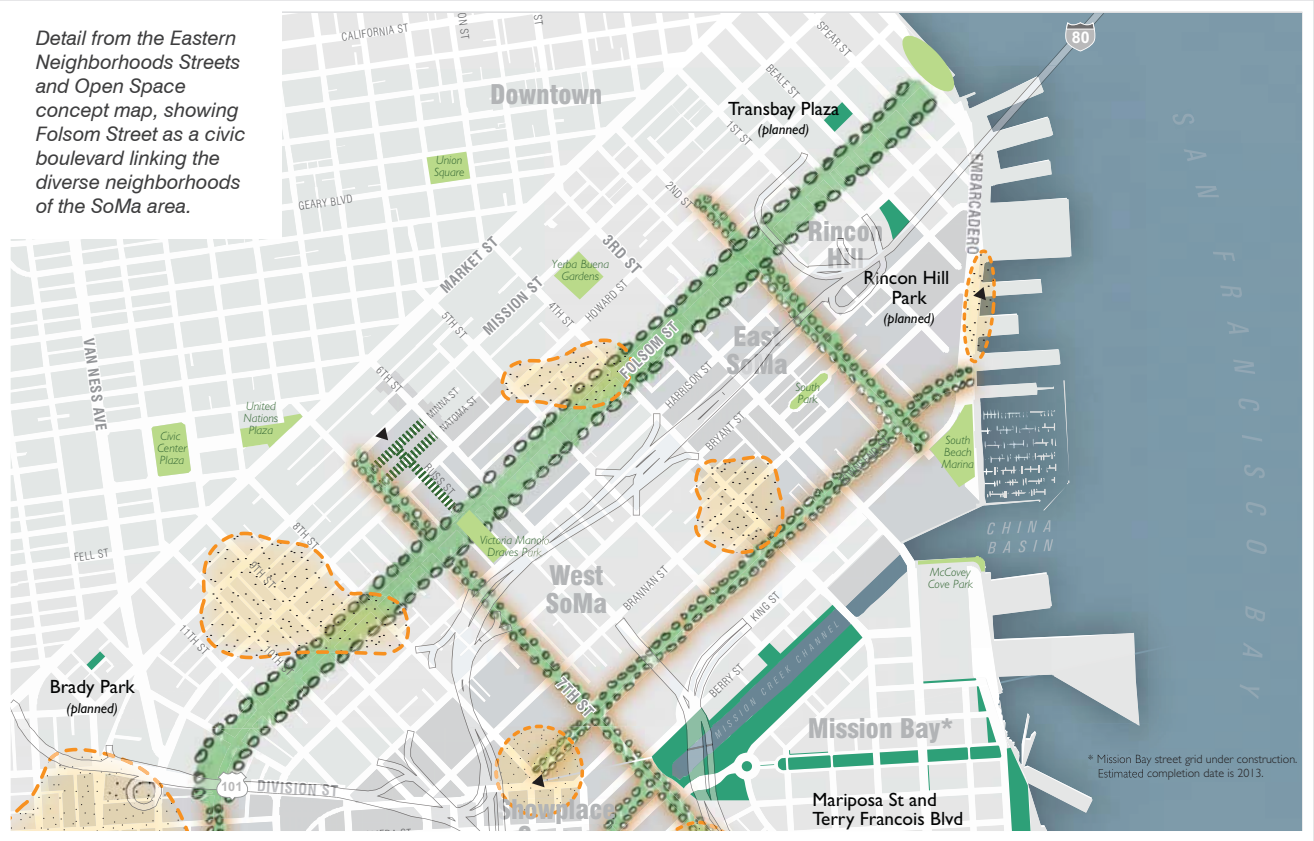
Sidewalk widening is a major capital expense that would be implemented gradually over time. Development project sponsors will be required to widen sidewalks in front of their respective buildings. On blocks without development opportunity sites, sidewalk widening may need to be undertaken by the City as funding is available, and will have to compete with other transportation funding priorities.

FOLSOM AND HOWARD STREETS

The Eastern Neighborhoods Plans, adopted in 2008, outline opportunities for increased housing and new development throughout the eastern third of San Francisco. These Plans also include a vision for changes in the transportation network to support the proposed land use changes. Transforming Folsom Street into a civic boulevard is a key component of this vision.

The Eastern Neighborhoods Transportation Implementation Planning Study (EN TRIPS), concluded in 2011, began to advance this vision by focusing on several key corridors, including the portion of the Folsom and Howard Street one-way couplet between 5th and 11th Streets. EN TRIPS developed and evaluated several potential concepts for these street segments, and created conceptual designs for the concepts deemed most promising.

As part of the Central Corridor planning process, Planning Department and MTA staff have built on concepts developed by EN TRIPS to form two scenarios for the central SoMa street network including Howard and Folsom Streets from 11th Street to the Embarcadero. The first scenario keeps one-way operations on both Howard and Folsom Streets, while the second scenario converts both streets to two-way operations. In both scenarios, the pedestrian realm is strengthened with wider sidewalks, shorter and more frequent crossings, landscaping, and sidewalk furnishings. Both scenarios include features that increase transit speed and reliability, as well as upgraded cycling facilities. Since the trade-offs reflected in each scenario may differ significantly, the Central Corridor planning process will analyze both scenarios in its Environmental Impact Report.

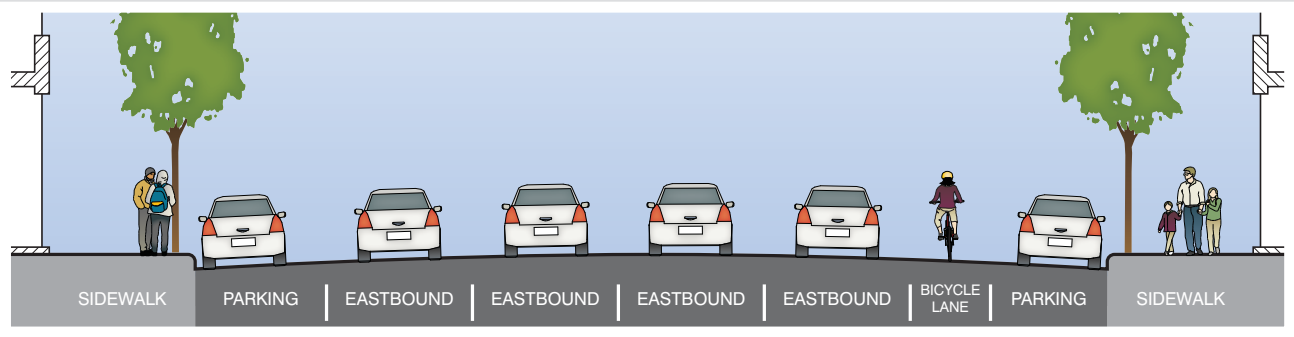


FOLSOM STREET

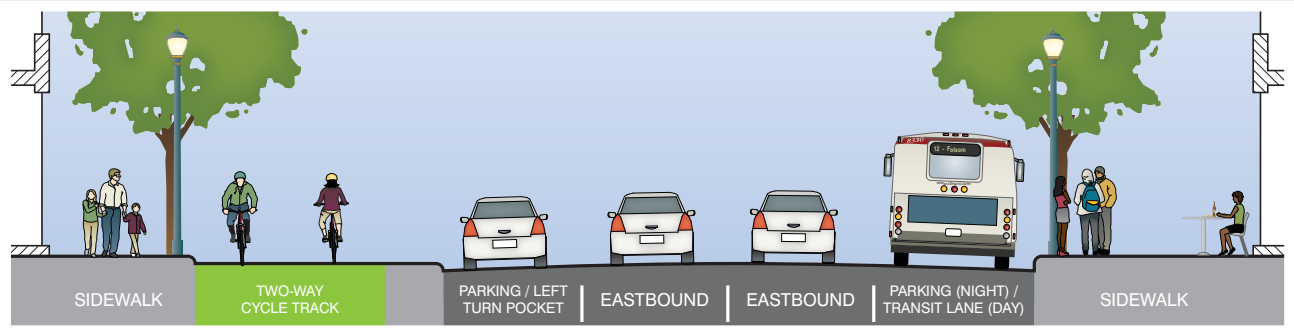
Folsom Street has long been envisioned as a civic boulevard linking multiple existing and emerging neighborhoods in the SoMa area. It is currently configured as a one-way street with multiple traffic lanes but relatively narrow sidewalks and unprotected bicycle lanes (see Existing Cross-Section below). Building on ideas developed in the ENTRIPS process, the Plan will carry forward two scenarios for Folsom street: a one-way scenario and a two-way scenario.

Under the one-way scenario (middle row below), Folsom Street would be re-balanced with wider, well-furnished sidewalks, more frequent crosswalks, and a two-way cycle track. The existing four general traffic lanes would be reduced to two. In addition, a lane adjacent to the cycle track would include full-time on-street parking and left turn pockets at intersections, while the right-hand curb lane would be used as a transit-only lane during daytime/peak hours and for on-street parking during nighttime/off-peak hours.

Under the two-way scenario (bottom row), Folsom Street would feature wider, well-furnished sidewalks and more frequent crosswalks, two-way transit, and cycle tracks. The roadway would feature one traffic lane in each direction, which transit would share with general traffic west of 4th Street. To enable this scenario to work without creating unreasonable congestion that would impede transit operations, traffic volumes on Folsom would have to be substantially reduced. This would likely require changes to freeway access in the eastern end of the corridor, such as by re-routing freeway-bound traffic to Harrison Street, closing Essex Street, and possibly implementing forced-right turns at 4th Street or other measures.



Folsom Street: typical existing section.



Folsom Street: typical section of proposed one-way scenario showing wider, well-furnished sidewalks and two-way cycle track.

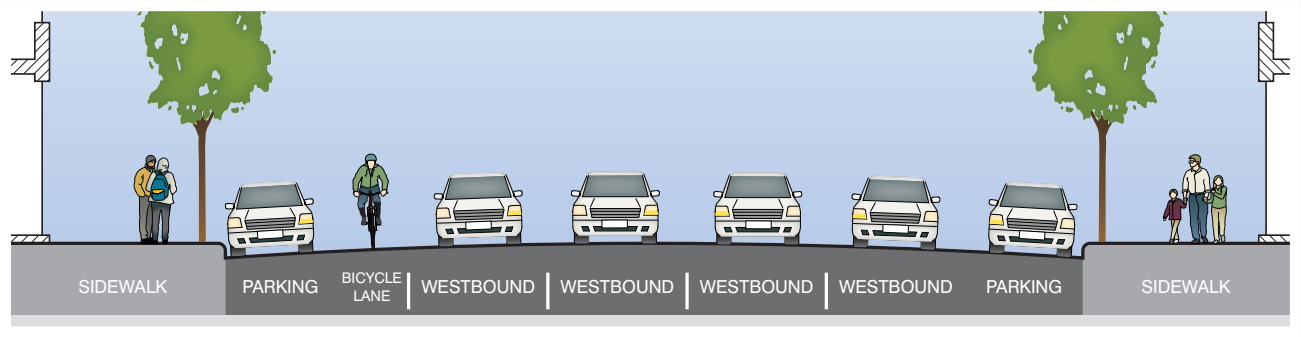
Folsom Street: typical section of proposed two-way scenario showing wider, well-furnished sidewalks, cycle tracks, and two-way transit service.

HOWARD STREET

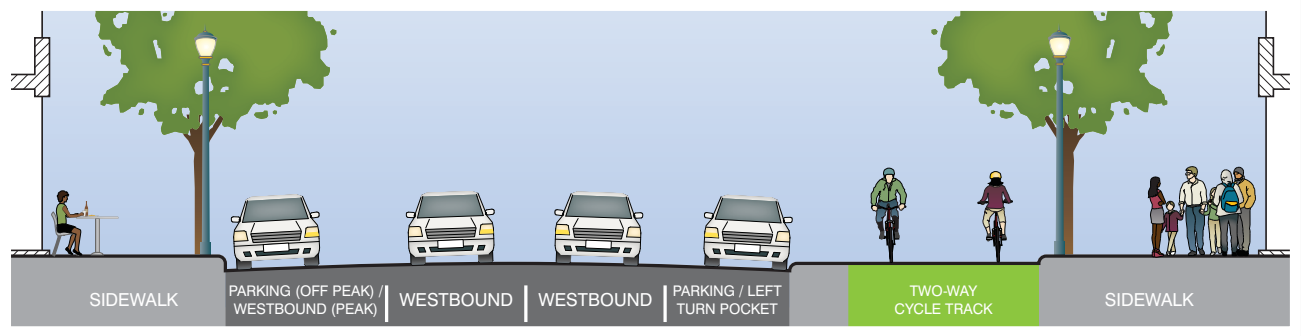
Currently configured as a one-way street, Howard Street functions as the westbound companion in a one-way couplet with Folsom Street. It has multiple traffic lanes but relatively narrow sidewalks and an unprotected bicycle lane (see existing section, top row on this page). Building on ideas developed in the ENTRIPS process, the Plan will carry forward two scenarios for Howard Street that are tied to the outcome for Folsom Street: a one-way scenario and a two-way scenario.

Under the one-way scenario (middle row), Howard Street would remain one-way, but would be re-balanced with wider, well-furnished sidewalks, more frequent crosswalks, and a two-way cycle track, similar to Folsom Street. The existing four general traffic lanes would be reduced to two. In addition, a lane adjacent to the cycle track would include full-time on-street parking and left turn pockets at intersections, while the right-hand curb lane would be used as an additional general traffic during peak hours, and for on-street parking during off-peak hours.

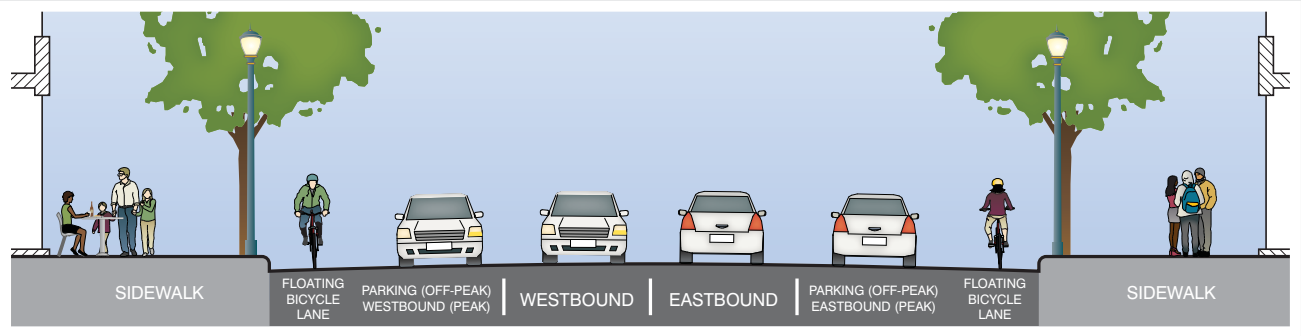
Under the two-way scenario (bottom row), Howard Street would accommodate larger traffic volumes than Folsom Street, which would accommodate two-way transit service. East of 6th Street, Howard Street would have two general traffic lanes in each direction, left turn pockets at intersections, bicycle lanes in both directions, and on-street parking along one side of the street. West of 6th Street where traffic volumes are lower, the bicycle lanes would have a "floating" design allowing off-peak on-street parking at both curbs.



Howard Street: typical existing section.



Howard Street: typical section of proposed one-way scenario showing wider, well-furnished sidewalks and two-way cycle track.



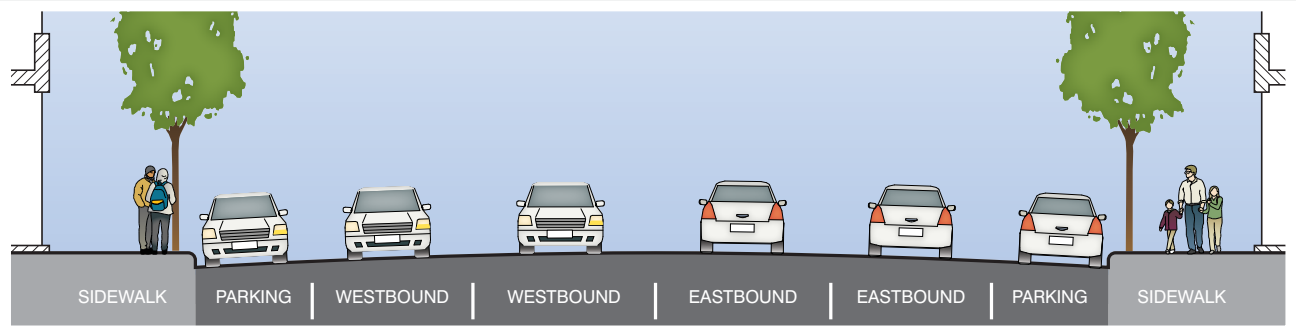
Howard Street (west of 6th St.): typical section of proposed two-way scenario showing wider, well-furnished sidewalks, and floating bicycle lanes.

BRANNAN STREET

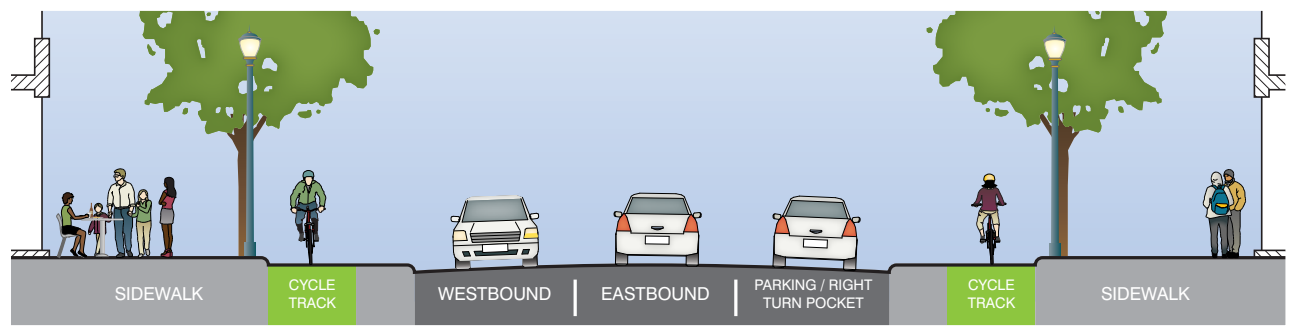
Currently a two-way street with narrow sidewalks and no provisions for safe bicycle travel, Brannan Street is the east-west spine of the southern half of the Plan area, where substantial employment and residential growth is expected.

The Central Corridor Plan retains two-way operations but rebalances Brannan Street to function as a neighborhood hub with wider, well-furnished sidewalks, more frequent crosswalks, and cycle tracks in both directions. Since space is limited, these improvements require reducing general travel lanes from two lanes in each direction to one lane in each direction and on-street parking adjacent to the cycle track along one side of the street.

Brannan Street, lined by several notable underdeveloped properties, currently has narrow sidewalks and no landscaping or bicycle facilities.



Brannan Street: typical existing section.



Brannan Street: typical proposed section showing wider, well-furnished sidewalks and cycle tracks.

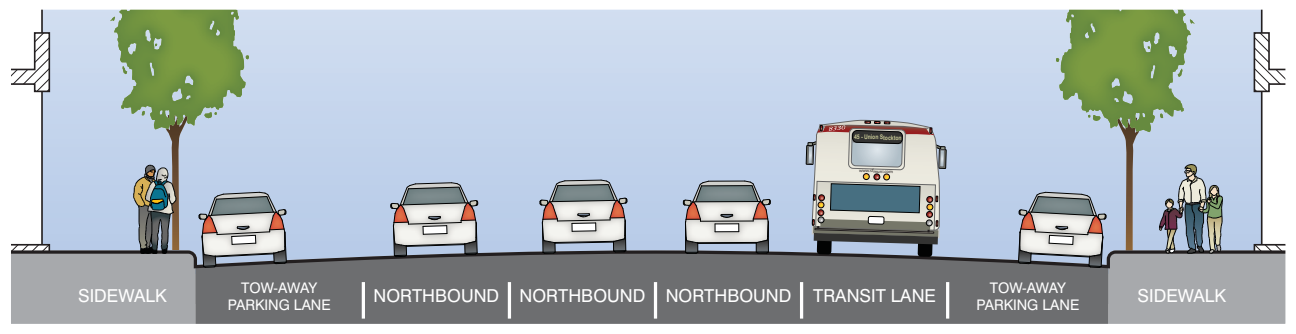
THIRD AND FOURTH STREETS

Third and Fourth Streets connect the commercial center of the City, the Moscone convention center, major cultural institutions, the Caltrain station, and the hospital, university, office and residential clusters of Mission Bay and southward. Both streets are currently configured as a one-way couplet devoted almost entirely to automobiles, with multiple general traffic lanes and narrow sidewalks, several closed crosswalks, unprotected transit lanes and no facilities for safe bicycle travel.

