



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## Certificate of Determination EXEMPTION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

**Case No.:** 2013.1545E  
**Project Address:** 645 Harrison Street  
**Zoning:** SSO (Soma Service/Secondary/Office) Use District  
40-X Height and Bulk District  
**Block/Lot:** 3763/105  
**Lot Size:** 37,121 square feet  
**Plan Area:** Eastern Neighborhoods Area Plan (East SoMa)  
**Project Sponsor:** Ilene Dick, Farella, Braun, + Martel – (415) 954-4958  
**Staff Contact:** Chelsea Fordham – (415) 575-9071  
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### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The approximately 37,121-square-foot (sf) project site is located at the intersection of Harrison Street and Vassar Place, on a block bounded by 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to the east, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Hawthorne Streets to the west, and the Interstate 80 overhead freeway to the south, in the San Francisco's East South of Market (East SoMa) neighborhood. The project site is occupied by a 54-foot-tall, four-story, 146,779 -sf industrial Production, Repair, Distribution (PDR) building with two existing loading docks located off Vassar Place and one receiving dock.

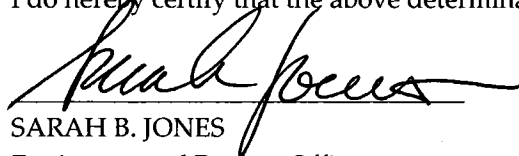
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### EXEMPT STATUS

Exempt per Section 15183 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and California Public Resources Code Section 21083.3

### DETERMINATION

I do hereby certify that the above determination has been made pursuant to State and Local requirements.

  
SARAH B. JONES  
Environmental Review Officer

November 25, 2015  
Date

cc: Ilene Dick, Project Sponsor  
Kimberly Durand, Current Planning Division  
Supervisor Jane Kim, District 6

Virna Byrd, M.D.F.  
Exemption/Exclusion File

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION (continued)

The proposed project would legalize 67,972 square feet of existing office use and result in the change of use and tenant improvements of an additional 30,992 square feet of office use. Additionally, 32,988 square feet of vacant PDR uses would be retained and occupied, and tenant improvements would be made to this space. Approximately 14,520-square-feet of the existing building is considered legal office use and would not be considered a change of use under the Planning Code.<sup>1</sup> This 14,520 sf of legal office use is currently vacant within the building and this space would be occupied as office use following project approvals. In total, the proposed project would result in the 645 Harrison Street building containing 113,484 square feet of office use and 32,988 square feet PDR use. Proposed tenant improvements associated with the proposed project would take place within the interior of the building and proposed exterior changes would include the installation of new air cooled refrigerant compressor units on the rooftop for heating and cooling. For purposes of environmental review, the proposed project is analyzing the change of use of 30,992 square feet of PDR to office uses, occupation of 32,988 sf of existing PDR space, and proposed tenant improvements throughout the entirety of the building.

## PROJECT APPROVAL

The proposed 645 Harrison Street project would require the following approvals:

### Actions by the Planning Commission

- Approval of office space allocation per Planning Code Section 321 (Office Development: Annual Limit).

### Actions by other City Departments

- Building Permit from the Department of Building Inspections (DBI) for proposed interior improvements.

The proposed project is subject to Planning Code Section 321, Office Allocation authorization from the Planning Commission, which is the Approval Action for the project. The Approval Action date establishes the start of the 30-day appeal period for this CEQA exemption determination pursuant to Section 31.04(h) of the San Francisco Administrative Code.

## COMMUNITY PLAN EXEMPTION OVERVIEW

California Public Resources Code Section 21083.3 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 provide an exemption from environmental review for projects that are consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plan or general plan policies for which an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific significant effects which are peculiar to the project or its site. Section 15183 specifies that examination of environmental effects shall be limited to those effects that: a) are peculiar to the project or parcel on which the project would be located; b) were not analyzed as significant effects in a prior EIR on the zoning action, general plan or community plan with which the project is consistent; c) are potentially significant off-site and cumulative impacts that were not discussed in the underlying EIR; or d) are

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of Determination, 645 Harrison Street, April 13, 2015.

previously identified in the EIR, but which, as a result of substantial new information that was not known at the time that the EIR was certified, are determined to have a more severe adverse impact than that discussed in the underlying EIR. Section 15183(c) specifies that if an impact is not peculiar to the parcel or to the proposed project, then an EIR need not be prepared for the project solely on the basis of that impact.

