



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report And Notice of Public Scoping Meeting

Date: April 24, 2013
Case No.: 2011.1356E
Project Title: **Central Corridor Plan**
Zoning: Multiple Use and Height and Bulk Districts
Block/Lot: Multiple Blocks and Lots
Project Sponsor: Joshua Switzky, Project Manager
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Central Corridor Plan is a comprehensive plan for the southern portion of the Central Subway transit line, an extension of the Third Street light rail line, in the South of Market neighborhood (SoMa). The Plan area encompasses approximately 260 acres, and is bounded by Market Street to the north, Sixth Street to the west, Second Street to the east, and Townsend Street to the south. The project to be analyzed is the draft Central Corridor Plan published in April 2013, as well as street network changes throughout the Plan area, including specific designs within, and in some cases extending beyond, the Plan area for the following streets: Folsom, Howard, Harrison, Bryant, Brannan, Third, and Fourth streets. The Central Corridor Plan includes two height options for the Plan area. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will analyze the Plan's Mid-Rise Height Option (Option A), the Plan's High-Rise Height Option (Option B), and alternatives to these options as required by CEQA, including a No Project Alternative. In general, Option A would increase heights along Fourth, Harrison, and Bryant streets from 65 feet to 85 feet and allow for towers between 130 to 320 feet on certain sites mostly located south of Harrison Street. Height limits proposed under Option B would be similar to Option A, except that tower height limits for certain sites south of Harrison Street would increase from 130 feet to 160 feet and height limits on some other sites would increase to between 250 feet and 400 feet. The EIR will also analyze a land use variant that would prohibit residential uses in a four-block area bounded by Bryant, Townsend, Fourth and Sixth streets.

The Plan would result in new planning policies and controls for land use; urban form, including building height and design; street network and circulation modifications along with other public realm improvements; open space recommendations; historic preservation; and district sustainability. The Plan would allow for height limit increases in portions of the Plan area, and would result in a comprehensive plan and implementing mechanisms, including *General Plan*, *Planning Code* and Zoning Map amendments, as necessary. In addition, the Planning Department proposes changes to the street network that extend east and west beyond the Plan area boundaries; together with the Plan, these public realm improvements encompass the proposed project that will be analyzed in the EIR. (Refer to the separate Project Description for additional details of the proposed project and for a map of the project area.)

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The proposed project may result in significant environmental effects. An Initial Study and EIR will be prepared to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the project, including those that would be less than significant or less than significant with mitigation, and to identify potentially significant environmental issues. These documents will constitute a “program level” EIR for the Central Corridor Plan and will include a project level analysis of proposed street network changes such that these improvements may be considered for adoption based on the EIR. Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15168, a program EIR may be prepared for a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project, related, as in this case, geographically; as logical parts in a chain of contemplated actions; and in connection with the issuance of rules, regulations, plans and other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program.

The comments received during the public scoping process (described below) will be considered during preparation of the Initial Study and EIR. It is anticipated that the Initial Study will address environmental impacts related to land use and land use planning, population and housing, greenhouse gas emissions, recreation and open space, utilities and service systems, public services, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, hazards and hazardous materials, mineral and energy resources and agricultural and forest resources. Other environmental topics including aesthetics, cultural and paleontological resources, transportation and circulation, noise, air quality, and wind and shadow are anticipated to be addressed in the EIR. The environmental issues to be addressed in either the Initial Study or EIR are described briefly below.

Land Use and Land Use Planning

The topic of Land Use and Land Use Planning will describe existing land uses and analyze whether the proposed project would physically divide an established community or result in land use conflicts within the Plan area and vicinity as a result of proposed rezoning.

Aesthetics

The topic of Aesthetics will include analysis of the proposed project's potential impact on scenic vistas and resources, public views, visual character or quality, as well as potential adverse effects from light and glare.

Population and Housing

The topic of Population and Housing will include analysis of the proposed project's potential impact related to population, employment and housing.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

The topic of Cultural and Paleontological Resources will include analysis of the proposed project's potential impacts on historic architectural resources. In addition, this topic will include evaluation of potential impacts to both prehistoric and historic archaeological and paleontological resources. The analysis will also consider the effects to below-grade cultural and paleontological resources that could result from construction of the proposed street network changes.

Transportation and Circulation

The topic of Transportation and Circulation will include analysis of the proposed project's potential impact on public transit, circulation, and intersection operations, and will analyze the impact on pedestrian and bicycle conditions, emergency vehicle access and on-street loading. The EIR will also discuss short-term, construction-related transportation impacts resulting from the proposed street network improvements. The City and County of San Francisco does not consider parking supply as part of the permanent physical environment and, therefore, does not consider changes in parking conditions to be environmental impacts as defined by CEQA. However, any secondary environmental effects of the proposed project related to parking will be included in the analysis. For informational purposes, the EIR will present a parking analysis to inform the public and the decision-makers of any changes to parking conditions that could occur as a result of implementing the proposed project.

Noise

The topic of Noise will include analysis of noise compatibility standards for land uses, and discuss the long-term impacts of noise and groundborne vibration that could result from the proposed project. Short term construction-related noise impacts resulting from implementation of the street network changes will also be described.