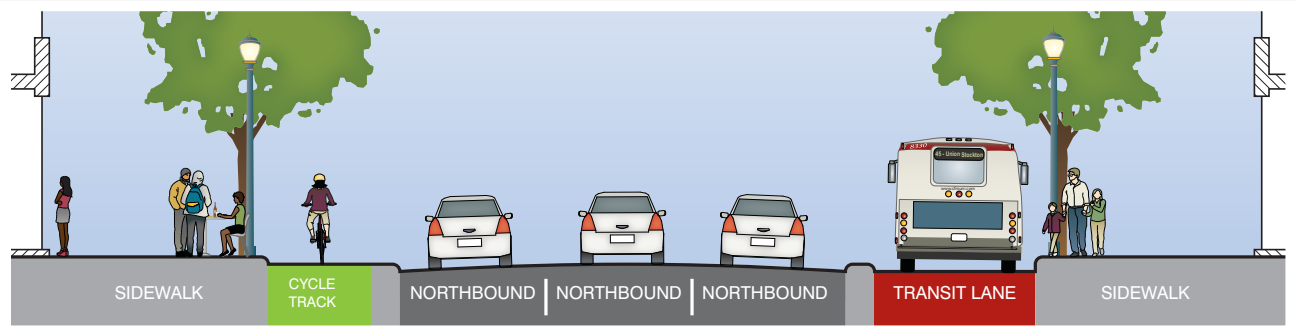
The Central Corridor Plan proposes to retain one-way operations but rebalance both streets to support their important civic roles, high-density of activity, and critical function for modes besides autos. On Third Street throughout the Plan area and on Fourth Street north of Harrison Street, the Plan proposes wider, well-furnished sidewalks, additional crosswalks, protected and extended transit lanes, and cycle tracks. To accommodate high traffic volumes, three general travel lanes are retained on each street. Since space is limited, these improvements preclude on-street parking, although curbside loading zones would be carved out of the wider sidewalks where needed. South of Harrison Street, Fourth Street will be re-configured as part of the Central Subway construction project, which includes center-running light rail and two-way traffic.

Third Street: existing transit-only lanes are often blocked by traffic.

Third Street: existing narrow sidewalks.



Third Street: typical existing section.



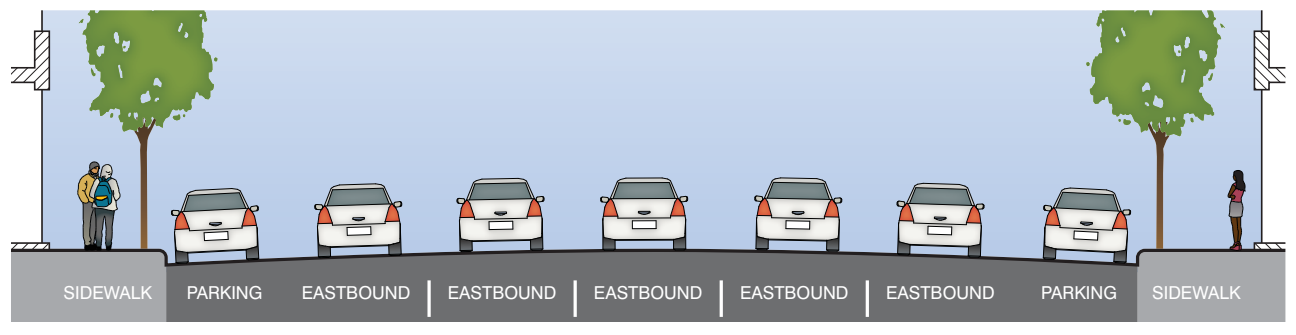
Third Street: typical proposed section showing wider, well-furnished sidewalks, cycle track, and enhanced transit lane.

HARRISON AND BRYANT STREETS

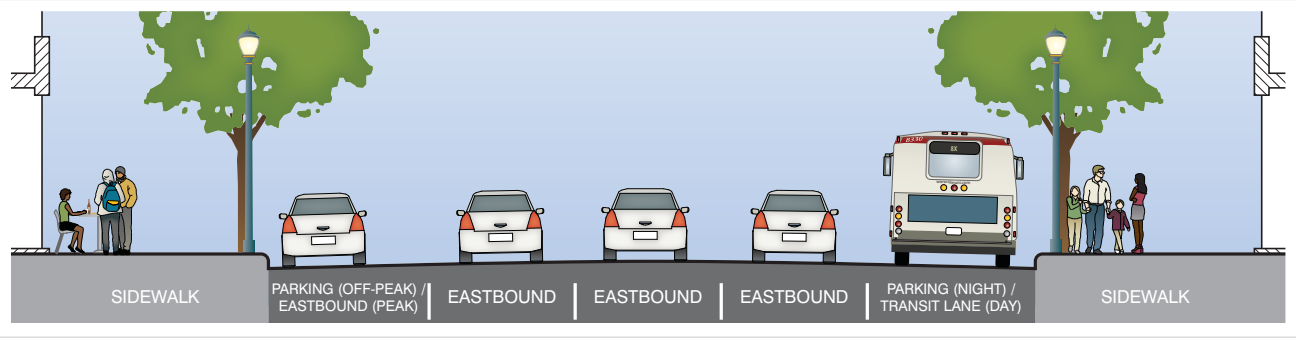
Currently configured as a one-way couplet devoted almost entirely to automobiles, Harrison and Bryant Streets have extremely narrow sidewalks (typically 8').

As other major streets are made more accommodating to pedestrians, transit and cyclists, Harrison and Bryant Streets will continue to be important for through-traffic and highway connections. Four of the existing five general traffic lanes on each street would be retained, with the fifth lane converted to transit-only during daytime/peak hours. Off-peak, both curb lanes would be used for on-street parking. To improve pedestrian conditions, the Plan calls for wider, well-furnished sidewalks and additional crosswalks. Since space is limited, the Plan does not propose dedicated bicycle lanes. Similarly, on-street parking would be limited to off-peak hours, but curbside loading pockets would be provided where needed.

Harrison Street: sidewalk bulb-out. The plan calls for all sidewalks on Harrison and Bryant Streets to be expanded to a similar width.



Bryant Street: typical existing section.



Bryant Street: typical proposed section showing wider, well-furnished sidewalks and transit lane.

Fourth and Folsom Streets

Howard Street

Third Street

Bryant Street

5 OPEN SPACE

Acquisition of new open space in this area is a long-standing goal recommended by numerous planning efforts...

Background

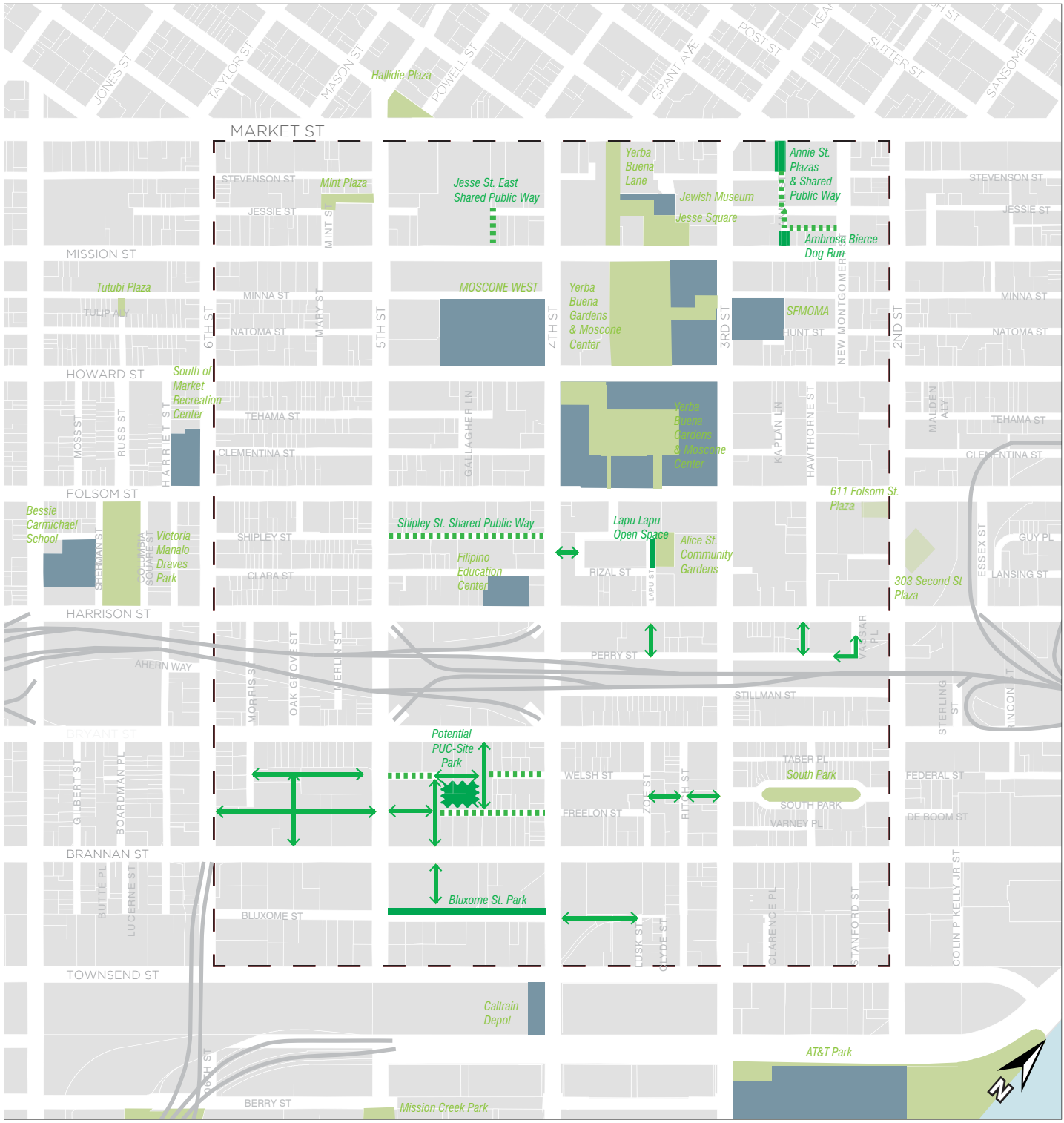
Due to its long industrial history, large portions of the Central Corridor area currently lack public open space. With the addition of new workers, visitors and residents, need for open space will increase. One of the primary objectives of this Plan is to recommend an expanded network of open space that will serve the Central Corridor's existing and anticipated population.

Acquisition of new open space in this area is a long-standing goal recommended by numerous planning efforts including the latest draft of the *San Francisco General Plan's Recreation & Open Space Element* (ROSE, 2012), the *SoMa Area Plan* (1990), and the *East SoMa Area Plan* (2008). These plans also identify the importance of improvements to local streets and alleys as green connections linking neighborhoods to open space. This Plan seeks to further define and offer potential solutions that meet the open space goals of these previous planning efforts.

The Central Corridor Public Realm Existing Conditions Report found that access to open space varies greatly between areas north and south of the elevated Interstate 80 ("I-80"). The area north of I-80 is served by Yerba Buena Garden's interconnected assemblage of major public spaces and facilities. Nevertheless, numerous opportunities for open space enhancements exist in this area. South of I-80, the only public open space is South Park. Creating new open space in this southern area is a major goal of this Plan especially since new land use policies will allow this currently industrial area to accommodate thousands of new workers, visitors and residents.

In addition to creating new public open space and recreation facilities, this Plan encourages the creation of publicly accessible privately-owned open space ("POPOS") as part of new developments, including creation of mid-block passages that break up the area's large blocks. The Plan also recommends improvements to public rights-of-way that will provide pleasant connections to open space both within the Plan area and outside its borders, such as South Park and Mission Creek Park.

Each proposed open space improvement offers opportunities to highlight and incorporate environmental sustainability components related to the proposed Central Corridor Eco-District as described in this Plan's Sustainability Chapter. Collectively, these improvements will create an inter-connected network of open space that will enhance the identity, ecology, health, and public enjoyment of the Central Corridor.



OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

1,000 Feet

Existing Open Space & Public Facilities

Potential Open Space

High Priority Potential Mid-Block Connection

In addition to the connections shown on this map, mid-block connections are required to be provided by all projects with 300 linear feet of street frontage and are encouraged on lots with more than 200 feet of frontage. In general, mid-block connections shall be promoted to break up large blocks throughout the plan area. On smaller lots, new development proposals should consider using any required open space to expand or link together this network of mid-block connections.

High Priority Potential Shared Public Ways

Additional small streets and alleys may be candidates for shared public way design.

Project Boundary

PRINCIPLE 1

CREATE NEW PUBLICLY-OWNED OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION AMENITIES THROUGHOUT THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR AREA.

Acquisition of land for new parks is a challenging prospect in highly urbanized areas like the Central Corridor where there is little publicly-owned land. Nevertheless, creating new public open space is a key component of this Plan and its goal to enhance the Central Corridor as livable urban neighborhood. To expedite open space acquisition, this Plan recommends utilizing existing city-owned land and public-rights-of-way to carve out new open spaces within the neighborhood's urban fabric. This strategy should not preclude efforts to explore options to acquire private property for open space or merge or swap private and public properties to achieve ideal open space configurations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1.1 *Create new pedestrian plazas and public spaces on Annie Street.*

Annie Street is a narrow alley connecting Market Street to Mission Street, between 3rd and New Montgomery Streets. The alley is lined with a diverse mix of residential and commercial uses and offers an intimate walking route in one of the busiest parts of San Francisco.

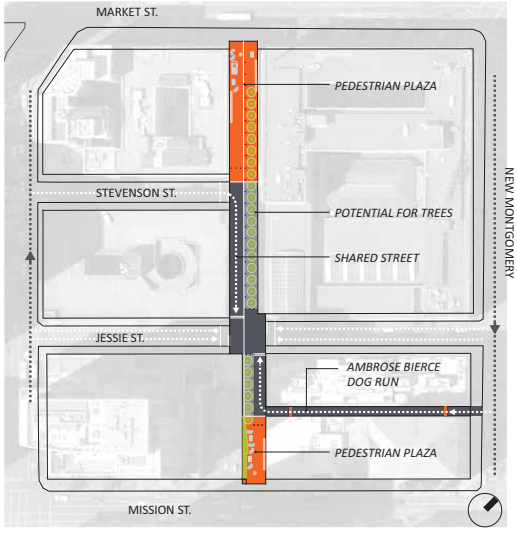
A redesigned Annie Street, as originally proposed in the *Yerba Buena Street Life Plan*, could become a truly unique pedestrian-oriented environment in the heart of Downtown with small open spaces that serve as nodes of social life for the neighborhood. The plan for Annie Street has three unique components:

- **Annie Street Plaza North:** The existing mini-plaza at the intersection of Annie Street and Market Street would be expanded to Stevenson Street and redesigned with new pedestrian amenities, better visibility, and improved access.
- **Annie Street Plaza South:** Between Mission Street and Ambrose Bierce Alley, Annie Street would be closed to vehicular traffic and transformed into a new pedestrian plaza. The space would be designed to allow ground-floor activity from adjacent buildings to spill out and enliven the plaza.
- **Annie Street Shared Street:** The remainder of Annie Street between the two plazas would retain vehicular circulation but be redesigned as a single-surface shared street.

Annie Street Plaza Rendering and Schematic Plan View from the Yerba Buena Street Life Plan

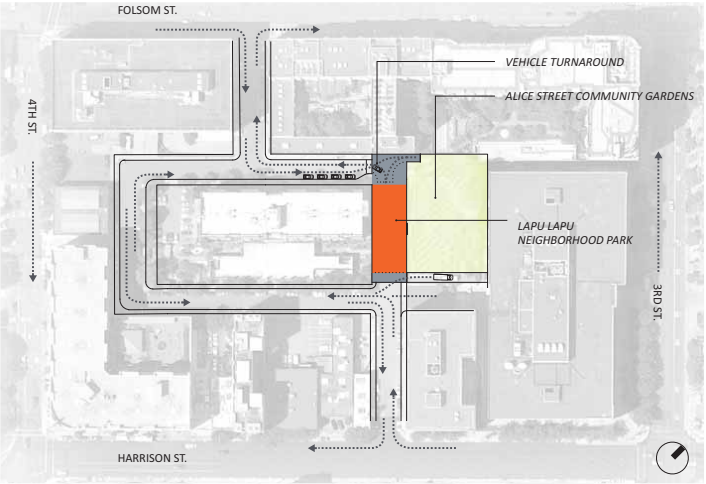
Existing condition

Artist's rendering at Mission Street plaza

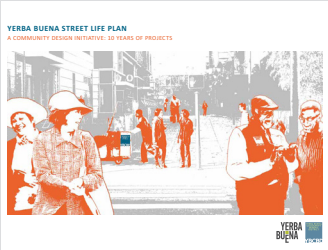


Existing condition

Artist's rendering



Lapu Lapu Park Rendering and Schematic Plan View from the Yerba Buena Street Life Plan



THE YERBA BUENA STREET LIFE PLAN

The Yerba Buena Street Life Plan was released in August 2011 by the Yerba Buena Community Benefit District (YBCBD). The plan outlines a program of 10 years of public realm improvements for the Yerba Buena district, roughly bounded by 5th, Market, 2nd, and Harrison Streets.

The planning process for the Yerba Buena Street Life Plan began in October 2010 and lasted seven months. The community-based design process was led by the YBCBD in collaboration with CMG Landscape Architecture, Sherwood Design Engineers, and Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates. Although not an official plan of the City & County of San Francisco, significant outreach and input was provided to the plan team by City agencies, including the Planning Department.

Public realm projects proposed in the plan range in size and scope, from way-finding signage to creation of new public open spaces on underutilized roadways. The Central Corridor Plan supports these proposals, and also incorporates a majority of the more significant public realm improvements into this Plan's recommendation and environmental review. For more information on these projects download the Yerba Buena Street Life Plan at: *www.ybcbd.org/yerba-buena-street-life-plan*

1.2 *Investigate opportunities to create additional open space amenities on Lapu Lapu Street, adjacent to the Alice Street Community Gardens.*

Lapu Lapu Street is a short, narrow residential street running adjacent to the Alice Street Community Gardens. The configuration of adjacent streets, which form a two-way loop, presents an opportunity to repurpose Lapu Lapu Street between Bonificio Street and Rizal Street while maintaining necessary vehicular access throughout the interior of this block.

The Yerba Buena Street Life Plan calls for the conversion of this segment into a small neighborhood park that expands on the success of the Community Gardens.

Alternative concepts could include maintaining traffic along Lapu Lapu but repurposing the parking-lane adjacent to the community gardens to create a dog run or other amenities. The conversion of the interior block streets into a one way traffic loop could further free up room for expanded sidewalks and other traffic calming measures.

A focused community design process is recommended to further develop open space ideas for this block and select a preferred design.

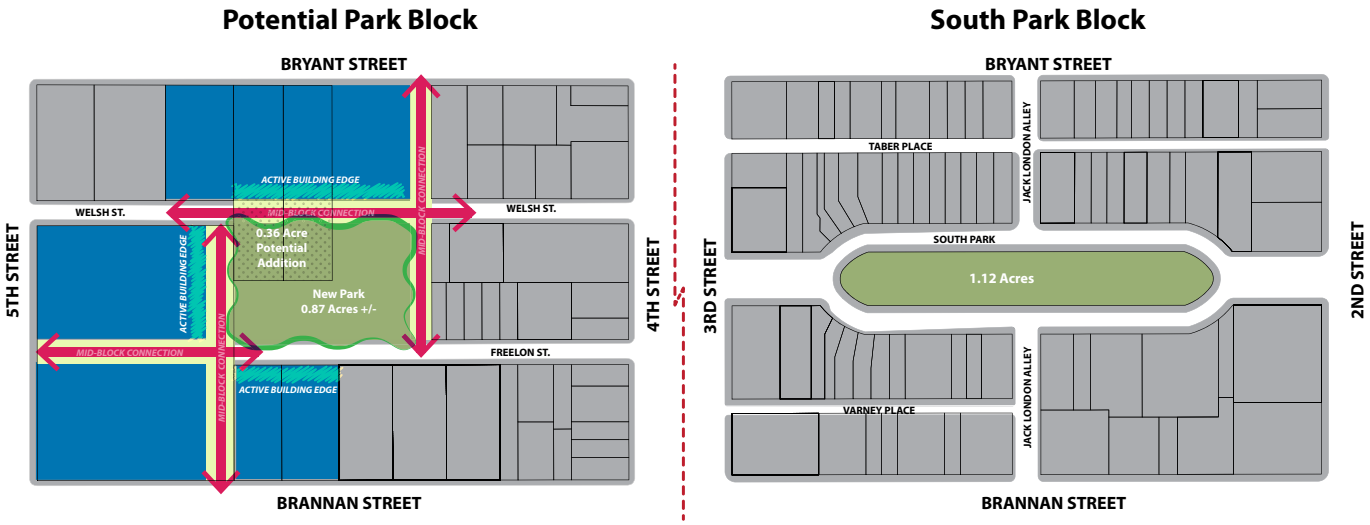


Diagram Showing Potential PUC-site Park Block in Relationship to South Park

1.3 *Continue studying the potential to convert the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's property at 639 Bryant Street into a new public open space.*

The portion of the study area south of I-80 has been identified in previous planning efforts as being in particular need of new open space acquisition. This Plan's analysis of publicly-owned parcels identified the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) 1.38-acre property at 639 Bryant Street as a potential open space acquisition site.