This determination evaluates the potential project-specific environmental effects of the 645 Harrison Street project described above, and incorporates by reference information contained in the Programmatic EIR for the Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Area Plans (PEIR)<sup>2</sup>. Project-specific studies were prepared for the proposed project to determine if the project would result in any significant environmental impacts that were not identified in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR.

After several years of analysis, community outreach, and public review, the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR was adopted in December 2008. The Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR was adopted in part to support housing development in some areas previously zoned to allow industrial uses, while preserving an adequate supply of space for existing and future production, distribution, and repair (PDR) employment and businesses.

The Planning Commission held public hearings to consider the various aspects of the proposed Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Area Plans and related Planning Code and Zoning Map amendments. On August 7, 2008, the Planning Commission certified the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR by Motion 17659 and adopted the Preferred Project for final recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.<sup>3,4</sup>

In December 2008, after further public hearings, the Board of Supervisors approved and the Mayor signed the Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Planning Code amendments. New zoning districts include districts that would permit PDR uses in combination with commercial uses; districts mixing residential and commercial uses and residential and PDR uses; and new residential-only districts. The districts replaced existing industrial, commercial, residential single-use, and mixed-use districts.

The Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR is a comprehensive programmatic document that presents an analysis of the environmental effects of implementation of the Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Area Plans, as well as the potential impacts under several proposed alternative scenarios. The Eastern Neighborhoods Draft EIR evaluated three rezoning alternatives, two community-proposed alternatives which focused largely on the Mission District, and a “No Project” alternative. The alternative selected, or the Preferred Project, represents a combination of Options B and C. The Planning Commission adopted the Preferred Project after fully considering the environmental effects of the Preferred Project and the various scenarios discussed in the PEIR. The Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR estimated that implementation of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan could result in approximately 7,400 to 9,900 net dwelling units and 3,200,000 to 6,600,000 square feet of net non-residential space (excluding PDR loss) built in the Plan Area throughout the lifetime of the Plan (year 2025).

A major issue of discussion in the Eastern Neighborhoods rezoning process was the degree to which existing industrially-zoned land would be rezoned to primarily residential and mixed-use districts, thus reducing the availability of land traditionally used for PDR employment and businesses. Among other

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<sup>2</sup> Planning Department Case No. 2004.0160E and State Clearinghouse No. 2005032048

<sup>3</sup> San Francisco Planning Department. Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Area Plans Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), Planning Department Case No. 2004.0160E, certified August 7, 2008. Available online at: <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=1893>, accessed August 17, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> San Francisco Planning Department. San Francisco Planning Commission Motion 17659, August 7, 2008. Available online at: <http://www.sf-planning.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=1268>, accessed August 17, 2012.

topics, the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR assesses the significance of the cumulative land use effects of the rezoning by analyzing its effects on the City's ability to meet its future PDR space needs as well as its ability to meet its housing needs as expressed in the City's General Plan.

The proposed project and its relation to PDR land supply and cumulative land use effects is discussed further in the Community Plan Exemption (CPE) Checklist, under Land Use. The 645 Harrison Street site, which is located in the East SoMa of the Eastern Neighborhoods, was designated as a site with building up to 40-X feet in height.

Individual projects that could occur in the future under the Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Area Plans will undergo project-level environmental evaluation to determine if they would result in further impacts specific to the development proposal, the site, and the time of development and to assess whether additional environmental review would be required. This determination concludes that the proposed project at 645 Harrison Street is consistent with and was encompassed within the analysis in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR, including the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR development projections. This determination also finds that the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR adequately anticipated and described the impacts of the proposed 645 Harrison Street project, and identified the mitigation measures applicable to the 645 Harrison Street project. The proposed project is also consistent with the zoning controls and the provisions of the Planning Code applicable to the project site.<sup>5,6</sup> Therefore, no further CEQA evaluation for the 645 Harrison Street project is required. In sum, the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR and this Certificate of Exemption for the proposed project comprise the full and complete CEQA evaluation necessary for the proposed project.