Air Quality

The topic of Air Quality will include analysis of consistency of the proposed project with applicable air quality plans and standards, the potential for the proposed project to result in criteria air pollutants and other toxic air contaminants that may affect sensitive populations, as well as the potential for the project

to result in sources of odor. The air quality analysis will also include quantification of construction-related air pollutant emissions resulting from proposed street network changes.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The topic of Greenhouse Gas Emissions will include an analysis of the proposed project's consistency with the applicable Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan and the degree to which the proposed project's greenhouse gas emissions could result in a significant effect on the environment.

Wind and Shadow

The topic of Wind and Shadow will include an evaluation of the potential for the proposed project to result in wind and shadow impacts on nearby sidewalks, parks and open spaces, including those that are privately owned but publicly accessible, those under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Commission, and those owned by other public agencies.

Recreation

The topic of Recreation will include an analysis of whether the proposed project could adversely affect existing parks and open spaces and whether proposed open spaces could result in adverse effects on the environment.

Utilities and Service Systems

The topic of Utilities and Service Systems will include analysis of the adequacy of water and sewer infrastructure to provide both potable water and sewage treatment, and will discuss disposal of solid waste that may be generated by the proposed project. This topic will also include an assessment of whether the proposed project would require the construction of new water, wastewater treatment, and/or stormwater drainage facilities, and if so, whether that construction could result in adverse environmental effects.

Public Services

The topic of Public Services will include analysis of whether existing public services (e.g., schools, police and fire protection, etc.) would be affected by the proposed project. The analysis will determine whether project implementation would result in an inability of service providers to maintain adequate levels of service (e.g., fire and police response times), and/or a need for new or expanded facilities.

Biological Resources

The topic of Biological Resources will include analysis of any substantial adverse effect on important biological resources or habitats, such as trees or the movement of any native resident or migratory bird species. This topic will also include evaluation of whether the proposed project would conflict with any local polices or regional, state or federal conservation plans.

Geology and Soils

The topic of Geology and Soils will include an analysis related to the susceptibility of the Plan area to seismic activity, liquefaction, landslides, erosion, soil stability, and risks to life or property.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The topic of Hydrology and Water Quality will assess the potential for the proposed project to violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, effects to groundwater supplies, the degree to which the proposed project could affect drainage patterns or create water runoff that could affect stormwater drainage systems. This analysis will also analyze the potential of the project to result in housing within a flood hazard area.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This topic will analyze the potential for the proposed project to encounter hazardous material in soils or groundwater, emit or handle hazardous materials, or interfere with an emergency response plan. This analysis will also consider the potential for the street network changes to encounter hazardous materials including lead, other metals, and petroleum hydrocarbons.

Mineral and Energy Resources

The topic of Mineral and Energy Resources will include analysis of potential project impacts on existing mineral and energy resources.

Agricultural and Forest Resources

The topic of Agricultural and Forest Resources will include analysis of potential project impacts on existing agricultural and forest resources.

Other CEQA Issues

The Initial Study and EIR will analyze the Plan's Mid-Rise Height Option (Option A) and the High-Rise Height Option (Option B). The analysis will identify feasible mitigation measures intended to lessen or reduce significant environmental impacts of the proposed project. Pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will also analyze a range of alternatives that would reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts identified in the EIR as well as a No Project Alternative, as described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6.

Other topics required by CEQA, including growth-inducing impacts; significant unavoidable impacts, significant irreversible impacts; any known controversy associated with environmental effects, mitigation measures, or alternatives; and issues to be resolved by the decision-makers will also be addressed.

FINDING

This project may have a significant effect on the environment and an Environmental Impact Report is required. This determination is based upon the criteria of the State CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15063 (Initial Study), 15064 (Determining Significant Effect), and 15065 (Mandatory Findings of Significance), and for the reasons documented in the Environmental Evaluation (Initial Study) for the project, which is attached.

PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS

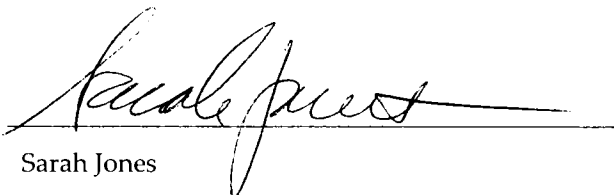
Pursuant to the State of California Public Resources Code Section 21083.9 and California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15206, a public scoping meeting will be held to receive oral comments concerning the scope of the EIR. The meeting will be held on **May 15, 2013** beginning at **6:00 p.m.** at The Mendelson House located at 737 Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA 94107. Written comments will also be accepted at this meeting and until 5:00 p.m. on **May 24, 2013**. Written comments should be sent to Sarah Jones, Acting Environmental Review Officer, San Francisco Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94103, or sent by email to Jessica Range, the CEQA Coordinator for this project, at jessica.range@sfgov.org.

Following the public review period for the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report, the Planning Department will prepare an Initial Study to appropriately focus the scope of the EIR. The Initial Study will be available for a 30-public review period. Following public review of the Initial Study, the Planning Department will then prepare an EIR addressing those topics for which the proposed project may result in potentially significant environmental impacts.

If you work for a responsible State agency, we need to know the views of your agency regarding the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR when considering a permit or other approval for this project. Please include the name of a contact person in your agency.

April 23, 2013

Date



Sarah Jones

Acting Director of Environmental Planning and
Acting Environmental Review Officer

Enclosures: Central Corridor Plan Project Description