Currently the SFPUC uses the majority of the site for storage of street light poles and fixtures, primarily in an open lot. The construction of a new rail station adjacent to this block and the on-going transition of the immediate surrounding area from light industry to higher density office and housing offers an opportunity for the City to re-evaluate whether this is the appropriate location for such a low-intensity industrial facility.

The Planning Department has initiated discussion with the SFPUC about converting a portion of the lot into a new mid-block open space. The SFPUC would have to be adequately compensated for the property and for relocation of the existing uses to another feasible site in the City. Adjacent SFPUC-leased property and one or more private parcels should also be considered for incorporation into this project pending further investigation and negotiations.

The Planning Department has also initiated a health assessment from the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) to ascertain the benefits and challenges of locating a park in this location. Although air-quality is, in general, an issue anywhere near I-80, initial review by DPH has determined that the health benefits of locating a park in this open space-deficient area far outweigh any potential drawbacks, and that the central-block location provides a buffer from the noise and safety issues of the area's major arterial streets.

Determining the specific dimensions, design, and amenities within this open space is beyond the scope of the Central Corridor Plan and would involve a new community planning process.

On the following pages some basic parameters are recommended for the site, should the City move forward with this concept.

SFPUC POTENTIAL PARK BLOCK - DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

RELATIONSHIP TO SOUTH PARK

In many ways, South Park serves as an inspiration for the proposed SFPUC-site park. The historic park is located two blocks directly to the east of the SFPUC-site and therefore situated in a similar geographic setting. The park's location in the middle of the block with adjacent buildings buffering it from the busy SoMa street grid creates a green respite from the intense urbanity of the district. The new park need not replicate South Park, but the two parks should complement each other and offer the community two compelling open space options. Due to its relative proximity, the programming of the SFPUC-site park should complement the uses already in South Park. The City should also carefully manage open space funds to ensure both spaces are adequately maintained.

ESTABLISH MID-BLOCK CONNECTIONS

One of the major benefits of repurposing the SFPUC property is the potential to create new mid-block connections for pedestrians, bicyclists and possibly motorized vehicles via small shared streets or paseos. The park's design should reconnect Welsh and Freelon Streets and include mid-block connections north to Bryant Street and south to Brannan Street. These connections will improve access to the open space and are in keeping with this Plan's general recommendations to break-up SoMa's large blocks to increase pedestrian connectivity. As much as possible, these connections should provide open views and direct visibility to the park from adjacent major streets to entice use and enhance safety in the park.

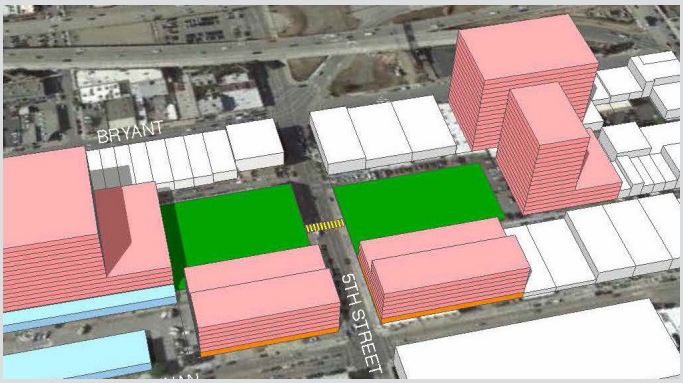
INCORPORATE ECO-DISTRICT CONCEPTS

Given the site's ownership by the SFPUC and location within the proposed Central Corridor Eco-District, environmentally sustainable design features and green infrastructure should be incorporated into the park's final design. The open space could showcase ways to incorporate sustainable design methods in meaningful, playful, and visually engaging ways, whether through recycled water or renewable energy infrastructure or other means.

Conceptual Diagram of SFPUC Park Block and Adjacent Soft-Site Development

CREATE ACTIVE FRONTAGES

Engaging architecture and active frontages should face the park on all sides. The majority of the site is surrounded by "soft-sites" – under-built parcels which are likely to be redeveloped in the future based on the Plan's proposed rezoning. As these sites are redeveloped, new buildings should embrace the park via architectural design and by lining the frontages facing the park with active and welcoming small-scale ground floor uses, such as the restaurants and shops around South Park.

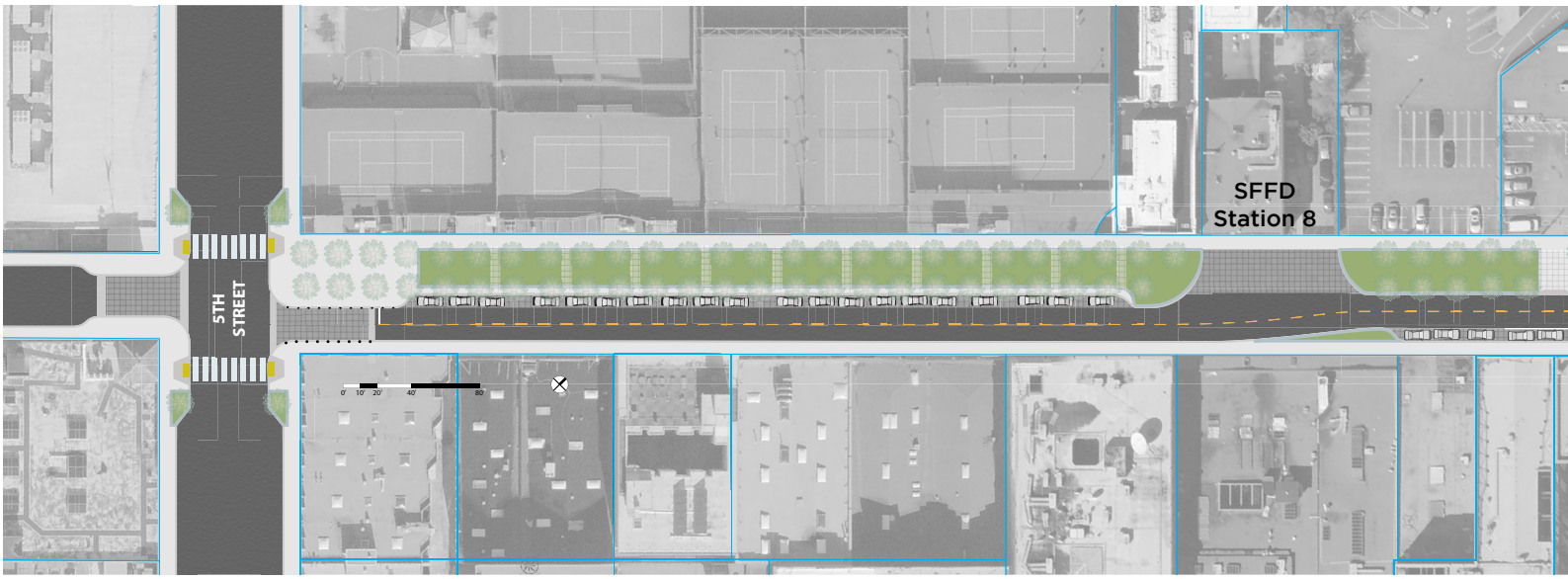


Above, a potential swap of the PUC's interior parcel for one with frontage on 5th Street. Bottom, mirrored parks across 5th Street created through master development. Graphics developed by and provided courtesy of TODCO Group.

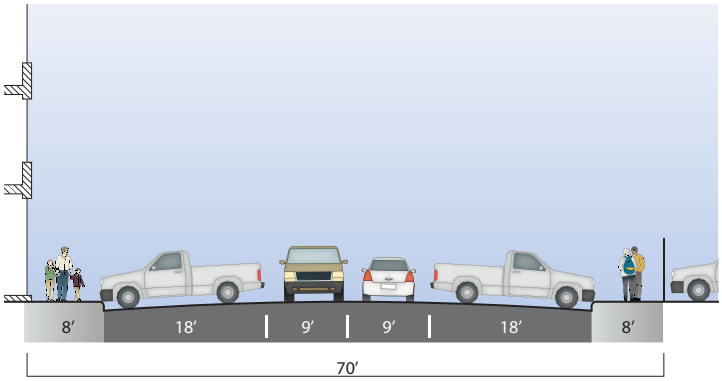
AN OPEN SPACE ALTERNATIVE

An alternative to the South Park-inspired mid-block open space proposed by this Plan, is a scenario, conceived by the TODCO Group, in which the park would be located on an existing private parcel enfronting 5th Street, and potentially expand across 5th Street to encompass another private parcel, creating a mirrored set of open spaces. Such a configuration would provide greater visibility, and potentially greater accessibility, to the open space by including frontage along a major street; but would also be accompanied by greater exposure to vehicular traffic and noise.

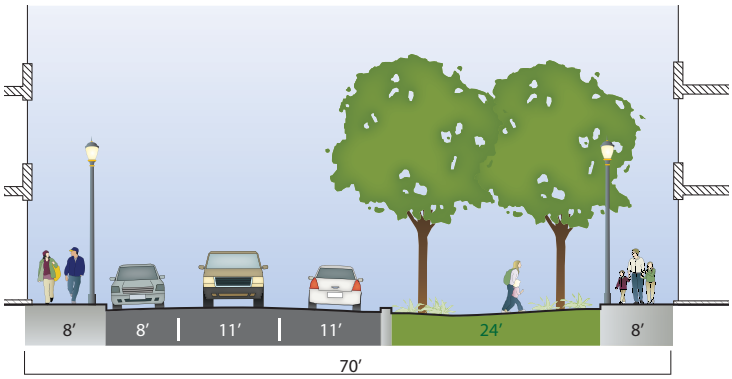
This alternate plan proposes that a number of sites around 5th and Brannan Streets be collectively master-planned to facilitate the creation of this major open space. However, master development of these sites would be challenging and may be unlikely, given disparate ownership and the desire of several current owners to develop in the near term.



Conceptual Plan View of Bluxome Street Linear Park



Existing Bluxome Street Section View - Looking West

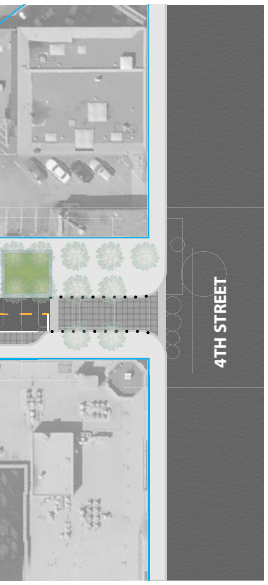


Proposed Bluxome Street Section View - Looking West

1.4 *Repurpose the excess right-of-way on Bluxome Street between 4th and 5th Streets as a new linear open space.*

Bluxome Street between 4th and 5th Streets offers an opportunity to repurpose underutilized street right-of-way as a new park. Bluxome Street is functionally an alley and does not serve major circulation purposes, but is extraordinarily wide (70') compared to other SoMa alleys (typically 35'-40'). The 70-foot wide street right-of-way is currently devoted primarily to angled parking.

Rebalancing the right-of-way allocation by expanding the pedestrian area on one side of the street and consolidating the vehicular area to two lanes of traffic and one parallel parking lane would allow nearly one-half acre of open space to be created on the block. Future collaboration between the City and the community can determine the design and use of this open space. Some preliminary ideas already discussed include incorporation of urban agriculture or other design elements that enhance and celebrate the area's function as an Eco-District.



Linden Street in Hayes Valley offers a precedent for transforming public rights-of-way into pleasant, shared social space.

Photo by Niall Kennedy

PRINCIPLE 2

CREATE AN EXTENSIVE NETWORK OF PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY STREETS, ALLEYS, AND PASEOS THAT SERVE AS FLEXIBLE PUBLIC SPACES.

In addition to traditional open spaces like parks and community gardens, in recent years there has been an increased understanding and appreciation of the role that public rights-of-way play in the City's open space network. The following implementation strategies outline how such paths of travel in the Central Corridor might also be transformed into places to linger and enjoy.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

2.1 *Where appropriate, promote shared-street design concepts for small streets and alleys.*

Alleys and small streets help break up the large blocks that make up the SoMa grid. These public-rights-of-way, which provide only local circulation for low volumes of autos, offer an opportunity to create an inviting and inter-connected pedestrian network throughout the Central Corridor that does dual function as neighborhood open space. This Plan recommends redesigning these small streets and alleys as pedestrian-oriented spaces via traffic calming (e.g. chicanes, raised crosswalks, special paving), additional landscaping and pedestrian amenities, and single-surface shared street designs to emphasize their intimate pedestrian character. Schematic designs for improvement to certain alleys have already been created via previous City and community plans. They include:

- **Ambrose Bierce Alley:** The Yerba Buena Street Life Plan recommends transforming this short, narrow alley into a shared street designed as a dog run to meet the area's high demand for public spaces that allow dogs off-leash.
- **Jesse Street East:** The short stretch of this alley near the Westfield San Francisco Centre's Mission Street entry is proposed to be converted into a shared street in the Yerba Buena Street Life Plan, with retail uses spilling out of the adjacent retail complex.
- **Shipley Street (4th to 5th Streets):** The Yerba Buena Street Life plan recommends converting Shipley Street into a shared public way with traffic calming, streetscape improvements, and small public spaces.
- **Minna, Natoma, Tehama, Clementina, Shipley, and Clara Streets (Between 5th and 6th Streets):** Phase II of the City's SoMa Alley Improvement project will extend traffic calming features on all of these alleys, including shared-street style entry plazas, chicanes, and enhanced landscaping and street furnishings.

Mid-block connections can also serve as linear open space.

Improvements similar to those mentioned above could be implemented on all alleys and small streets in the Central Corridor area.

2.2 *Expand the network of mid-block connections to serve a dual role as small-scale public spaces and as a means of access to larger parks.*

Currently, gaps in the network of SoMa's alleys and small streets impede their usefulness as pedestrian routes to open space. The City should work with private developers to bridge these gaps through new publicly accessible, pedestrian-oriented alleys or paseos. This plan recommends extending the provisions of Planning Code Section 270.2 to the entire Central Corridor area, requiring the provision of new publicly accessible mid-block rights-of-way and access easements on large lots with more than 300 feet of street frontage on any street. Such connections are encouraged on lots with more than 200 feet of street frontage on any street. On smaller lots, new development proposals should consider using any required open space to expand or link together this network of mid-block connections.

In the Central Corridor area some key locations of consideration for new mid-block access include the following blocks: *(see map of Open Space Opportunities)*

- **The block bounded by 4th, Bryant, 3rd and Brannan Streets.** Privately owned parking lots unofficially allow pedestrians to travel mid-block from Freelon and Welsh Streets to 3rd Street, which provides direct access to South Park. A procession of formalized mid-block connections here would provide a convenient and pleasant route between 4th Street and South Park.
- **The block bounded by 4th, Folsom, 3rd, and Harrison Streets.** Privately owned parking lots and driveways unofficially allow pedestrians to travel between 4th Street and the interior streets of this dense residential block. Securing a public easement here to preserve this connection will ensure that this vital link between the transit on 4th Street and the mid-block residential complexes is not severed in the future. A well designed pedestrian paseo with seating, lighting, and other amenities would also create an inviting way to access the Alice Street Community Garden and the proposed Lapu Lapu amenities.

Artistic lighting and pedestrian-amenities can improve the experience of crossing beneath I-80.

Temporary moveable structures like the shipping crates converted into stores and restaurants in Hayes Valley may be used to enliven the areas beneath I-80.

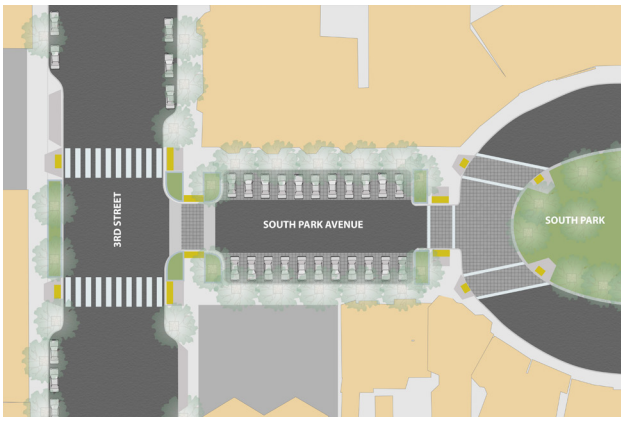
- **Perry Street to Harrison Street.** Multiple soft-sites are located between Perry and Harrison Streets east of 4th Street. The development of these sites offer opportunities to break up the large blocks in this area.
- **The block bounded by 5th, Bryant, 4th, and Brannan Streets.** The proposed park for this block offers numerous opportunities to create new mid-block pedestrian connections. See recommendation 1.3 and "SFPUC Potential Park-Block" section for more details.
- **The block bounded by 5th, Townsend, 4th, and Brannan Streets.** Mid-block connections between 4th and 5th would provide greater pedestrian access to the proposed open space along Bluxome Street.
- **The block bounded by 6th, Bryant, 5th, and Brannan Streets.** The San Francisco FlowerMart takes up a large portion of this block. Should the site be redeveloped, multiple mid-block connections through the site should be provided to create a rich pedestrian and vehicular network through this super-block.
- **The block bounded by 5th, Townsend, 4th, and Brannan Streets.** Mid-block connections could potentially create a pedestrian link in-line with Bluxome Street between 4th and 5th Streets.

2.3 *Use public art, lighting, and other amenities to improve the pedestrian experience along 5th, 4th, and 3rd Streets beneath the elevated freeway.*

The unwelcoming environment beneath the freeway creates an imposing physical and psychological barrier that divides the Central Corridor into two halves. Pedestrians feel like intruders in this noisy, dark, car-dominated environment, making walking from one side of the freeway to the other an unpleasant or even intimidating experience. Public art, enhanced lighting, and other streetscape amenities can all help to improve this dreary condition.

The City should consider use of the 1% Public Art development fee to fund these improvements. The City should also coordinate with Caltrans to find ways to line the street-frontages of under-freeway parcels with uses that generate pedestrian activity and interest and which promote safety by providing additional "eyes on the street." While permanent buildings may not meet Caltrans' needs, temporary movable structures, such as the modified high-design shipping containers installed in Hayes Valley, could be a promising and acceptable option to bring life to this area.

Existing aerial-view of South Park Avenue at 3rd Street



Conceptual Plan View for South Park Avenue at 3rd Street showing new pedestrian crosswalk at 3rd Street and large sidewalk bulb-outs on South Park Avenue. Additional parking removal or shared street on South Park Avenue should be investigated to create additional public space.

2.4 *Support streetscape improvements that enhance the walking and cycling experience along routes that lead to major open spaces along the Bay and Mission Creek.*

The southern portion of the Central Corridor area is within easy walking and biking distance to major public open space amenities along the waterfront and Mission Bay. Streets which connect the Plan area to these open spaces should be easily identifiable via way-finding signage and high quality streetscape amenities.

2.5 *Support efforts to improve South Park and pedestrian access to the park.*

Although South Park is widely recognized as one of the crown jewels of the neighborhood, access to the park is less than ideal. The local community is already investigating ways in order to enhance the park as well as the surrounding streets to improve pedestrian access and create additional public space. The City should support these efforts. One key area of consideration are the entries to South Park Avenue at 3rd and 2nd Streets. The diagram below shows how these entries might be redesigned to be more pedestrian-friendly and provide inviting ceremonial gateways to this historic park.