## PROJECT SETTING

The project is located within San Francisco's East SoMa neighborhood. The 37,121-sf project site is on a corner parcel with frontages on Harrison Street and Vassar Place, and is located within a SSO (Soma Service/Secondary/Office) use district and a 40-X height and bulk district. The project blocks of Harrison Street, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Hawthorne, and Folsom Streets on which the project site is bound, consists of retail, office, residential, surface parking, and low-scale, production, distribution, and repair (PDR) uses. On the project block, Harrison Street consist primarily two to eight-story office and industrial buildings, and surface parking lots. The surrounding area comprise the higher density Rincon Hill residential developments to the east, and low-scale, production, distribution, and repair (PDR) uses mixed with housing and small-scale retail to the west. South of the project site, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street contains the South Beach neighborhood with primarily office and retail uses, along with AT&T Park. Directly abutting the project site to the southern property line is the Interstate 80 overhead freeway.

## POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR included analyses of environmental issues including: land use; plans and policies; visual quality and urban design; population, housing, business activity, and employment

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<sup>5</sup> Adam Varat, San Francisco Planning Department, Community Plan Exemption Eligibility Determination, Citywide Planning and Policy Analysis, 645 Harrison Street, October 15, 2014. This document is available for review at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, as part of Case File No. 2013.1545E.

<sup>6</sup> Jeff Joslin, San Francisco Planning Department, Community Plan Exemption Eligibility Determination, Current Planning Analysis, 645 Harrison Street, November 25, 2015. This document is available for review at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, as part of Case File No. 2013.1545E.

(growth inducement); transportation; noise; air quality; parks, recreation and open space; shadow; archeological resources; historic architectural resources; hazards; and other issues not addressed in the previously issued initial study for the Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Area Plans. The proposed 645 Harrison Street project is in conformance with the height, use and density for the site described in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR and would represent a small part of the growth that was forecast for the Eastern Neighborhoods plan areas. Thus, the plan analyzed in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR considered the incremental impacts of the proposed 645 Harrison Street project. As a result, the proposed project would not result in any new or substantially more severe impacts than were identified in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR.

Significant and unavoidable impacts were identified in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR for the following topics: land use, historic architectural resources, transportation and circulation, and shadow. The proposed loss of 32,922 square feet of existing PDR uses represents a considerable contribution to the cumulative loss of PDR space analyzed in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR, but would not result in significant impacts that were not identified or a more severe adverse impact than analyzed in the PEIR.

The Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR identified feasible mitigation measures to address significant impacts related to noise, air quality, archeological resources, historical resources, hazardous materials, and transportation. **Table 1** below lists the mitigation measures identified in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR and states whether each measure would apply to the proposed project.

**Table 1 – Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation Measure	Applicability	Compliance
<b>F. Noise</b>		
F-1: Construction Noise (Pile Driving)	Not Applicable: project does not involve pile driving.	N/A
F-2: Construction Noise	Not Applicable: project does not involve pile driving and all work would take place within the interior of the building	N/A
F-3: Interior Noise Levels	Not Applicable: project does not involve noise-sensitive uses.	N/A
F-4: Siting of Noise-Sensitive Uses	Not Applicable: project does not involve noise-sensitive uses.	N/A
F-5: Siting of Noise-Generating Uses	Applicable : project would install new rooftop mechanical equipment in areas where noise levels exceed 60 dBA (Ldn). The requirements of this mitigation measure have been completed during the environmental review process through the preparation of a noise study.	Requirements satisfied by Project Sponsor with preparation of a Noise Study demonstrating compliance with the Noise Ordinance
F-6: Open Space in Noisy	Not Applicable: project does not	N/A