PRINCIPLE 3

ENSURE THAT NEW PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT AUGMENTS THE OPEN SPACE NETWORK WITH NEW PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE PRIVATELY-OWNED PUBLIC OPEN SPACES.

Anticipated development projects will offer new opportunities for the City to work with private developers to create new open privately-owned public spaces throughout the study area.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

3.1 *Require new non-residential development to provide publicly-accessible open space.*

Existing Code requirements in the Eastern Neighborhoods require all non-residential development to provide open space per Section 135.3, but unlike the Downtown (Section 138), none of this space is currently required to be publicly-accessible. The required provision of POPOS has been a celebrated, integral component of the densification of the downtown and has created a rich tapestry of interesting public spaces. Here too should such required spaces be public. Residential development should continue to be encouraged to provide some of their required open space as publicly-accessible.

3.2 *Ensure that privately-owned public spaces have clearly marked and convenient means of public access.*

Privately-owned public space is not truly public if navigating access to the site is cumbersome, or if the design of the space itself offers no compelling reason for public utilization. Thus, proposals for such spaces that are not directly accessible from the sidewalk or other public rights-of-way should be carefully reviewed.

PRINCIPLE 4

UTILIZE OPEN SPACE AREAS TO HIGHLIGHT AND STRENGTHEN ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR ECO-DISTRICT.

Open spaces in the Central Corridor should strengthen and showcase the City's commitment to environmentally sustainable design. There are a multitude of ways that parks and open space can help the Central Corridor meet its goals as an Eco-District. Whether it is by showcasing renewable building materials, incorporating green energy or water infrastructure, or using landscaping to create natural habitat, each site should be viewed as an opportunity to support ecological sustainability. For more information see the District Sustainability chapter.

Urban agriculture can also play a key role within Central Corridor open spaces. The Alice Street Community Garden already shows how open space can also serve a dual role as urban agricultural space in the Central Corridor. Where space and environmental conditions allow, additional urban agriculture areas should be incorporated into Central Corridor open space designs.

PRINCIPLE 5

INCREASE RECREATIONAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR AREA.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

5.1 *Incentivize the inclusion of recreational and community facilities in new development.*

Since publicly-owned parcels for recreational amenities are limited, the City should also encourage the provision of neighborhood-serving, affordable and publicly-accessible recreational and community amenities in new private developments. Selective use of zoning incentives such as FAR bonuses are tools the City can use to encourage private developers to provide such amenities.

There is a provision in the Western SoMa SUD that requires 1-for-1 replacement within the boundaries of the SUD for any privately-owned recreational space removed by new development, regardless of whether such recreational facility is commercial/for-profit, non-profit, public or affordable. While providing recreation is an important objective of the Plan, this requirement may unreasonably circumscribe the area of replacement to too-small a geography to be practical as well as make physically and financially limit appropriate land use futures for key sites, such as the Tennis Club site on Brannan Street between 4th and 5th Streets. If replacement of existing private recreational facilities (including for-profit facilities) is indeed an important public objective after further community discussion, the area of replacement should be broadened to be reflective of the broader geography served by the clientele of such a facility.

5.2 *Work closely with the community to determine appropriate recreational amenities in new open spaces.*

The new open space proposed in the Central Corridor offers the community opportunities to add new public recreational amenities to the neighborhood. Playgrounds, community gardens, athletic facilities, dog runs, and a multitude of other uses can potentially be included in these new spaces.

6 HISTORIC RESOURCES & SOCIAL HERITAGE

Within this diverse mix of land uses, SoMa and the Central Corridor Area is distinguished by the existence of individually significant properties.

Background

SoMa was once the domain of longshoremen, warehousemen, merchant mariners, day laborers, immigrant farm workers, and other manual workers (most of whom were men) who contributed immeasurably to the prosperity and economic development of the West. Many were newcomers—beginning with the Irish, Germans, and Scandinavians in the nineteenth century. These groups were followed by waves of Greeks, Eastern European Jews, Ukrainians, and Japanese during the early twentieth century. Dustbowl refugees arrived during the Depression, and Central Americans, African-Americans, and Filipinos took up residence during the post-World War II era.

The industrialization of the SoMa was the result of the neighborhood's proximity to the waterfront, in addition to its regional highway and rail links, and has been equated to San Francisco's back porch--the place where the unglamorous service businesses and industrial enterprises could conveniently set up shop. The topography of South of Market allowed for flat and wide thoroughfares making the transportation of goods via wagon and eventually train and truck much easier.

During the Gold Rush era, SoMa served as the most productive industrial zone on the West Coast. In the years following the gold rush, the area evolved into a mixed-use neighborhood. This is in part attributed to the fact that residential uses were developed in conjunction with industrial facilities, to provide convenient access for industrial workers who could not yet afford public transit.

The 1906 Earthquake and Fire destroyed almost every building and structure in SoMa and also dramatically changed the socio-economic characteristics of the entire area. Two important survivors of the conflagration were well-fortified public buildings: the U.S. Mint and the U.S. Post Office and Court of Appeals. The U.S. Mint was listed as a National Historic Landmark, the National Park Service's highest honor, on July 4, 1961. After the 1906 Earthquake, economic forces led to the reconstruction of the neighborhood as a predominantly light industrial district, which caused the residential population to plummet.

SoMa has developed an eclectic mix of commerce, industry, and increasingly, entertainment and residential living spaces. Within this diverse mix of land uses, SoMa and the Central Corridor Area is distinguished by the existence of individually significant properties. Within the Central Corridor Area Plan there are a number of City Landmarks, generally in the northern edge of the Plan area, including St. Patrick's Church (Landmark No. 4), the Jessie Street Substation (Landmark No. 87), and the Old U.S. Mint (Landmark No. 236), and one locally-designated historic district, the South End Historic District. Various other significant properties and districts relating to the Filipino and gay "leather" communities have been identified through informational surveys and inventories within the boundaries of the Central Corridor Plan Area.

The Plan area's built fabric, and the social role of those buildings, play a key role in its unique character. The historic preservation objectives and policies of the Central Corridor Plan provide for identification, retention, reuse, and sustainability of these unique properties. As the area changes and develops, historic features and key properties that define it should not be lost or their significance diminished through demolition or inappropriate alterations. New construction in designated historic districts should respect and relate to their contexts. The Plan supports sound treatment of historic resources according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, encourages rehabilitation of resources for new compatible uses, and it allows for incentives for qualifying historic projects.

PRINCIPLE 1

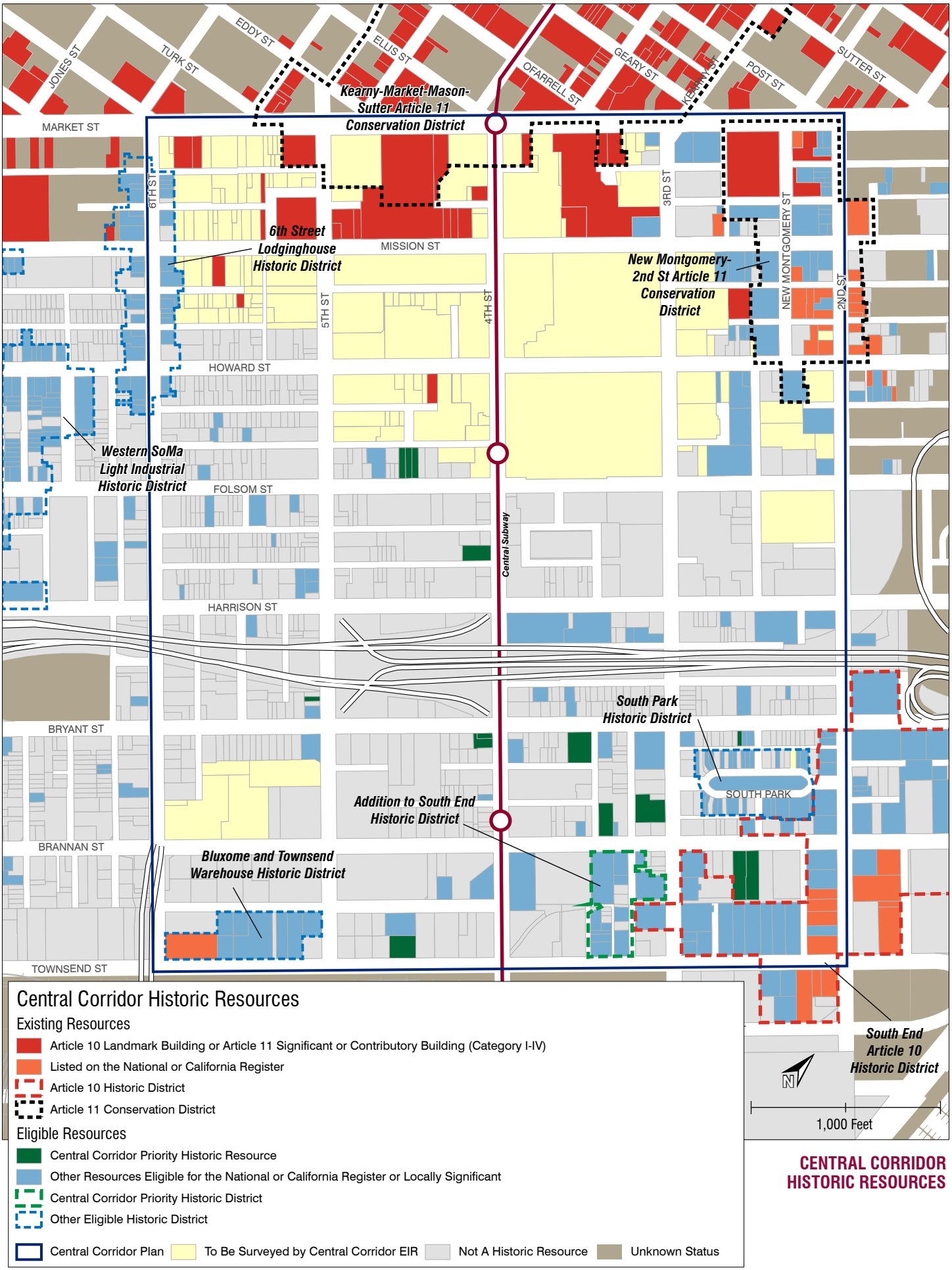
HISTORIC RESOURCES SHOULD BE RETAINED AND PROTECTED FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS AND TO MAINTAIN THE RICH DIVERSITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

San Francisco's heritage is preserved in its historically significant buildings, sites, districts, and other resources. These historic resources are important to quality of life in the City, and they help to make it attractive to residents, visitors, and businesses. They provide continuity to the events, places, people, and architecture of San Francisco's storied past. Historic resources contribute to the City's diverse housing and commercial stock, and to the human scale and pedestrian orientation of its neighborhoods. Plan policies should promote the identification, protection and rehabilitation of known and unknown historic resources to assure that they accommodate for current populations as well as future generations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1.1 *Complete survey and evaluation of all buildings and sites in Central Corridor Area.*

Assessing the historic value of a building or landscape requires survey, research and analysis to determine whether a property is significant for local, state, or national historical registers. Such research and analysis is helpful to the Planning Department, community, and property owners, as it provides up front information about a property's historic status. For most of the Plan Area, this analysis has already occurred as part of the Transit Center Historic Resource Survey, South of Market Historic Resource Survey, and other past historic resource evaluations. As part of the environmental analysis of the Central Corridor Plan, the small unsurveyed remainder of the Plan Area will be surveyed and evaluated to determine the historic status of each resource. This information shall be used to augment the understanding of the area's historic resources.



CENTRAL CORRIDOR HISTORIC RESOURCES

1.2 *Protect "Priority Historic Resources" through local designation in Article 10 or Article 11 of the San Francisco Planning Code.*

Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code contain lists of individual buildings and districts considered historically and architecturally significant. The Plan Area currently contains twenty-seven buildings listed in Article 10 as City Landmarks or as contributing resources to a designated Landmark District, and twenty-one buildings listed in Article 11 as a Significant Building (Category I and II) or Contributory Building (Category III or IV). These are primarily in the northern, downtown portion of the Plan area.

The Central Corridor's Historic Resources map includes a category of "Priority Historic Resources" that represent those properties preliminarily identified by Department staff to be proposed for Article 10 and Article 11 designation based upon review of the existing historic resource surveys and community outreach efforts. These new Landmarks, Significant Buildings, and Contributing Building shall be vetted by the Historic Preservation Commission, as recommended by Planning Department with community input and outreach. Additional buildings, such as those shown on the map as "Other Resources Eligible for National or California Register or Locally Significant," could be listed in the future in Articles 10 or 11 based on further research and discussion. Such local designations may entitle such properties to certain benefits, such as the ability to sell TDR.

1.3 *Designate the South End Historic District Extension.*

On February 16, 2011, the Historic Preservation Commission adopted the findings of the South of Market Historic Resource Survey, which examined and evaluated approximately 1,467 properties constructed in or before 1962. This historic resource survey recommended expanding the boundaries and period of significance of the South End Historic District, which is defined in Appendix I of Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code. As noted in the District Record for the South End Addition:

"This group of resources comprises an addition to the local (Article 10) and National Register-certified South End Historic District ("SEHD"). The contributing resources included in the proposed appended area are compatible with the "warehouse architectural form" theme of the South End Historic District. The original district also included other building types, such as industrial manufacturing, commercial, and mixed-use residential buildings. The SEHD Addition maintains consistency with the diversity of building types in a primarily industrial area. Likewise, the area is located adjacent to the western boundary of the South End Historic District, and the contributing resources in the appended area coincide with the post-1906 Earthquake period within the broader period of significance (1867 – 1935) established by the South End Historic District. Thus, the SEHD Addition's period of significance is 1906 – 1935".

This extension would add additional warehouse properties to the South End Historic District, as well as smaller-scale light industrial buildings, which are of a similar historic and architectural character. These smaller-scale properties are from the same time period as the rest of the historic district, and constitute an increasingly rare property type, which appears to be decreasing across SoMa. The South End Historic District Extension is located to the south and west of the existing district boundaries. The district would be expanded to include twelve new contributing resources, and seven non-contributing properties.

To further protect historic resources within the Plan Area, the City would initiate the designation and expansion of the South End Historic District. As a result of designation, these resources would qualify for the economic and zoning benefits afforded to locally-designated historic resources.

1.4 *Expand the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to the Central Corridor to help preserve historic buildings.*

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is an effective method for creating economic benefit to preserve historic buildings. It creates economic value for historic buildings by enabling them to sell unused development rights. In San Francisco, this tool has only been utilized in the downtown (C-3) zoning districts. As part of the

Hotel Utah at 500 4th Street, a Priority Historic Resource

Central Corridor Area Plan, the City would extend this tool into Plan Area. Facilitating the TDR program in this area would support the protection of historic buildings by reducing development pressure and providing an economic incentive for designated resources. The extension of TDR into the Central Corridor, as well as requiring new construction in the Plan area to purchase TDR, will be analyzed concurrently with the environmental review of the Plan. Current concepts being considered include the requirement for new development to purchase TDR for square footage of new development that exceeds a Floor Area Ratio of 4:1 or 5:1.

1.5 *Encourage adaptive reuse of designated historic resources with use flexibility provisions similar to Planning Code Section 803.9(b).*

To foster the reuse of existing historic resources and expand upon a property's development options and income potential, the Zoning Administrator, with consultation from the Historic Preservation Commission, may grant approval to allow commercial uses in mixed use districts for properties designated as:

- a Landmark listed in Article 10;
- a Contributing Resource to a Designated Historic District listed in Article 10;
- a Category I, II, III, or IV in Article 11; or
- Listed in or determined eligible[1] for the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources.

The newly adopted Western SoMa zoning does not permit this allowance in the SALI and WMUO zones. To the extent that this zoning remains in place in the Plan area, particularly parcels zoned SALI, such controls would continue unchanged. Further discussions will refine the controls as pertain to other districts in the Plan area.

1.6 *Encourage the use of the Mills Act for designated historic resources.*

The Mills Act is the one of the best preservation incentives available to private property owners to help rehabilitate, restore and maintain its historic buildings. Enacted by the State of California in 1976 and adopted by San Francisco in 1996, the Mills Act allows the City to enter into contracts with the owner of a privately-owned historical property to ensure its rehabilitation, restoration, preservation and long-term maintenance. In return, the property owner enjoys a reduction in property taxes for a given period. Mills Act contracts have

1 The newly adopted Western SoMa zoning limits this allowance to only building individually eligible in districts where such allowances are permitted.

the net effect of freezing the base value of the property, thereby keeping property taxes low. To qualify, a subject property must receive one of the designations noted in Implementation Strategy 1.5. The property owner must work with the Planning Department and the Assessor's Office to determine the Mills Act value and appropriate maintenance plan.

1.7 *Encourage the use of the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Incentives.*

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program is one of the nation's most successful and cost-effective community revitalization programs. The 20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit is available for buildings that are National Historic Landmarks, listed in the National Register, and that contribute to National Register Historic Districts and certain local historic districts. To qualify, properties must be income producing and must be rehabilitated according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The 20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit applies to any project that the Secretary of the Interior designates a certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. The 20% credit is available for properties rehabilitated for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes, but it is not available for properties used exclusively as the owner's private residence. Currently, contributing resources within the South End Historic District, along with individually-listed and determined eligible properties, may take advantage of this incentive.

1.8 *Encourage façade easements for designated historic resources.*

One of the oldest strategies for historic preservation is a historic preservation easement. An easement insures the preservation of a property's significant architectural and natural features while allowing the owner to continue to occupy and use the property subject to the provisions of the easement. A preservation easement is created by deed and is typically donated or sold to a public or private preservation organization. Either the City or a qualified preservation group, such as San Francisco Architectural Heritage can hold title to the easement, which allows the property owner a one-time tax deduction and the holder has the right to review any changes to features covered by the easement.

1.9 *Encourage the utilization of Planning Code exemptions afforded to historic resources.*

As part of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plans, a number of exemptions for designated historic resources were adopted to provide relief from Planning Code requirements. For designated historic resources in the Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts, per Planning Code Section 307(h)(1) the Zoning Administrator may waive dwelling unit exposure, rear yard, non-residential open space, off-street loading, and off-street parking requirements. Proposed projects must meet certain criteria and comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

1.10 *Encourage the use of the California Historic Building Code (CHBC) for qualifying historic properties.*

Utilization of the California Historic Building Code (CHBC) can provide creative solutions to achieve the health, safety and welfare requirements for the reuse of historic buildings. The renovation of historic buildings is often difficult when older buildings must meet the standards of modern building codes (including Uniform Building Code, City Building Code, Fire Code, Plumbing Code) whose regulations are designed for contemporary construction technologies. The measures permitted by the CHBC are more sensitive to the historic conditions of a building than standard building codes. The CHBC allows flexibility in meeting building code requirements for rehabilitated structures. Generally, building owners can enjoy substantial cost savings when rehabilitating an historic structure by using the CHBC. The CHBC applies to properties that receive one of the designations noted in Implementation Strategy 1.5.

660 3rd Street, part of the proposed extension of the South End Historic District.

PRINCIPLE 2

INCENTIVIZE RETENTION OF CONTEXTUAL AND NON-PRIORITY BUILDINGS AND ENCOURAGE ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION AND INNOVATION IN ADDING TO SUCH BUILDINGS.

As previously noted, this Plan identifies a number of priority resources - buildings that demonstrate a high level of historic and cultural value and align with the City's historic preservation goals. However, these are not the only buildings of merit in the Central Corridor area. The map showing the Central Corridor Historic Resources identifies numerous other resources of national or local significance, as well as districts where the combination of buildings combines to create a strong representation of the past (See resources marked Other Resources Eligible for the National or California Register or Locally Significant, as well as the Central Corridor Priority Historic Districts). All of these components help to define the neighborhood's unique character.

Allowing a city to grow while preserving its history is a challenge – but it is one that can be met. This does not require replication of historic features; in fact, some of the most successful new buildings in historic districts can be those that are clearly modern in design but compatible with and sensitive to the existing character The experience of historic areas can be enriched by new buildings that have merit on their own and are sensitive to their setting. And existing buildings, even those not designated as a resource, are a key part of the area's story. The Plan supports their retention, re-use and additions to them wherever these buildings can be retained.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

2.1 *Develop design guidelines and incentives for additions and alterations to buildings that are not priority resources.*

Design guidelines will be developed for the Central Corridor Plan Area (except for the South End Historic District, for whom controls already exist in Article 10 of the Planning Code). Such guidelines will be utilized by the Planning Department, developers, and the community in reviewing new construction, or in assessing proposed changes to existing buildings. The Central Corridor Design Guidelines will be specifically tailored to the dynamic and innovative character of this area, and will help preserve the diversity and eclectic nature of buildings in this area. Specifically, for buildings of merit that are not considered Landmarks or simple buildings that provide texture and links to the area's past, the Guidelines will encourage renovations and additions, rather than demolition, whenever there is an opportunity to do so.

PRINCIPLE 3

SUPPORT AND ENHANCE SOCIAL HERITAGE RESOURCES WITHIN THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR PLAN AREA.

The term "social heritage" is understood to mean those elements, both tangible and intangible, that help define the beliefs, customs and practices of a particular community. These elements are rooted in the community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community. The Western SoMa Area Plan identified two groupings of social heritage resources related to Filipino Social Heritage and Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Social Heritage. Some of these resources are located in the Central Corridor Plan Area. These areas are significant for their association with the uses, meanings and memories of these populations, rather than the architectural significance of individual buildings. As work progresses within the area, other social heritage areas may be identified in the future.

A concentration of Filipino Social Heritage resources was identified in an area roughly bounded by 3rd, Harrison, 10th, and Mission Streets, and includes a wide variety of resources, which can be categorized as either: Business, Office, Filipino Residents, Community Facilities, Social Services, Cultural Centers, Art/Mural/Theatre Art, and Monument/Historical Landmark.

As noted in *Recognizing, Protecting and Memorializing South of Market Filipino Social Heritage Neighborhood Resources* (July 13, 2011), Filipino people arrived in San Francisco and made South of Market their home, as well as their place of work, recreation and worship around the 1940s. In the early 1970's, the Filipino population in South of Market had grown to 5,000. Many of the families lived in the alleys of Natoma and Minna. The Filipino American Friendship mural at the Howard Langton Community Garden depicts a grand neighborhood festival that brought the Filipino community together with Filipino food, dancing, and music. Community organizing in the Filipino community was at its height during this time, so community pressure brought about the removal of no parking signs on Minna Street, a primarily Filipino residential neighborhood. Today the Filipino community maintains important traditions such as the Parol Lantern Festival, which provides and upholds a strong sense of identity in the neighborhood, and in their places of worship. Churches were important to Irish, Filipino and other Catholic immigrants as a bedrock institution of traditional culture and identity. St. Joseph's Parish for example is not only the oldest Catholic Church in SoMa and a city landmark, but it also served for decades as a place of worship for the Filipino community. The parishioners moved to St. Patrick's Church when St. Joseph's Church was permanently closed after the 1989 earthquake.

LGBTQ Social Heritage resources have been identified in an area roughly bounded by 3rd Street, Mission, Brannan, and 12th Streets, and includes a wide variety of resources, which can be categorized as either: Arts, Bath House, Entertainment, Foundation, Media, Nonprofit Service, Residential Hotel, Retail, and Institutional.

As noted in *Recognizing, Protecting and Memorializing South of Market LGBTQ Social Heritage Neighborhood Resources* (July 18, 2011), SoMa has long been one of the major neighborhoods for San Francisco's LGBTQ populations. In the mid-1950s and early 1960s, the Polk Street and Folsom Street neighborhoods became dense and visible havens for gay people. Before the emergence of the Castro in the 1970s, Polk Street was the major gay residential and commercial center, while Folsom Street specifically and SoMa more broadly drew the leather crowd. By the end of the 1960s, San Francisco leather bars had become heavily concentrated along Folsom Street, and leather bars and businesses sprouted in the surrounding blocks. By the late 1970s, SoMa had become one of the most extensive gay leather neighborhoods in the world. As a result, SoMa acquired a number of nicknames, including the "Folsom," "the Miracle Mile," and the "Valley of the Kings." While the Castro was unquestionably the center of local gay politics, the Folsom had become the sexual center. The same features that made the area attractive to leather bars made it hospitable to other forms of gay sexual commerce. Most of the local gay bathhouses and sex clubs also nestled among the warehouses SoMa. The gay and leather occupation of SoMa reached its zenith by 1982 then shrank dramatically in the mid-1980s before stabilizing by the

early 1990s. Today, the gay and leather presence is still significant, most visibly in the small concentration of gay leather bars, shops, and sex clubs bounded by Folsom, Harrison, Fifth and Twelfth Streets, and in the annual Folsom Street Fair and the Up Your Alley Fair.

Ultimately, the Plan Area should reinforce the principles of recognition, understanding, protection, and memorialization of these social heritage areas in a manner that is thoughtful and consistent with the other principles.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

3.1 *Identify and refine social heritage resources in the Plan Area.*

To further the recognition and understanding of social heritage resources, the Planning Department would work on identifying and refining the existing social heritage inventory, including identifying resources for communities (in addition to Filipino and LGBTQ) for whom SoMa is or was important. This work might include additional community outreach, oral histories, development of a historic context statement, and a reconnaissance-level survey.

3.2 *Develop a Social Heritage Toolkit for the Plan Area.*

Given the diverse nature of social heritage resources, the tools used for recognition, preservation, and memorialization could widely vary. The Department will work with community members and other City agencies to identify tools that preserve, memorialize, and enhance the social heritage within the Plan Area. These tools could include way-finding programs, landmark designation, public infrastructure improvements, and economic incentives.

7 DISTRICT SUSTAINABILITY

Operating between building-level programs and city-wide policy, Eco-District initiatives are an important economy-of-scale approach to furthering urban sustainability.

Sustainability is inherent to the Central Corridor Plan - an overall aim for the Plan is to deliver low-impact, high-performing development that will fulfill regional growth and development requirements in an environmentally responsible and economically sound manner. As a part of its citywide Sustainable Development Program, the Planning Department is working to leverage the main tenets of the Central Corridor Plan within the context of the State's requirements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (AB 32 and SB 375) and the City's goals to reduce water consumption, reduce waste, and enhance community-scale energy resources.

The Planning Department is using the Eco-District strategy to help achieve the City's environmental goals. An Eco-District is a district where neighbors, community institutions, and businesses join with city leaders and utility providers to meet ambitious sustainability goals and co-develop innovative projects. Operating between building-level programs and city-wide policy, Eco-District initiatives are an important economy-of-scale approach to furthering urban sustainability. Eco-Districts leverage the resources and expertise at the neighborhood scale.

Four types of Eco-Districts have been identified by the City. (See "What is an Eco-District" sidebar for description of the district typology.) The Central Corridor Plan Area has been identified by the Planning Department as a Type 2 Eco-District.

The Type 2 Eco-District is characterized by its mix of land uses and is comprised of undeveloped, under-developed, and developed land owned by different property owners implementing projects under different timeframes. This type of Eco-District focuses on aligning development timeframes to maximize opportunities to meet environmental goals. It also works closely with the community to build on its existing character and to integrate the physical qualities of the area as part of its character.

A Central Corridor Eco-District Program Framework has been developed using City environmental goals as guiding influences. This chapter is a summary of that framework.

The Central Corridor Eco-District Framework outlines the four elements of Eco-District Plan development:

1. District Organization
2. District Assessment
3. District Projects
4. District Management

An Eco-District Plan will be developed that identifies sustainability goals for the area and corresponding policies will be created to help achieve them. The Central Corridor Eco-District Plan will be created in collaboration with area stakeholders and moved forward

WHAT IS AN ECO-DISTRICT?

An Eco-District provides a way of achieving ambitious sustainability goals at the neighborhood or district level. Establishment of an Eco-District brings neighbors, community institutions, businesses, city leaders and utility providers together to co-develop innovative solutions to address water use, energy conservation, waste reduction and other needs. This broad partnership fosters the implementation of community-driven projects which blend the physical and cultural environment to explore new possibilities in public space and enhance the experience of an area.

Eco-Districts use a set of performance metrics to guide and shape such projects, and to monitor their progress over time. Creating Eco-Districts provides a practical vehicle for the City to achieve the goals of our Climate Action Plan, Electricity Resource Plan, and Green Building Ordinance; as well as to meet community-developed goals that are specific to the district at hand.

The Planning Department has identified four types of Eco-Districts in San Francisco:

For more information on Eco-Districts visit:
http://sustainabledevelopment.sfplanning.org

TYPE 1: THE BLANK SLATE

The Type 1 Eco-District is characterized by a large amount of undeveloped land typically owned by a single property owner. Type 1 Eco-Districts enable horizontal infrastructure development to be implemented in advance of vertical development to help optimize Eco-District goals. This type of Eco-District maximizes efficiencies in the delivery of goods provided by infrastructure through district-scale systems.

TYPE 2: THE PATCHWORK QUILT

The Type 2 Eco-District is characterized by its mix of land uses and is comprised of undeveloped, underdeveloped, and developed land owned by different property owners implementing development projects under different timeframes. This type of Eco-District focuses on aligning development timeframes to maximize opportunities to meet environmental goals. It also works closely with the community to build on its existing character and to integrate the physical qualities of the area as part of its character.

TYPE 3: THE STRENGTHENED NEIGHBORHOOD

The Type 3 Eco-District focuses on existing residential neighborhoods and their commercial corridors. Type 3 Eco-Districts are located in parts of the city that are not anticipated to accommodate major growth, but through tactical urbanism can bolster distinctive character and support eco-friendly behavior.

TYPE 4: THE INDUSTRIAL NETWORK

The Type 4 Eco-District focuses on creating stronger connections between the city's production, distribution, and repair (PDR) uses. PDR has been recognized as an important component of the city's culture, its economic stability, and the retention of its diverse labor force. Aligning these industries so that their operating and distribution systems can work more efficiently is the primary focus of the Type 4 Eco-District.

with adoption of the Central Corridor Plan, which will incorporate the Eco-District Plan's key principles and recommendations.

The Eco-District Plan will be created in collaboration with area stakeholders under the guidance of the Central Corridor Eco-District Formation Task Force, and developed on a separate but parallel track with the Central Corridor Plan. It will be comprised of two parts: a policy framework and an implementation program. The Implementation Program will be a stand-alone piece that will prioritize projects for the area and establish a path for implementation, including identifying funding sources.

District Organization

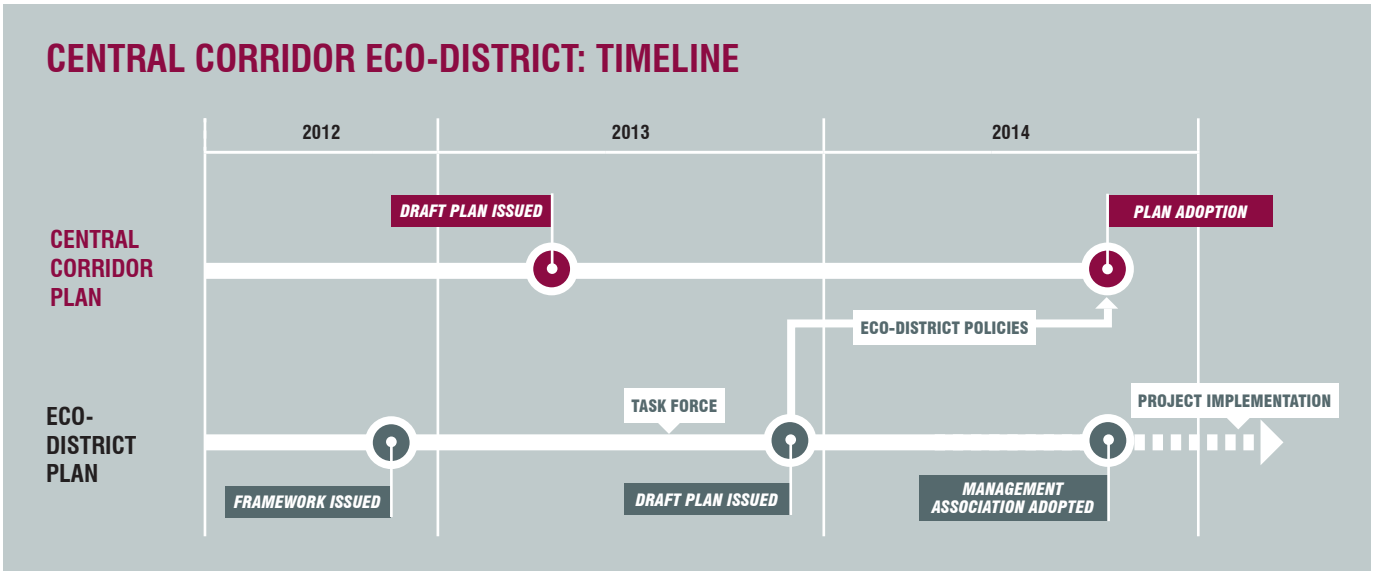
To achieve success as an Eco-District, a neighborhood - in partnership with the city and other public agencies - must create a shared vision for the area. Engaging public and private stakeholders to work together, share ideas, and establish partnerships for the area is a primary component of District Organization. The Central Corridor Eco-District Formation Taskforce will help establish the principles and structure of a potential Sustainability Management Association (SMA) or a Green Benefit District (GBD) which will guide the district's sustainability investments and activities over time.

Modeled on Business Improvement Districts and Transportation Management Associations, GBDs and SMAs are legal organizations that provides projects and services to a specific neighborhood. A SMA is a group of property owners, residents, and businesses within the district that, in partnership with the City, initiate implementation and management of sustainable development projects in the area. Private-sector stakeholders who bring time, resources, and enthusiasm to the partnership are critical. GBDs are special tax districts, authorized by state and local law, which allow property owners to tax their property while maintaining control over how the resulting revenues are spent.

A SMA is similar in many ways to the Transportation Management Association (TMA) which was formed by commercial properties, mostly in the downtown and South of Market, in order to meet Planning Code requirements to create and implement ongoing transportation demand management (TDM) programs. Similar to the TMA, new development in the Central Corridor may be required to participate in the SMA.

The Central Corridor Eco-District Formation Task Force will help to articulate the principles and structure of the SMA/GBD. The formation requires:

- Declaration of partners (public, private, NGO) to explore the formation of a Central Corridor Eco-District as a priority to shape the future of the



district and clarify sustainability priorities.

- Commitment by partners to engage in a formation process necessary to launch an Eco-District.
- Commitment by district partners to agree to meet long-range Eco-District performance metrics.
- Commitment of time and possibly resources to sustain the Eco-District formation process.
- Engagement of City staff to integrate relevant policies and local investments across a range of relevant City and utility agencies.

District Assessment

A neighborhood sustainability assessment will determine the most effective project priorities for a district. The process includes:

- Mapping existing resources that can contribute to an Eco-District, which will ensure that all sustainability opportunities are identified;
- Gathering information about district conditions to develop performance baselines;
- Identifying strategies to meet established goals and targets; and
- Selecting projects that will support those strategies.

This assessment process will build on work done to date and identify gaps and synergies. Topics to be addressed include energy, water, community identity, habitat and ecosystem function, and materials management. Work underway in each of those topic areas is described below.

ENERGY

The City has established aggressive climate protection and energy conservation goals, including a GHG-free electricity supply by 2030 and an 80% reduction in citywide carbon emissions from 1990 levels by 2050. Individual building requirements are already in place to help meet these targets; however, the City needs to continue developing and implementing aggressive and diversified approaches to reducing GHG emissions while continuing to absorb our fair share of regional population growth. While dense, mixed-use, transit-oriented-development and investments in transportation infrastructure can go a long way to reducing GHG emissions associated with growth, land use and transportation is only part of the picture. Another necessary approach is to plan low-carbon or carbon-free community-scale energy resources.

Community-scale energy resources could include district energy systems, like district heating and Combined Heat and Power (CHP), procurement of GHG-free electricity (including SFPUC resources), and other innovative methods to develop low-carbon or renewable energy at a community scale. Such community-scale energy resources have the potential to be an important tool in the City's efforts to reduce GHG emissions, particularly in areas with intensive infill capacity and anticipated growth.

If planned carefully, community-scale energy systems may offer benefits to property developers, property owners, tenants and the City. Benefits include lower development costs, reduced capital and operating costs, higher property values, and reduced living expenses.

Energy Use Analysis and Parcel Assessment

The Planning Department with San Francisco Environment received both a technical assistance award from the EPA and a grant from the State to support the evaluation of renewable district energy opportunities in the Central Corridor area. This assessment will:

- Analyze the overall energy use profile of the neighborhood, as well as changes expected from future growth;
- Evaluate individual parcels within the Plan area to evaluate the overall feasibility of community-scale energy;
- Identify appropriate energy generation types at district scale such as CHP, solar, wind, heat recovery from industrial uses, and thermal storage; and

- Look at opportunities to integrate water district planning with energy planning (e.g. wastewater heat recovery, bio digester gas recovery, solar water and space pre-heating) and to identify sites most appropriate as anchor heat and/or cooling loads.

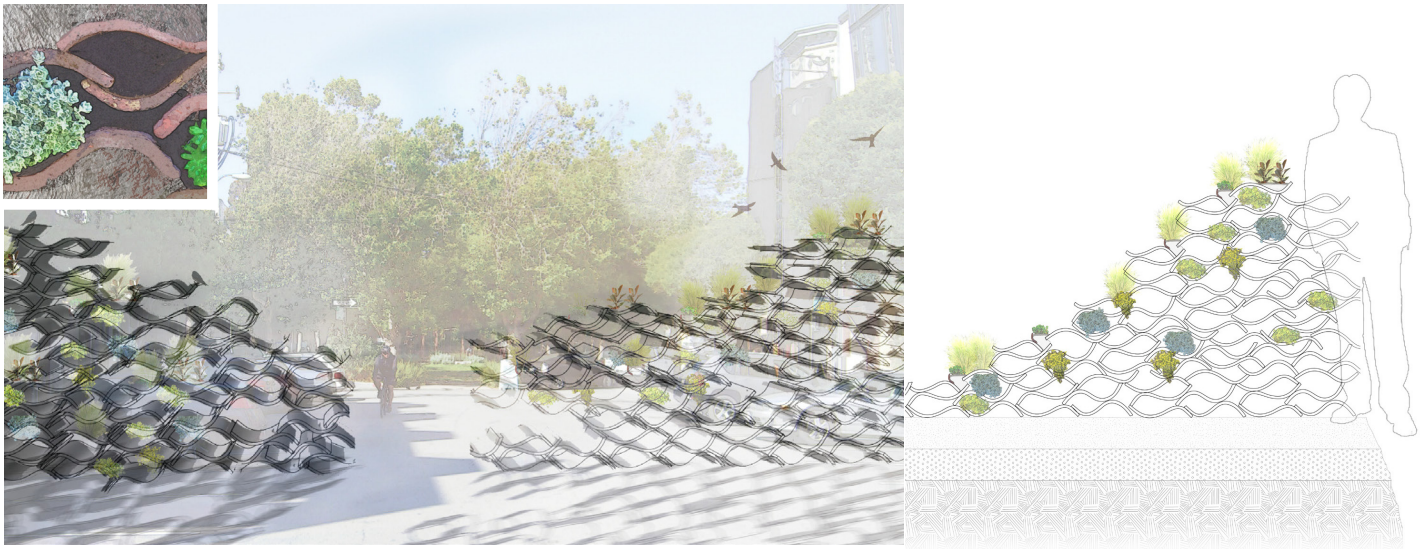
A final report will be prepared in December 2013 that compiles and summarizes the district energy assessment work.

WATER

To ensure continued reliable and adequate potable water for necessary uses, the City needs to reduce consumption of potable water and increase the efficiency with which we use water. Citywide efforts are already underway. Through a City voluntary non-potable water program, the City promotes and incentivise onsite re-use opportunities for non-potable purposes so that buildings can significantly decrease their impact on the City's water and sewer infrastructure. Wastewater efficiency is required of new development on private parcels through the Stormwater Design Guidelines. Plans to use recycled water for non-potable applications are underway in the SFPUC's Eastside Recycled Water Project; the entire Central Corridor area is within the Recycled Water Ordinance area in which all new development must be dual-plumbed for eventual service with recycled water. A third party assessment of the amount of water that could be reused by the Central Corridor's new development found that reusing water in all projects larger than 40,000 square feet for toilets, irrigation, and cooling towers could save approximately 550,000 gallons of water per day (200,000,000 gallons per year).

The SFPUC is looking at the regulations around pooling and/or sharing non-potable water resources across property lines and the public right of way. Staff will evaluate the challenges, drivers and viability of district-scale water reuse within the City. This analysis will inform recommendations for a district water policy in the Plan area.

Reusing discarded ceramic roof tiles to catch and filter water while providing a visual connection throughout the area was an idea proposed in the landscape architecture firm SWA's 2012 Summer Intern Program.



COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The Central Corridor area is a bustling center of economic and cultural activity that has grown out of a historically manufacturing and warehouse district south of the City's financial district. Today the Central Corridor is the focus of much of the City's growth and integrating the historic fabric of the area as it grows is essential to its evolving identity. We anticipate that there are innovative ways to repurpose and maximize the green energy contributions of historically industrial manufacturing structures.