<b>Mitigation Measure</b>	<b>Applicability</b>	<b>Compliance</b>
Environments	involve noise-sensitive uses.	
<b>G. Air Quality</b>		
G-1: Construction Air Quality	Not Applicable: project would comply with the San Francisco Dust Control Ordinance	N/A
G-2: Air Quality for Sensitive Land Uses	Not Applicable: project is located within the Air Quality Pollutant Exposure Zone; however, the project would not require heavy-duty off-road diesel vehicles and equipment during construction.	N/A
G-3: Siting of Uses that Emit DPM	Not Applicable: proposed office uses are not uses that would emit substantial levels of DPM.	N/A
G-4: Siting of Uses that Emit other TACs	Not Applicable: proposed office uses are not uses that would emit substantial levels of other TACs.	N/A
<b>J. Archeological Resources</b>		
J-1: Properties with Previous Studies	Not Applicable: The project site is located in an area with previous archaeological studies. However, the project would not entail any subsurface excavation or ground disturbance. No further mitigation is required.	N/A
J-2: Properties with no Previous Studies	Not Applicable: project site is not located within an area with no previous archaeological studies.	N/A
J-3: Mission Dolores Archeological District	Not Applicable: project site is not located within the Mission Dolores Archeological District.	N/A
<b>K. Historical Resources</b>		
K-1: Interim Procedures for Permit Review in the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan Area	Not Applicable: plan-level mitigation completed by Planning Department	N/A
K-2: Amendments to Article 10 of the Planning Code Pertaining	Not Applicable: plan-level mitigation completed by Planning Commission	N/A

Mitigation Measure	Applicability	Compliance
to Vertical Additions in the South End Historic District (East SoMa)		
K-3: Amendments to Article 10 of the Planning Code Pertaining to Alterations and Infill Development in the Dogpatch Historic District (Central Waterfront)	Not Applicable: plan-level mitigation completed by Planning Commission	N/A
<b>L. Hazardous Materials</b>		
L-1: Hazardous Building Materials	Applicable: project involves tenant improvements to the interior of the building.	Project sponsor shall properly dispose of any equipment containing PCBs or mercury or other hazardous materials identified according to applicable federal, state and local laws.
<b>E. Transportation</b>		
E-1: Traffic Signal Installation	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA	N/A
E-2: Intelligent Traffic Management	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA	N/A
E-3: Enhanced Funding	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA & SFTA	N/A
E-4: Intelligent Traffic Management	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA & Planning Department	N/A
E-5: Enhanced Transit Funding	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA	N/A
E-6: Transit Corridor Improvements	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA	N/A
E-7: Transit Accessibility	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA	N/A
E-8: Muni Storage and Maintenance	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA	N/A
E-9: Rider Improvements	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA	N/A

Mitigation Measure	Applicability	Compliance
E-10: Transit Enhancement	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA	N/A
E-11: Transportation Demand Management	Not Applicable: plan level mitigation by SFMTA	N/A

Please see the attached Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the complete text of the applicable mitigation measures. With implementation of these mitigation measures the proposed project would not result in significant impacts beyond those analyzed in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR.

### PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT

A “Notification of Project Receiving Environmental Review” was mailed on May 13, 2015 to adjacent occupants and owners of properties within 300 feet of the project site. Three emails were received in regards to the environmental review notification. Overall, concerns and issues raised by the public in response to the notice were taken into consideration and incorporated in the environmental review as appropriate for CEQA analysis. Comments were received in regards to the following environmental topics; 1) commercial truck or vehicle trip volumes for the proposed office uses, including volumes during the PM peak hours; 2) development of a transportation demand management program; 3) questions in regards to if the proposed construction work would encroach onto the State Right of Way, requiring an encroachment permit that is issued by Caltrans. Additionally, several comments were received in regards to the project description including; 1) requirements under the Planning Code to legalize the existing office uses; and 2) the proposed project’s consistency with the Central SoMa Plan and the East SoMa area plan of the Eastern Neighborhoods Area Plan. The proposed project would not result in significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the issues identified by the public beyond those identified in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR.

### CONCLUSION

As summarized above and further discussed in the CPE Checklist<sup>7</sup>:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the development density established for the project site in the Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Area Plans;
2. The proposed project would not result in effects on the environment that are peculiar to the project or the project site that were not identified as significant effects in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR;
3. The proposed project would not result in potentially significant off-site or cumulative impacts that were not identified in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR;

<sup>7</sup> The CPE Checklist is available for review at the Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, in Case File No. 2013.1545E.



4. The proposed project would not result in significant effects, which, as a result of substantial new information that was not known at the time the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR was certified, would be more severe than were already analyzed and disclosed in the PEIR; and
5. The project sponsor will undertake feasible mitigation measures specified in the Eastern Neighborhoods PEIR to mitigate project-related significant impacts.

Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from further environmental review pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21083.3 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.