The Planning Department has received a Green Communities Grant from the California Office of Historic Preservation to evaluate the potential to include Eco-District concepts into the preservation of buildings in the plan area. With this grant, the Planning Department will evaluate policies and programs that support the inclusion of historic buildings as components of district scale systems, including but not limited to policy impact on economic viability, standards for process and review, code amendments, and interagency coordination. Work commenced in October 2012, and the assessment is expected to be completed summer 2013.

HABITAT AND ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION

Although highly urbanized, San Francisco is home to a diverse range of biotic communities—plants and wildlife. An assessment of the district's biodiversity and ecosystem function is already partially underway through the Planning Department's Urban Forest Plan and Green Connections projects, which will evaluate the potential for trees and vegetation on City streets to support wildlife and habitat connectivity. These projects are expected to be completed in 2013. A targeted district assessment could identify projects related to habitat, reducing wildlife hazards and nature-friendly urban design; the Department will seek funding to support this effort.

FOOD SYSTEMS

As part of broader Citywide work, the Department is looking at ways to expand sustainable food systems on a neighborhood scale. A toolkit recommending best practices to increase access to healthy food is expected to be completed in 2013. Within the Central Corridor, next steps could include an inventory of land and rooftops that are suitable to community gardening, healthy food retail and farmer's market opportunities, and food waste to compost opportunities. Such an effort is currently unfunded.

MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

SF Environment, the Commission on the Environment, the Board of Supervisors, and the Mayor have all helped create ordinances and resolutions to address the problem of solid waste. Currently, the city is diverting 80% of its waste from land fill and has successfully met its initial goal of 75% waste diversion by 2010. In order to meet its next goal of zero waste by 2020, the City has implemented policy initiatives to ensure that government leads by example and has created programs to encourage the private sector to move toward zero waste. Currently, the City is exploring waste management opportunities including zero waste facilities and anaerobic digestion. A waste management assessment in the Central Corridor area would identify how the district could help to accomplish the City's zero waste goal, be it in combination with its energy and water infrastructure systems or separately.

District Projects

Once the key opportunities are identified through the assessment process, an in-depth feasibility analysis will determine overall viability and cumulative impact. The feasibility analysis in the Central Corridor will focus on district utilities that address energy, water and waste. It will screen projects within the Central Corridor to identify technical feasibility, ease of implementation, economic viability, and environmental benefits.

The screening involves several steps:

- Establish clear boundaries for the Eco-District screening;
- Gather information on cost drivers, capacity or operating constraints, and environmental footprint of existing central utility systems;
- Gather information on current and projected building area, utility demands, costs, and environmental footprint;
- Identify nodes of growth within the Eco-District that could be a starting point for the development of shared utility systems; and
- Identify and screen specific opportunities for collective systems such as:

  Community-Scale Energy Resources: Assessment of projects that can advance community scale energy will be led by the SFPUC and SF Environment. That study will explore shared energy efficiency analytic resources to pool resources for audits and energy efficiency improvements in surrounding buildings that may not be adjoining, or to engage in building performance challenges to enhance competition for recognition of operational improvements, or to otherwise leverage transparency of building performance information.

  Water: Study of a district water strategy is needed to consider opportunities for shared stormwater management and decentralized wastewater treatment and reuse. The study would evaluate types of decentralized systems and ownership/operation models for organizing such utilities to understand potential scenarios for decentralized water and wastewater infrastructure in the City. It will be led by the SFPUC (Water and Wastewater Division).

  Waste Management: The City is currently in discussion with Recology to explore the next generation of waste recycling facilities including identifying technologies able to get us to zero waste and maximum sort separation. Options are being explored such as anaerobic digestion processing facilities. Additionally, the distribution system associated with moving waste in and out of the city to waste treatment plants contributes to the city's greenhouse gas emissions. A specific study for the area will evaluate incorporating anaerobic digestion with energy infrastructure to meet zero waste goals while simultaneously meeting community-scale energy goals. The study lead will be SF Environment.

Based on the analysis, the district's SMA (or similar) will develop an implementation and funding strategy for priority projects. The outcome is a project plan that includes the business case, implementation approach, and partners.

District Management

As Eco-District projects are planned and developed, ongoing monitoring and program evaluation is essential to understand the performance impacts. This phase includes formalizing the ongoing monitoring of baseline metrics established in the assessment phase. Monitoring may be district-wide by the SMA or specific to a particular project. Eco-District performance areas can be used regularly to collect data to show the overall value of particular project interventions. In addition, qualitative documentation and lessons learned about Eco-District implementation will be essential to refining the Eco-Districts approach.

8

FUNDING DISTRICT-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS

The Plan proposes capital improvements to address the area's needs for physical infrastructure...Fortunately, the Plan brings with it significant funding potential.

Background

A key goal of this Plan is to create a high-density, transit-oriented neighborhood that not only supports but builds upon SoMa's eclectic, unique character and mix of uses. The Plan's proposed changes in land uses, height limits and densities will bring new workers, residents and visitors to the area. A significant portion of the neighborhood's new development will occur south of Harrison Street, in formerly industrial areas lacking ample infrastructure for walking and biking, open space, and neighborhood services. Those existing deficits will be amplified by new growth.

The Plan proposes capital improvements, such as streetscape and circulation improvements and new open spaces, to address the area's needs for physical infrastructure. It also includes consideration of program improvements, bolstering programs that can enhance access to community services, affordable housing and work opportunities. A broad range of funding mechanisms will be needed to provide the investment necessary to implement that list of improvements.

Fortunately, the Plan brings with it significant funding potential. The transportation investment and service represented by Central Subway will add substantial value to the properties in the district, enabling new development to contribute to the neighborhood's infrastructure. The rezoning of the area will include a number of regulatory changes in land use, height limit increases and removal of density limits that translate into increased development potential, which will further increase property values and development's ability to support needed improvements. New development will also generate a variety of public revenues (e.g. property taxes, sales taxes, real estate transfer taxes) which can additionally support necessary increases in community facilities and services in the area.

Several key principles form the basis for the Plan's recommended funding mechanisms.

GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES DUE TO PROJECTED GROWTH IN THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR PLAN AREA

EXPENDITURES REQUIRED BY NEW GROWTH	GENERAL FUND
Public Protection (Police, Fire Sheriff, and 911)	$184,980,000
Public Works, Transportation and Commerce	$91,676,000
Human Welfare and Neighborhood Development	$63,774,500
Public Health (DPH)	$56,994,000
Culture and Recreation (Parks, Libraries, Other Programs)	$34,685,500
General Administration and Finance	$8,350,500
Contingency (20%)	$88,092,000
Total Costs	**$528,552,500**

REVENUES GENERATED BY NEW GROWTH	GENERAL FUND
Sales and Use Tax	$93,839,500
Property Tax (Secured, Unsecured and Property Transfer)	$1,014,054,500
Utility Users Tax (Telephone, Access Line, Water, Gas, Electric, Steam)	$6,055,500
Other Taxes (Payroll, Business Registration, Vehicle License Fee)	$28,220,000
Other Revenues (Licenses, Permits, Franchise Fees, Fines & Penalties)	$5,320,500
Total Revenue	**$1,147,490,000**

Assumptions: Even annual growth projected across 20 year period. All figures in 2012 dollars.

NET REVENUE TO GENERAL FUND	$618,937,500

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Using the development program, residential population, and employment estimates provided earlier in this document, the Planning Department estimated expenditures required by new growth as well as new revenues contributed by development.

Growth in the plan area, with an estimated 11,715 new housing units and 46,960 new jobs, will require provision of additional public services, ranging from public safety to library services. During the 30-year life of the plan, these services are estimated to cost the City over $525 million.

However, the land use changes proposed by the Central Corridor Plan will result in far greater contributions than their cost. At full build-out, the Plan's proposed changes could increase the City's property tax base by over $1 billion, as buildings are constructed and sold or rented. Other revenues contribute an additional $135 million. During the 30-year life of the Plan, the City's General Fund could receive almost $1.15 billion, or an average of about $38 million per year.

PRINCIPLE 1

UTILIZE THE BENEFITS OF DENSITY TO HELP FUND A ROBUST SET OF PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PLAN AREA, REQUIRING NEW DEVELOPMENT TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND AMENITIES.

Numerous studies have elaborated on the benefits of density on the environment (dense cities have lower greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption[1]), the economy (geographic clustering leads to innovation and economic growth[2]) and social equity (workers in denser places earn higher wages[3]). However, density can also have a significant benefit on the public realm, as it can yield a significant amount of revenue for public infrastructure over a small area – maximizing revenue while decreasing the area it needs to be spread across.

The approximately 250 acres of the Central Corridor Plan area represents a relatively small geographic area, particularly as compared with the surrounding Eastern Neighborhoods. The public improvements program includes a finite number of physical improvements. And while density increases the *need* for streetscape improvements and access to open space, it does not proportionally increase the cost to address that demand for all kinds of improvements. The result is that a high-density area like the Central Corridor, which attracts new fee-paying development while continuing to receive revenue from existing tax streams, will have greater funds to draw on to meet the need for public improvements.

PRINCIPLE 2

IMPLEMENT "VALUE CAPTURE" STRATEGIES, WHERE PARCELS WHO RECEIVE SIGNIFICANT VALUE THROUGH THE REZONING CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS COMMUNITY NEEDS ACCORDINGLY.

The influx of development that will result from the Plan over the long-term will not only benefit transit ridership—it brings with it the opportunity for value capture. It has been well-documented that transit increases property values. The rezoning proposed by this Plan will further increase those values. Those increased values are the direct result of public actions, and the City has the opportunity to harness a portion of it to fund the Plan's public improvements.

Impact fees represent one significant source of funding that is directly intended to address public improvements, and as long as the fees are supported by a rational nexus and a demonstrated linkage between the improvements and the growth in population, their amount can be scaled to relate to the value of development opportunity. Other potential tools include community benefit and assessment districts; and joint development agreements on sites owned or controlled by the City.

For example, the Moscone Station site, located at Fourth and Folsom Streets, provides an opportunity for a public-private partnership for development adjacent to and above the future station. Future revenue generation

1 Edward L. Glaeser & Matthew E. Kahn, 2008. "The Greenness of Cities: Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Urban Development," NBER Working Papers 14238, National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc.

2 See Richard Florida's research with the Martin Prosperity Institute, particularly his 2008 paper entitled *Density and Creativity in U.S. Regions.*

3 See Ryan Avent's eBook *The Gated City*, published September 2011.

could go above and beyond the one-time development opportunity itself to include ongoing/ long-term revenue to the SFMTA gained through agreements to provide security at the station's entrance, maintenance for the station, and innovations management of the station's use of energy, utility and other resources.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

2.1 *Establish Planning Code requirements to address public improvement needs.*

The City's Planning Code requires development to address some public improvements directly. Existing requirements include the provision of private open space, Better Streets requirements for planting of street trees, provision of sidewalk widening and other street improvements, bicycle parking and car sharing facilities. New provisions that will further be required in the Central Corridor include provision of new public mid-block alleys across large parcels, provision of publicly-accessible open space, and other public realm requirements.

In addition, any needs that are addressed by impact fees as discussed below may be alternately mitigated through provision of in-kind improvements, enabling development sponsors to directly provide public open space, low- or no-cost space to community facilities such as childcare, and streetscape improvements.

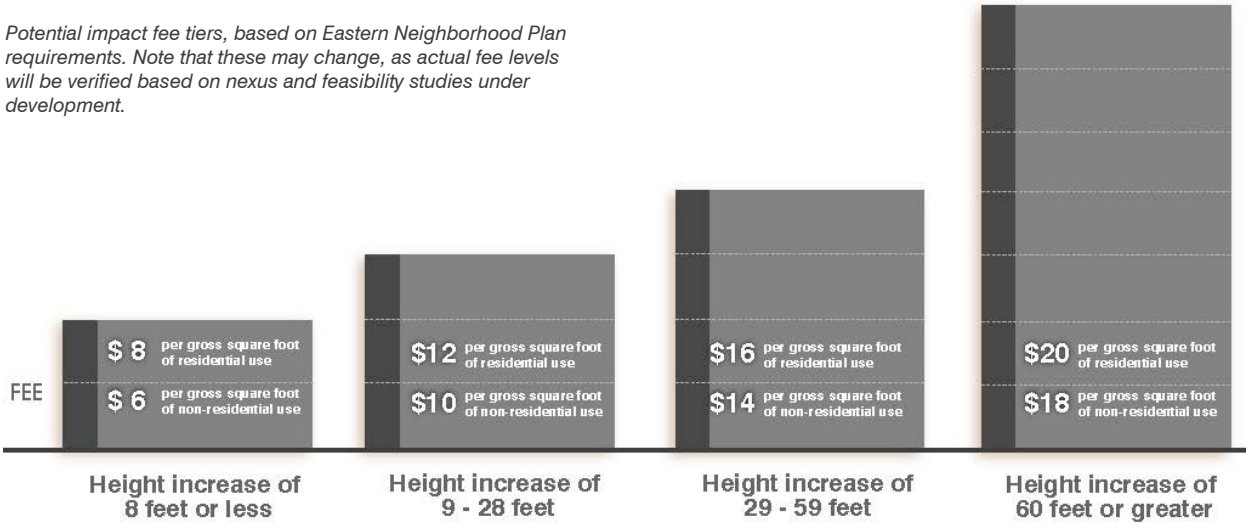
2.2 *Expand the application of the Eastern Neighborhoods Impact Fees to this area.*

Development impact fees are one-time charges applied to new developments to mitigate their impacts on public infrastructure. These funds can be used towards the construction or expansion of capital infrastructure needed to serve new residents, workers and visitors associated with new development. San Francisco imposes a number of citywide impact fees that fund general infrastructure needs that cross neighborhood boundaries like transit, child care, and water capacity. Parcels in the Plan area will continue to be subject to those Citywide fees.

San Francisco also imposes area-specific impact fees that fund pre-identified neighborhood needs within a limited geographic area. These area-specific impact fees are generally imposed following a focused community planning process, in concert with a rezoning, and are intended to fund a program of neighborhood improvements.

The Eastern Neighborhoods Plans implemented a tiered exaction system based on value capture, where properties who received beneficial changes in use, or quantifiable increases in residential density and/or height, are required to pay greater fees and/or affordable housing requirements. That system is proposed to be applied to the Plan area, with the addition of a fourth tier to capture the increased value represented by sites receiving

Potential impact fee tiers, based on Eastern Neighborhood Plan requirements. Note that these may change, as actual fee levels will be verified based on nexus and feasibility studies under development.



the equivalent development capacity of height increases of 60 feet or more. Actual fee levels for the plan area have not yet been verified, and will be ascertained based on the nexus and feasibility studies described below. However, in advance of that information, the schedule shown above, based on existing Eastern Neighborhoods fees and including a proposed additional tier, represents draft fee levels that can be used for planning purposes.

Under these draft fee levels, development in the Plan area is projected to generate $130-200 million towards public realm, open space and community facilities.

By California law, impact fees must be calculated according to the nexus between the demands for new facilities and the costs to construct those facilities. A nexus study previously developed for the Eastern Neighborhoods analyzes the relationship between projected new development in the Eastern Neighborhoods and the cost of providing public facilities to meet increased demand from new residents and workers. The Planning Department is currently scoping a comprehensive nexus study that will provide support for impact fees for open space, recreational facilities, transportation infrastructure, streetscape improvements and childcare facilities throughout the City, including the Central Corridor. That study will be complete at the time of the Plan's adoption.

2.3 *Tailor affordable housing requirements to maximize their potential benefit.*

The provisions of the SLI and SALI zoning districts, which covers a significant portion of the plan's southern area, currently restricts development of any housing except exclusively affordable housing projects in the SLI. A few parcels in the Plan Area are also zoned M-1, which only allows housing with a Conditional Use and subject to certain density limitations. The proposed rezoning of the Plan will generate significant value for landowners by opening this area to residential development. As in the Eastern Neighborhoods, former SLI, SALI and M parcels that receive new residential allowances will be required to provide increased affordable housing above the City's baseline inclusionary program.

In the Eastern Neighborhoods, increased affordable housing requirements were predicated on value gained primarily by removing Conditional Use requirements for housing in combination with increases in height limits. Parcels in the former industrial districts were subject to three increasing tiers of affordability requirements based on the value conferred by the rezoning. In the Central Corridor's former SLI and SALI areas, value will be gained by removing a complete *prohibition* on market-rate housing, representing a much greater gain in value and subsequent increase in financial feasibility than was the case in the Eastern Neighborhoods.

The Plan will also extend the new inclusionary options of land dedication and middle income housing provision offered within the Urban Mixed Use District of the Eastern Neighborhoods. The land dedication option enables project sponsors the option to dedicate a development site to the Mayor's Office of Housing for the development of affordable housing in lieu of traditional inclusionary requirements. The middle income option allows developers to provide a greater number of below-market-rate units at higher prices that are affordable to households with incomes averaging 135 percent of San Francisco's Median Income, instead of providing fewer, more deeply subsidized units according to the traditional inclusionary program.

All non-SLI, SALI or M parcels, and those not receiving significant height limit increases in the Plan area will be subject to the Citywide levels of the City's Inclusionary Housing Program, currently set as a fee equivalent to 20% of the units in the principal project, with the option to provide 20% of the project's units as affordable at an off-site location, or provide 12% of the project's units as affordable on-site within the project. All non-residential development in the Plan area will also continue to be subject to the City's Jobs Housing Linkage fee program. Under these programs, development in the Plan area is estimated to generate $688-740 million dollars towards affordable housing.

PRINCIPLE 3

ENSURE ANY NEW REQUIREMENTS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SUBSTANTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PLAN AREA.

The Central Corridor area represents a target area for growth. Its central location, its desirability, and its proximity to local and regional transit all make it an optimal location to house a portion of the growth projected to occur in the City. Excessive fee requirements can have a stifling effect on development, particularly when such fees do not exist in other parts of the City. It is important that fees needed to support community improvements support, rather than disincentivize, redevelopment in the area.

To ensure that zoning requirements, proposed fees, affordable housing requirements and other exactions are financially feasible, anticipated increases in land value must be assessed against the potential economic impact of proposed new exactions. In the Eastern Neighborhoods, fees were calibrated so that the increased costs related to the new fees and requirements could be absorbed by the corresponding increase in land values, while still allowing an increase in property value that can translate into higher income for landowners. For this Plan as well, the exact level of fee, housing and other requirements should be adjusted to result generally in a financial gain for property owners, and therefore provide a financial incentive for the redevelopment of underutilized sites in the area.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

3.1 *Complete a Feasibility Assessment to support imposition of new fees, and update fees regularly to ensure feasibility.*

In concert with the Nexus Study described above, the Planning Department is developing a scope to analyze the impact of zoning, height and density changes proposed by the Plan in concert with proposed impact fees and other requirements. This scope will build upon the work of the Eastern Neighborhoods Financial Analysis performed in 2008, where a consultant to the City developed land residual models to compare the estimated value of land under existing height and bulk restrictions to the value under proposed zoning and regulations. While the real estate market has changed since 2008, this past work provides a methodology and a basis for evaluation of the Plan's effect under current conditions. The results of further feasibility analysis will be available at the time of the Plan's adoption, to enable stakeholders and decisionmakers assurance that the Plan's proposed requirements are indeed feasible and will not deter development in the Plan area.

Consistency of development fees is critical to maintain certainty for developers as well as feasibility under future changes in market conditions. Fees should generally be maintained at their initial levels relative to construction cost inflation, and updated regularly to maintain a correct relationship between development and infrastructure costs. The Planning Code mandates that each year, the Controller review the amount of each impact fee and adjust it based on the City's Annual Infrastructure Construction Cost Inflation Estimate. That estimate is based upon construction cost inflation data, market trends and a variety of national, state and local commercial and institutional construction cost inflation indices.

PRINCIPLE 4

EXPLORE NEW AND INNOVATIVE FUNDING MECHANISMS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS.

While requirements imposed on development will contribute significant funding towards the Plan's public improvements, they cannot cover the entire community improvement program, nor contribute towards projects upon which they do not have an impact. Efforts to secure additional revenue will require interdepartmental efforts that continue after the Plan's adoption. As part of its ongoing efforts to ensure implementation of area plans, the City is exploring funding tools that can help provide adequate infrastructure and public services, as well as maintenance of this infrastructure and services. One tool that may be particularly helpful to facilitate development of open space or the public realm in concert with large developments is a Mello-Roos/ Community Facilities District (CFD), which is a voter-approved measure that increases the City's property tax base by levying new charges on properties in a defined area.

The City will also need to explore new funding mechanisms to provide resources to the Central Corridor Eco-District, and support its projects. Tools under exploration for the Eco-District include:

- Business Improvement District: A public/private sector partnership where business owners elect to make a collective contribution via property assessment to fund Eco-District staff and ongoing organizational operations
- Local Improvement District (LID): Similar to the above, a broader elective contribution via property assessment to fund sustainability infrastructure improvements.
- Resource Consumption Surcharges: A surcharge, or carve out, on existing utility bills to support energy, water, and waste efficiency projects.

PRINCIPLE 5

UTILIZE AND IMPROVE UPON EXISTING MODELS OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, COMMUNITY AND INTERAGENCY COORDINATION TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN'S PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS.

Over the past five years, the Planning Department, in collaboration with City agencies and community stakeholders, has developed and refined methods for implementing its plans for growth. The role of the Department's Plan Implementation Group is to turn the visions of adopted Plans into executed improvements. They work closely with the following established bodies:

- *Interdepartmental Plan Implementation Committee (IPIC):* The IPIC provides a forum for interagency coordination for Plan area community improvements, and consists of the City agencies who will build, operate and maintain the proposed improvements. The IPIC is established in the City's Administrative Code Chapter 36.
- *Plan Area Community Advisory Committees (CACs):* Committees to help further the implementation exist for the Market Octavia and Eastern Neighborhoods Plan Areas. These CACs advise staff and policy makers on the use of impact fee revenue for public improvements.

Implementation of the Central Corridor Plan can be optimized by working with these established groups to prioritize projects, identify funding, pursue grants, and identify opportunities for project coordination to help realize its proposed improvements.

Inter-plan area coordination is critical to effective implementation. Many of the plan's proposed improvements transcend plan boundaries – for example, improvements to Folsom and Howard Streets cross numerous neighborhoods. Thus implementation of public improvements should be considered on a basis larger than just the plan area, so funds can be leveraged with revenues generated in other areas. Additionally, because impact fees only play a partial role in deliverance of public improvements, and because their timing may not align with investment needs, funds will need to be leveraged with other sources to move forward.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

5.1 *Incorporate the Plan's public improvement program into the Eastern Neighborhoods Implementation Program, to coordinate prioritization of projects, administration of fee revenue, and community input.*

A large portion of the Central Corridor Plan area is already within the boundaries of the Eastern Neighborhoods, and covered by the Eastern Neighborhoods Impact Fee. Revenue collected from those fees goes into the Eastern Neighborhoods Public Benefits Fund. Fees collected in the remainder of the Central Corridor Plan (except for the portion of the Plan Area included in the C-3 districts) should also be directed into this fund, to enable the seamless provision of projects that cross various plan area boundaries for the benefit of the entire South of Market area.

As part of the Eastern Neighborhoods Public Benefit Fund, the Central Corridor's improvement projects will be considered for prioritization of fee expenditures. Fees must be expended to address the direct impact for which they were collected, so should the pace of growth in the Central Corridor exceed that of other neighborhoods under this committee, the prioritized improvement program will need to be modified to prioritize this area accordingly. The administration plan for the Eastern

Neighborhoods Public Benefits Program clearly states that "Implementation of public improvements should closely track growth on a geographic basis," and this will ensure that the area sees the benefit of revenues generated in the area, while allowing for the benefits of inter-plan coordination.

The Eastern Neighborhoods Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is the central community advisory body charged with implementation of the Eastern Neighborhoods Area Plans, including its public improvements. This Plan recommends that the responsibilities of that Committee be expanded to include implementation of the Central Corridor's public improvements as well. The composition of the CAC and the interests of its members should be reviewed and, if necessary, modified to ensure that stakeholders representing the Central Corridor area are included.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC OUTREACH & PLANNING PROCESS

The Central Corridor Plan has been developed based on extensive input from a wide range of stakeholders. This input was collected through a number of different engagement strategies, to provide a wide range of opportunities for people to shape the Plan. This section describes the outreach and engagement efforts used to shape the Central Corridor Plan.

The project was launched in February 2011 as a community based planning effort. The first six months of this effort was focused solely on collaborating with and listening to community members, stakeholders, and relevant city agencies about their the diverse goals for the project area. Staff ensured best practices were followed in all outreach efforts- all public meetings and workshops were well advertised; and translation services , child and support services for participants with special needs were provided upon request.

This project has been funded through a Transportation Planning Grant from Caltrans.

Interagency Coordination

The Planning Department worked with myriad City and regional agencies to ensure that their input was incorporated into the Plan. From its inception, the Central Corridor Plan had a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that met to review and vet key Plan concepts and engagement efforts, as well as provide input and guidance at critical plan junctions. In addition, Planning staff coordinated with agency and official staff on specific topical issues. A list of agencies and their engagement with this process is provided below:

- Office of Mayor Edwin Lee
- Supervisor Jane Kim (District 6)
- The Department of Public Health
- San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)
- San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA)
- San Francisco Youth Commission
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
- San Francisco Travel
- San Francisco Entertainment Commission
- Department of Public Works
- Association of Bay Area Governments
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission
- Caltrans

Community Outreach

To ensure that community input was incorporated into the Plan, the Planning Department conducted a broad outreach effort, including the following:

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The Planning Department contacted organizations with roots in the geographical project area, including neighborhood and community organizations, business development organizations, and Citywide public policy organizations with an interest in the project area. Staff met all community groups who responded to this outreach. To ensure maximum participation, meetings were typically held at a regularly scheduled meeting of the organization. Groups included in this process include:

- Asian Neighborhood Design
- California Culture and Music Association
- Central Subway Outreach Committee
- Clementina Cares
- Filipino-American Development Foundation
- Housing Action Coalition (HAC)
- Rincon Hill /South Beach/Mission Bay Neighborhood Association
- San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR)
- South of Market Action Network (SOMCAN)
- South of Market Business Association (SOMBA)
- South of Market Leadership Council
- South of Market Project Area Committee (SOMPAC)
- TODCO Group (Tenants and Owners Development Corporation)
- Western Soma Taskforce
- Yerba Buena Community Benefit District

In addition to these community meetings, Planning Department honored any meeting requests with stakeholders, including property owners, developers, business owners, and residents.

WALKING TOUR

In early June 2012, the Planning Department facilitated two walking tours of the Plan Area. This format allowed both staff and stakeholders to ground the visioning process based on common experience. These walking tours featured a variety of speakers who discussed their area of interest and vision for the corridor.

STOREFRONT CHARRETTE

For four days in late June 2012, the Planning Department set up shop in a retail space in the Plan Area and invited everyone to drop in to chat and to provide input. This enabled stakeholders to visit at their leisure and have the opportunity to share their visions and concerns at length with staff. Additional charrettes were performed in Tagalog and Mandarin at nearby senior centers to ensure maximum participation.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Planning Department created an online survey to gauge community opinions on a range of issues. These surveys enabled stakeholders to provide input at their convenience, and provided space for additional input on issues that may not have been addressed in the survey. The survey was available in English, Spanish, and Tagalog.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

During the planning process, the Planning Department held three public workshops in the Plan Area. These workshops enabled staff to present different aspects of the plan as they were being developed, and to receive immediate feedback from community members.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

During the planning process, four public hearings were held – four at the Planning Commission and one at the Historic Preservation Commission. These hearings provided an opportunity for staff to present different aspects of the Plans to the public and public officials for their comment and input.

WEBSITE

All of the information about the Plan has been maintained and documented on the website, *http://centralcorridor.sfplanning.org*. Information on the webpage includes:

- The project description, map, and schedule
- Project context, including background reports on land use and the public realm (streets, parks, etc.), and maps of existing conditions.
- Links to all the other City planning efforts being conducted in this area, including transportation plans.
- Information on and results of the outreach efforts discussed above, including walking tours, storefront charrette, and the community survey.
- Draft plan and concepts, including presentations from all the public workshops and public hearings.

Next Steps

This Draft Plan document contains the major proposals of the Plan, highlighting all of the key elements that will analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that is necessary prior to adopting the rezoning or implementing other actions (e.g. circulation and streetscape improvements) proposed in the Plan. There are many important details that need to be discussed and fleshed out over the next 12 - 18 months, while the EIR is being drafted, in order to create a full Plan and zoning package for adoption. Many of these are mentioned explicitly in the Plan's chapters, and include a diverse array of zoning issues, design guidelines, and other matters.

Upon publication of this document, the Planning Department intends to embark on a new round of focussed public participation to discuss and flesh out these details. This participation will likely take the form of monthly (or other regularly scheduled) public roundtable discussions focussed on specific topics. These will be informal working sessions for people interested in particular topics. An initial list of topics for discussion includes:

- FAR and TDR
- Specific allowed uses
- Setbacks, bulk and massing
- Lot consolidation
- Incentives for additions to/retention of non-historic buildings
- Incentives and controls for community and recreational facilities
- Key opportunity site design guidelines
- Open space design

APPENDIX B

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

Since releasing the Central Corridor Plan's key concepts in summer 2012, the San Francisco Planning Department and Planning Commission have received correspondence relaying specific questions and concerns about varying aspects of the Plan. Staff provides responses to those questions below, and additional discussion of these issues can be found in the main body of the Draft Plan in the appropriate chapters:

1 *What are the ramifications of the Plan for production/distribution/repair (PDR) uses?*

Production/Distribution/Repair (PDR) jobs are critical to the economy and job diversity of San Francisco. These uses are appropriate in economically diverse, mixed use areas such as SoMa. As such, PDR uses would be allowed throughout the Plan Area. As discussed in the Plan, the Central Corridor area is one of the best opportunities for the City to meet its need to direct growth to transit-rich areas. Rezoning the Service Light Industrial (SLI) district and portions of the Service Arts Light Industrial (SALI) to Mixed Use Office (MUO) in order to allow more intensive transit-oreinted uses, such as offices and housing, will accomplish this. As a result, some existing PDR uses on parcels currently zoned SLI or SALI would potentially face a greater risk of displacement from higher paying uses. (This risk already exists in many parts of SoMa such as the MUO, Western SoMa Mixed Use Office (WMUO), and Secondary Service Office (SSO) districts, which allow office and/or housing as well as PDR). Given the relatively small percentage of the City's PDR jobs in this area, the other efforts citywide to protect and encourage PDR, and the opportunity represented by the rezoning *in this location*, on balance this is a reasonable trade-off.

Currently there are approximately 5,600 PDR workers in the Central Corridor Plan Area. Approximately 40%, or 2,300, of these jobs are located on parcels zoned SLI or SALI. Under the proposed rezoning, about 1,800 of these jobs would lose the protection of SLI and SALI zoning. This is about 3% of the city's PDR workers. Under the proposed rezoning, 500 of these jobs would remain in areas designated SALI which protects PDR or allows other non-competitive uses. Such a zoning change does not guarantee the displacement of PDR jobs. PDR uses exist throughout SoMa and elsewhere in the city in areas where other uses are permitted (attested by the fact that 60% of the existing PDR jobs in the Plan area are in districts where office and housing is allowed and co-exists). Additionally, the Central Corridor Plan would accommodate space for up to 40,000 new jobs overall, of which several thousand would likely be higher-paying jobs for people without a four-year college degree, thereby creating new opportunities for the segment of San Francisco's workforce who are employed by PDR businesses.

The City is strongly committed to the preservation of PDR uses, as signified by the 2008 creation of very restrictive PDR zoning districts in the Eastern Neighborhoods of the Mission, Showplace Square, Central Waterfront, and Bayview. The City is beginning a PDR "intensification" study, to best understand the conditions under which new PDR development is feasible. This study is expected to be completed in spring/summer of 2013.

As to the future of PDR in SoMa, the traditional forms of PDR (e.g. large-scale manufacturing) are typically not viable uses even within PDR-friendly districts in

the South of Market. Based on evidence and discussion with SFMade (a non-profit supporting the real estate and small business needs of local manufacturing firms), many of the new PDR businesses moving to or being started within Eastern Neighborhoods are of a "new school" model of boutique manufacturing and other small-scale PDR uses. Such uses would be permitted as-of-right throughout the Central Corridor Plan Area, including the MUO districts. As discussed in Mayor Lee's 17-Point Jobs Plan, the City supports manufacturing uses through City contracting priorities and partnerships with major events. The Office of Economic and Workforce Development is currently adding a full-time staff position to directly work with the manufacturing sector.

2 *Will air quality concerns diminish the viability of a public park on the block bounded by 4th/5th/Bryant/Brannan Streets as being contemplated in the Central Corridor Plan?*

The area south of the freeway has been identified in multiple previous planning efforts and adopted policy documents, including the Eastern Neighborhoods Plans, as a priority area to develop new public open space, as there is none today. The Central Corridor planning process has suggested that the block between 4th, 5th, Bryant, and Brannan Streets contains a key opportunity to create a new public park. This opportunity primarily exists because a large portion of this block is owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). Local precedent has shown that developing a park on publicly-owned land is substantially easier than doing so on privately-owned land.

While the proximity of this park to the freeway is not ideal, that factor is outweighed by the benefit of providing open space to workers and residents who otherwise have little or no access to nearby open space. A primary concern with regard to air quality is the amount of time spent in areas of concern. The amount of time spent at a park is typically a fraction of that spent at one's workplace, school or residence; so lengthy exposure is not expected to be generated by park users. In cooperation with the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Planning Department has verified that the public health benefits of open space in this location are greater than detriments possible given air quality concerns.

Full development of the park will an air quality assessment, which DPH has done for other potential park sites, and design will explore opportunities to minimize potential air quality impacts, including considering alternate locations to provide maximum benefits to park users.

3 *Why isn't the Plan's future office development capacity based on historic market demand, which is lower than the Plan would allow?*

In 2012, the Bay Area's regional governing agencies, comprised of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), released their draft Plan Bay Area, a land use and transportation strategy to address the greenhouse gas reduction mandates of California state law SB375. Recognizing both an increasingly greater demand for and policy imperative to facilitate urban development (as opposed to suburban sprawl), Plan Bay Area projects that San Francisco will grow at the same pace as the rest of the region between now and 2040, adding an additional 92,410 housing units and 191,000 jobs. Planning Department staff estimates that about two-thirds, or 130,000, of the City's projected jobs will be located in office environments.

While job growth in San Francisco has been relatively flat since the mid-1980s, that relatively flat growth masks a major shift in job sectors over the past 30 years, specifically a loss in industrial jobs with a corresponding increase in other job sectors[1]. Additionally, those first 20 years coincided with a national movement of jobs, particularly offices, to the suburbs, a period during which San Francisco's job growth was dramatically outpaced by job growth in less urban parts of the region, such as Silicon Valley, and during which its annual amount of new office space approved has dropped from an average 1.7 million square feet to about 788,000 square feet[2].

1 Since 1985, a total of 19.7 million square feet of office was constructed in large projects in the downtown area alone. Source: 25 YEARS: DOWNTOWN PLAN MONITORING REPORT 1985-2009, published by SF Planning in June 2009.

2 Since 1985, the City's office space development limit of 950,000 square feet per year has not been reached with the exception of a single year, 2000, when there were more development proposals than available space. Since then, enough office space has been available to accommodate office development. Source: 25 YEARS: DOWNTOWN PLAN MONITORING REPORT 1985-2009, published by SF Planning in June 2009.

However, since the dot-com recovery and re-emergence of job growth that began to be visible in 2004, San Francisco has grown by an average of 4,500 new jobs a year, and has seen an average annual change of more than 1% in employment despite a national recession. For a host of reason – demographic, cultural, environmental, and economic – cities are now growing faster than suburbs nationally, reversing a decades-old trend. The City aims to encourage this trend, by ensuring an accessible workplace market, where employers seeking to locate in San Francisco have a range of choices in product type, location and amenities. It also aims to place as much growth as possible, particularly job growth, in planned areas supported by transit and other necessary amenities. The numerous plans and major projects recently developed or currently underway in the City, such as the Hunters Point Shipyard, the Transit Center District, Pier 70, or even the 5M project in the Plan Area, all contribute towards this strategy, and work together to ensure a sufficient amount and range of spaces to address market demands.

The Central Corridor is a key part of that strategy. In particular, the Plan aims to generate significant workspace potential, which if fully utilized would represent a higher pace of growth than in the past. This is a shift that the City embraces, and indeed, hopes to facilitate, by providing more easily accessible space in locations of high demand. Thus, the Plan has been developed to support local economic development goals as well as regional growth targets, rather than to reflect historic growth rates.

4 *What is the economic development strategy for the Central Corridor Plan, particularly for the tech industry, and how does it fit within the City's broader economic development agenda?*

The Plan's proposals to date have been based upon San Francisco's Economic Strategy[3], which aided in identifying the kinds of jobs that will be most demanded in the future as well as those that provide the most benefit to the broadest segment of San Franciscans. Further development of that strategy has helped to identify the spatial and physical requirements of those jobs.

Through the Plan's Technical Advisory Committee, Planning Department staff has worked closely with the Mayor's Office, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and other agencies to ensure any land use, urban form, and public realm changes proposed by the Plan support the City's overall economic development agenda. The Plan's promotion of large floorplate, mid-rise structures over smaller footprint high-rise development is a direct response to the high demand, and low availability, of this type of workspace, particularly in SoMa. The Plan's land use and public realm proposals are intended to support economic synergies by creating dynamic "third places" – the cafes, parks, main streets, and civic spaces outside of home and work that add value to the daily live-work experience, and that are particularly critical to our innovation industries.

In particular, the plan strives to provide a balance of jobs accessible to a range of San Franciscans by tailoring its use and form parameters towards industries that create a more balanced distribution of job opportunities, which are generally in the local-serving sector of the economy. Tech jobs have been identified as high job generators - recent research by Professor Enrico Moretti of the University of California Berkeley demonstrates that for each new high tech job in a city, five additional jobs are created outside high tech. The City's Chief Economist recently identified the Health Care, Construction, and Retail Trade sectors as key workforce opportunities with the potential for job growth in the next several years, all of which are supported by the Plan. Construction and retail jobs in particular will be fostered through development in the Plan Area, and neighborhood retail requirements, respectively. Staff intends to work closely with OEWD staff over the next two years to further develop economic strategies that can be incorporated into major site redevelopment.

3 "Sustaining Our Prosperity: The San Francisco Economic Strategy" can be found at http://oewd.org/media/docs/SF%20Economic%20Strategy%20Report.pdf

5 *Why does the "Central Corridor" not include other areas along the Central Subway route, particularly the areas south of SoMa to Pier 70, including all of Mission Bay and the Central Waterfront?*

Numerous neighborhoods lie along the Central Subway – the newly constructed route will connect from Chinatown through Market Street and Downtown to SoMa. The route will connect with the existing T-Third Metro line which runs through Mission Bay, the Central Waterfront and Dogpatch neighborhoods, and the Bayview. Chinatown, Union Square and Downtown are dense and relatively built-out, with little capacity for growth. Other areas along the rail line, which extends all the way to the southern edge of the City, have been planned and rezoned in recent years:

- ***Mission Bay (1998):*** This Redevelopment Area is planned for 6,000 housing units, space for 20,000 jobs, and a campus for UCSF, much of which has been built to date.
- ***Central Waterfront (2008)***: Rezoned as part of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plans, the northern portion of this area was rezoned to allow for housing, PDR, office and also includes a Special Use District to accommodate Life Science and Medical jobs, given its proximity to UCSF.
- ***Bayview (2008)***: Rezoned as part of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plans, the 3rd Street corridor is zoned to accommodate moderate amounts of transit-oriented infill. Significant portions of this large planning area are zoned as industrial-protection PDR districts or are existing lower-density single family areas.
- ***Hunter's Point Shipyard/Candlestick Point (2010)***: These Redevelopment Plans to create new neighborhoods on the former Naval shipyard and other publicly-owned land include space for over 10,000 housing units and 10,000 jobs.

Two large Port-owned properties, Seawall Lot 337 in the Mission Bay area (currently used as a parking lot for AT&T Park) and Pier 70, in the Central Waterfront, are currently undergoing planning for additional development, which each may add capacity for several hundred housing units and several thousand jobs.

The southern stretch of the Central Subway line spans the Yerba Buena area, whose redevelopment plan expired last year, and the less intensively developed portions of SoMa. Both areas house opportunity sites where it is expected that the line could support additional ridership brought by new development. The Central Corridor Plan Area boundaries were generated to address these opportunity areas. However, the Plan's land use changes, streetscape and open space improvements have all been conceived to address the larger context and relationships with adjacent neighborhoods.

6 *How does the Plan propose "neighborhood development," particularly regarding provision for new affordable housing sites and community services?*

South of Market in general, and the Central Corridor Area in particular, is home to a significant amount of deed restricted affordable housing. About 15% of the housing is deed-restricted for low income residents, compared to 4.5% citywide; and another 2% is available to low to moderate income residents through the City's inclusionary program. Given the number of existing affordable housing sites in the Plan Area, as well as current program demands, the Mayor's Office of Housing has indicated a desire to focus on financial support of those existing programs. Based on that focus, the Plan's proposals include:

- Increased provision of affordable housing through additional inclusionary housing requirements on sites rezoned from SLI, SALI or M districts as well as on sites that receive substantial height increases, which would generate about 1,750-1,900 on-site inclusionary units, or approximately $550-600 million in in-lieu fees.
- Additional funding for affordable housing through the Jobs-Housing Linkage fees, which would generate about $138-140,000,000 in fees.
- Exploration of mixed income housing at major development sites such as 5M and the Central Subway's Moscone Station.

Community facilities, including language, communication, and education programs, job training, family support, tutoring and youth development, and arts and cultural resources centers, play a critical role in the lives of area residents. The plan's rezoning proposals attempt to respect those existing programs by avoiding major increases in height or development potential on sites where those programs exist. Similar to other Plan Areas, the Plan will include funding through impact fees for child care and library services. Other services needs, however, such as social services serving existing populations and operations for all types of facilities, will continue to be addressed at a citywide level.

7 *How does the Plan address the on-going market-driven evolution of Fourth Street into a neighborhood retail district?*

Retail uses are already integrated into and dispersed throughout the fabric of SoMa, and the Plan continues to permit retail throughout the area. In response to public input and desire for a focused neighborhood commercial center, the Plan proposes to support the neighborhood's burgeoning retail corridors along Folsom Street between 6th and 4th Streets, and along 4th Street between Folsom and Townsend Streets, by requiring ground floor retail; and to work with the community to develop appropriate controls for the types of retail (e.g. specific uses, use sizes) that should be supported along those corridors. This can help create a fine-grain, concentrated "neighborhood commercial" character on those blocks while still allowing offices uses on floors above - which is typically not the case in the City's Neighborhood Commercial districts. To further support this neighborhood's existing retail, the Plan proposes a reduction in height limits along the west side of 4th Street between Bryant and Brannan Streets.

8 *How does the Plan capitalize on the potential of Fifth Street as the primary focus for large-scale new commercial development?*

The Plan recognizes the immense potential of opportunity sites located along the southern segment of 5th Street in the Plan Area, and proposes flexible zoning in mid-rise development for all of its opportunity sites. The Plan's proposal includes 85 to 130 foot height limits along this stretch, with the potential for up to four tower sites in the High Rise Alternative, and this area is included in the proposed South SoMa Special Use District which would ensure that new development on these opportunity sites emphasizes space for jobs. Through the Plan's proposed height and zoning changes, sites along 5th Street could support as many as 18,500 jobs. Wider sidewalks, new bicycle lanes, other streetscape improvements, and a new park off 5th Street are intended to complement this significant amount of new development.

It should be noted the Plan does not address or propose increased heights or development potential at the 4th & King Railyards site, which would be the subject of future planning processes. (The Department recently completed a development feasibility and capacity study of the railyards site, available on the Planning Department's website).

9 *How does the Plan propose to maintain the long-time character-building components of SoMa?*

The activity and variety of the South of Market are, and have always been, a major part of its attraction, and has spurred its transition from an industrial core to the diverse center it is today. A key goal of the Plan is to respect that rich context, character and community, and the Plan proposes numerous strategies to ensure any increases in development capacity are balanced with that goal. The Plan proposes ground floor retail requirements, restrictions on lot mergers, reduced heights, and building sculpting along alleys to protect the area's unique features. Its land use proposal avoids conflicts with existing open spaces, residential enclaves, and small-scale neighborhood commercial clusters by maintaining existing heights and zoning, or in some cases more restrictive heights and zoning, in those areas. Its height districts are structured to maintain the mid-rise character of the area, setting base heights according to the width of the area's streets and generally limiting high-rises to key locations. The Plan proposes to protect a number of new Landmarks, Significant Buildings, and Contributing Building

identified by Department staff through Article 10 and Article 11 designation, and to identify a number of other potential resources to be listed in the future in Articles 10 or 11 based on further research and discussion. Further the Plan proposes to expand the Transferrable Development Rights (TDR) program to incentivize protection of historic buildings, and proposes to develop FAR incentives for retention of existing buildings, whether designated historic or not.

The Plan proposal to institute restrictions on lot consolidation where the proposed zoning and height limits changes would create pressure for consolidation, by requiring a Conditional Use Authorization, has been a recent topic of discussion. To ensure that the Conditional Use evaluation has "teeth," the Planning Commission would be required to make affirmative finding that clarify the specific benefits of the project proposal, and why consolidation is necessary to achieve those benefits; and lot consolidation would not be permitted absent a development proposal that can be weighed against these criteria. The Planning Commission has previously heard support for lot merger restrictions, including public input that the restrictions be an outright prohibition. Staff continues to propose a more flexible approach through Conditional Use restrictions that include both quantitative and qualitative criteria to support community objectives, but supports continued discussion on this topic and will work with the public to flesh out this and other zoning issues over the coming months.

10 *Given our long-term need for employment and housing space, can higher heights along 5th Street and in other locations be encouraged within the Plan Area?*

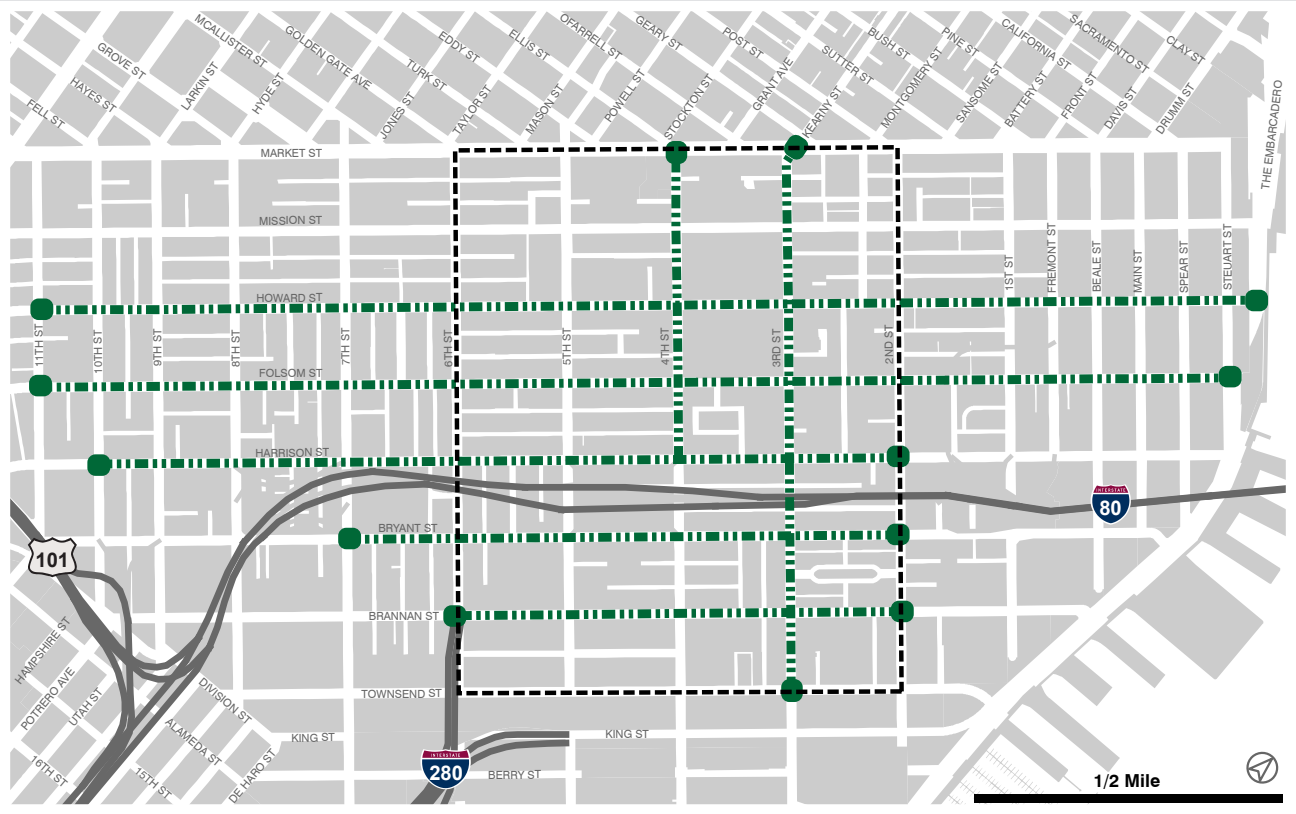
Given the amount of high-rise space recently enabled through the Transit Center District Plan and goals to build on and complement the character of SoMa, this Plan does not envision high rise development as a major component of the Central Corridor Plan. Rather, it promotes the kind of mid-rise development that is more in line with SoMa's current character and can also enable the large floorplate work spaces that are in high demand, yet difficult to find and secure, in central City locations.

In general, the mid-rise heights set by the plan provide for the same, and in some cases even more, density that would be provided with taller buildings. The large floorplates possible on large development sites, combined with heights ranging from 8 to 12 stories, enables a significant amount of density. Conversely, the combination of necessary bulk limitations, tower separation requirements for high rise buildings and the realities of designing elegant tall buildings that maximize light, air and views to both tenants and the neighborhood, limits the amount of incremental additional development possible with a tower prototype. For instance, on a 100,000 square foot site, a mid-rise building at 130 feet in height would yield more development space than two 200-foot towers constructed above an 85-foot base on the same site.

However, to enable the option for more high-rise buildings, the Plan does include a High Rise Alternative, which amplifies height limits in certain areas, expanding opportunities for buildings taller than 130 feet.

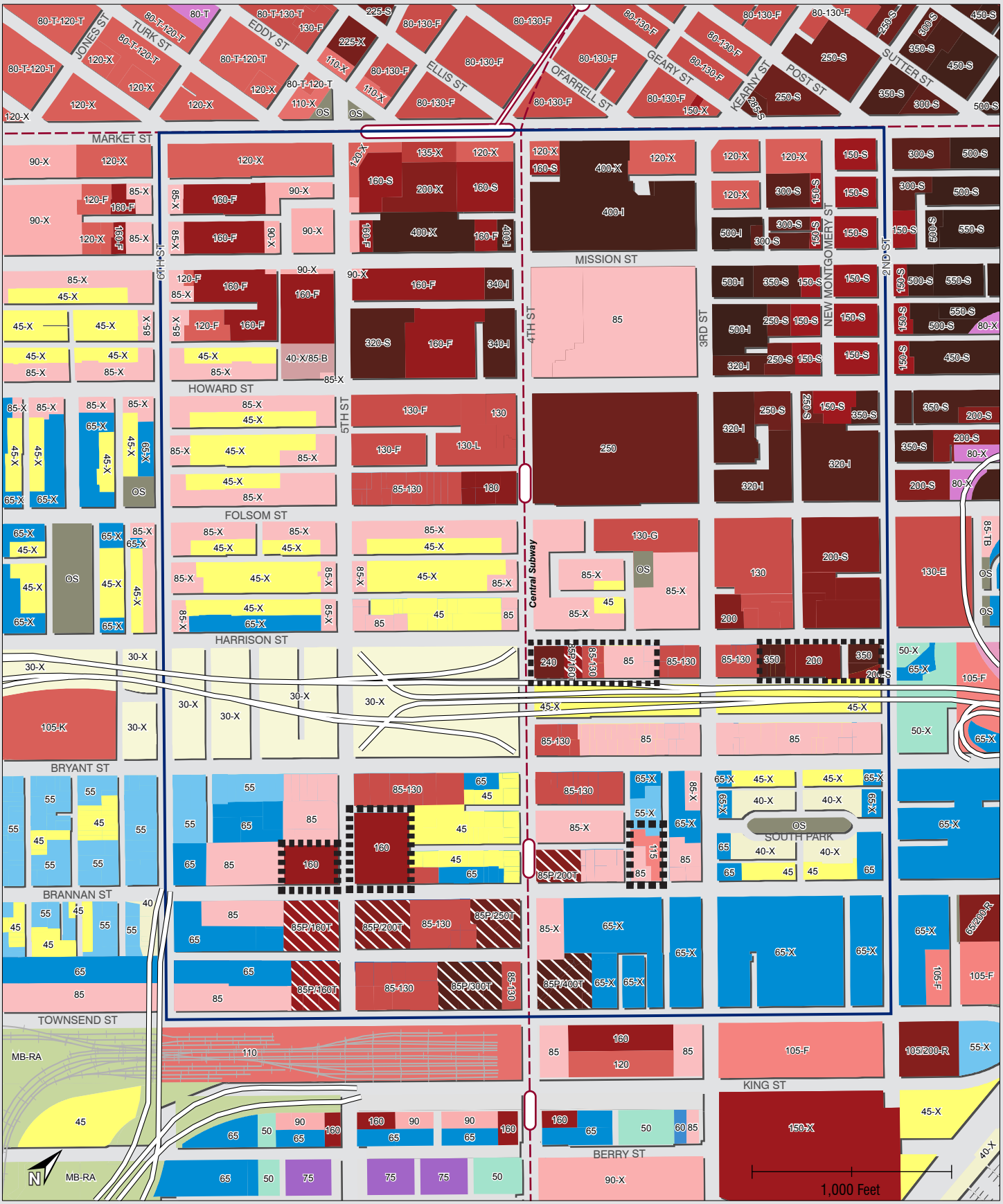
APPENDIX C

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS



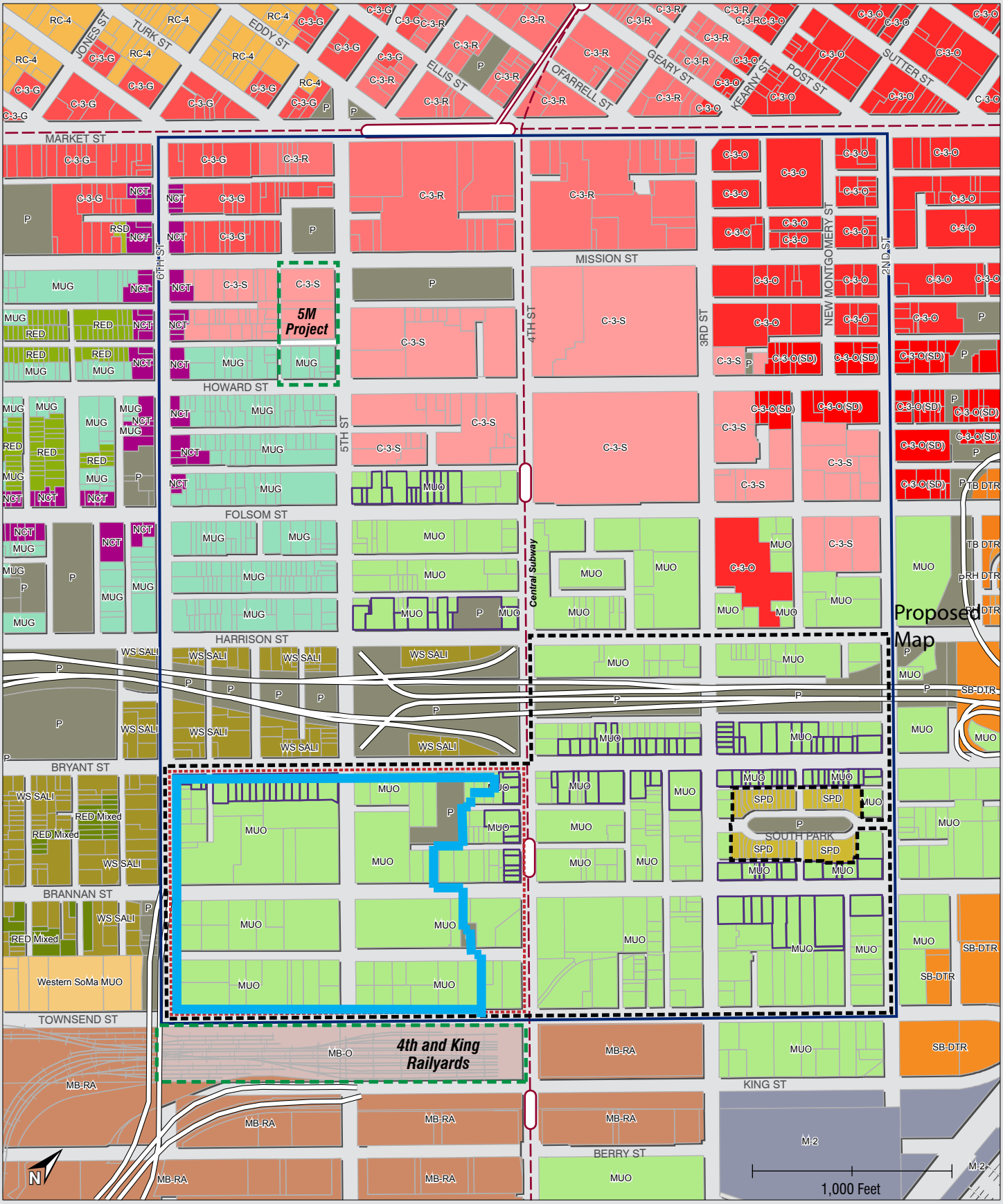
The draft Central Corridor Plan, as well as the streetscape changes proposed throughout the plan area, will be analyzed in a "program level" Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Central Corridor Plan identifies two height proposals for the Plan Area. The Environmental Impact Report will analyze three Alternatives at an equal level of detail: a No Project Alternative (Alternative A), the Plan's Preferred Height Alternative (Alternative B, as illustrated on page TBD), and the Plan's Higher Height Alternative, which includes consideration of height increases on certain sites as requested by individual developers of those sites (Alternative C, as illustrated on the next page). It should be noted that, due to these individual development considerations on certain sites, Alternative C differs slightly from the Higher Heights Alternative identified in the draft Plan (as illustrated on page TBD).

While the land use proposals are identical for each of the height alternatives, the EIR will also analyze a land use variant, which prohibits housing development within a roughly four-block area, for Alternatives B and C. The area of that variant is illustrated on page TBD.



ALTERNATIVE C: HIGHER HEIGHT LIMITS ALTERNATIVE INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Individual Development Considerations



Land Use Variant Area

PROPOSED ZONING INCLUDING LAND USE VARIANT AREA

APPENDIX D

RELATED DOCUMENTS

The Central Corridor process began with staff analysis of the area's characteristics and demands, and resulted in the production of two Department developed background papers, as well as one individually drafted report. All documents can be found on the project website at:

http://www.centralcorridor.sfplanning.org

Specific documents that can be found on the website include:

- ***Background Report (May 2011):*** A report produced by the Planning Department in May 2011 to examine important trends in the housing and the economy, as well as local conditions in the area.
- ***Public Realm Existing Conditions Report (October 2011)***: A report produced by the Planning Department examining existing conditions of streets, sidewalks and open spaces in the area, including a synthesis of comments and ideas from the public during the initial "Idea Gathering" phase from February through July 2011.
- ***Capitalizing on De-Industrialization to Sustainably Address the Demands of Growth & Modernization (January 2012)***: A report written by Steve Wertheim of the San Francisco Planning Department, based on his independent field work supported by the German Marshall Fund of the United States. This report looks at several European cities case studies, examines the strategies they employed in their de-industrializing urban cores, and discusses how they might be relevant to the Central Corridor.
- ***Sustainable Communities Index and the Central Corridor (April 2013):*** At the request of the Planning Department, the Department of Public Health conducted a Sustainable Communities Health Assessment of the Central Corridor Plan Area. The Assessment yielded a series of potential opportunity areas for improving neighborhood health, and this document describes how the Central Corridor Plan will assist in addressing these important health issues.

For information on related plans in the area, please see:

- Transit Center District Plan
  http://transitcenter.sfplanning.org
- Western SoMa Plan
  http://westernsoma.sfplanning.org
- Eastern Neighborhoods
  http://easternneighborhoods.sfplanning.org
- 4th and King Railyards Study
  http://railyards.sfplanning.org
- ENTRIPS Eastern Neighborhood Trips
  http://www.sfmta.com/cms/oentrips/indxentrips.htm
- Mission Bay Redevelopment Plan
  http://www.sfredevelopment.org/index.aspx?page=61
- SoMa Historic Resource Survey
  http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=2530

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