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People, Land, and Profit in the South of Market: A Critical Analysis of the Central SoMa Plan

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**People, Land, and Profit in the South of Market:
A Critical Analysis of the Central SoMa Plan**

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the College of Arts & Sciences
University of San Francisco

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN URBAN AFFAIRS

by

David Woo

May, 2017

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Abstract

The South of Market neighborhood in San Francisco has undergone several transformations, especially since WWII, that have largely characterized the broader relationships among local city government, private interests, and the public in San Francisco. These transformations have included deindustrialization and the restructuring of the local economy after WWII, Urban Renewal, the intensification of office uses, and the first and second technology booms. City planning and the implementation of area plans (a type of city planning development tool) have also played a significant role in facilitating these changes. By historically situating the current moment in San Francisco, this research paper seeks to better understand the role of planning in facilitating these changes during this current moment of tremendous wealth in San Francisco, ushered in by a second technology boom. Specifically, this research paper seeks to critically analyze the neighborhood area plan, the Central SoMa Plan, and speculate on the possible impacts of the plan. Based on the history of development and change in the South of Market, and a review of existing area plans, the argument is made that the changes proposed in the Central SoMa Plan work to actively restructure the neighborhood in order to allow for high-end development at the expense of existing working class residents, low-income communities, and blue-collar jobs.

Introduction

As San Francisco undergoes a second technology boom, massive amounts of wealth from both inside the country as well as abroad are flooding the small, roughly seven by seven mile city. This capital is fueling the development of tech office towers and luxury condos, and luring wealthy technology companies and highly paid white-collar employees to the city. Further, as Silicon Valley plays host to some of the biggest names in tech, the valley's inability to provide housing for its employees, in addition to the attractiveness of San Francisco as a hub for culture and social life, has meant that San Francisco has become the bedroom community for Silicon Valley. This combination of forces has created a dynamic in which higher paying individuals and businesses are actively displacing existing residents, businesses, and community serving institutions.

This paper argues that the result of San Francisco's continued role as an important node for both national as well as international capitalism is the evisceration of existing communities, cultures, and peoples. Neoliberal city policies, such as the "Twitter tax break," have further worked to help sustain and promote these forces. In addition, as will be explored more in depth, urban planners have also played a key role in facilitating this dynamic. As waves of wealth consume the city, average working class people, disproportionately people of color, are being removed as higher-paying uses replace the existing community.

The research in this paper will contribute to a topic that gets little media or public attention: neighborhood development plans that have immense public, cultural, and community ramifications. Specifically, this paper will focus on the Central SoMa Plan, initiated in 2011 by the Planning Department and headed for likely adoption by the Board of Supervisors in 2017, to

situate the larger planning/growth debate in San Francisco. By critically analyzing the Central SoMa Plan, the importance of understanding such projects will become apparent; neighborhood plans are often ignored, yet they have the ability to foment significant change. Further, as other neighborhoods are planned for rezoning and development in San Francisco, this case study will provide a guide to understanding other neighborhood-wide development plans as well. The changes that are occurring in San Francisco are no accident. Current city development plans, as seen in the neighborhood area plan the Central SoMa Plan, prioritize high end office and housing development at the expense of existing blue-collar jobs, working class residents, and low-income communities.

This paper is structured as follows. First, a literature review provides an overview of the existing literature surrounding different types of development and planning as they relate to displacement and/or unequal development. This is followed by an explanation of the rationale for this paper as well as the data and methods used. Part one of the paper explores the social and economic history of the South of Market (from the late nineteenth century up to the present), and the South of Market's relation to downtown as well as larger social and economic trends in San Francisco. Part two discusses the role of urban planning, specifically focusing on area plans in San Francisco, and looks at three examples of existing area plans - The Downtown Plan, The Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, and the Western SoMa Community Plan. Part three critically analyzes the Central SoMa plan, offering a description, background, and critique of the plan. Part four looks at alternative visions of development, planning, and growth in cities by exploring Susan S. Fainstein's concept of the "just city." This is followed by an analytical reflection of a summer internship with a community organization in the South of Market as well as a set of policy recommendations surrounding planning, development, and growth in San Francisco.

Literature Review

This section gives an overview of the existing literature surrounding different types of development and planning as they relate to displacement and/or unequal development. This will help set the context for the rest of the paper and the discussion of current development plans in San Francisco as seen through the area plan the Central SoMa Plan. It will further set the foundation for which the paper will seek to build on in terms of adding to the existing literature.

Old Forms of Top-Down Planning and Development as Destructive and Negative

Past forms of top-down urban planning and development in the United States are often looked at as lessons to learn from in current planning debates. Specifically, the federal program of Urban Renewal is largely viewed as a negative and destructive top-down form of planning that led to widespread social disruption and displacement across the United States.

As Scott Greer describes, the United States federal government undertook the program of Urban Renewal to address what it described as “blighted” areas or “slums” in cities across the United States, demolishing low-cost housing through local powers of eminent domain in low-income communities.¹ Richard Walega details how at the height of Urban Renewal, the program was operating in 962 localities throughout the United States and costs ran into the billions.²

Focusing on the specific case of urban renewal in the Western Addition in San Francisco, Walega discusses how the A-1 and A-2 phases of urban renewal in this neighborhood sought to reverse the trends of perceived “blight” and “social degradation” by engaging in a “public

¹ Greer, Scott A. *Urban renewal and American cities: the dilemma of democratic intervention*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966, 3.

² Walega, Richard A. *The failure of federal influence: urban renewal and relocation in San Francisco, 1954-1972*. 1977, 1.

partnership with the private sector...to improve the neighborhood.”³ Walega continues, stating that redevelopment was meant to serve commercial, financial, and other corporate enterprises as well as meet the needs of young suburban professionals coming to the city for job opportunities by providing them with adequate land for housing.⁴

As Chester Hartman describes, the A-1 phase of urban renewal in the Western Addition, along with other projects like it around the country, had many in the United States re-naming the redevelopment and urban renewal process “Negro removal,” because so many displacees were African American (though the African American population did continue to grow in San Francisco during this period). Hartman continues stating that many of those displaced from the A-1 area in the Western Addition were relocated in the A-2 area, only to be displaced a second time as the A-2 phase of urban renewal proceeded to displace 13,500, mainly Black, residents.⁵ The author writes that “Even though neighborhood opposition to A-2 had resulted in the construction of several publicly assisted housing projects, there was a gap of many years before completed projects could provide housing for displaced residents, the number of replacement units did not come close to equaling the number torn down, and new rents were far higher than old rents.”⁶

The South of Market neighborhood in San Francisco was also targeted for urban renewal during this time period. As Hartman describes, certain areas in the South of Market were dubiously deemed “blighted” and the City sought to develop these areas as the Yerba Buena Center with a convention center to attract business, eventually destroying the existing housing in the area. The nearly 4,000 people living in the redevelopment area were mainly older, retired,

³ Ibid., 52.

⁴ Ibid., 54.

⁵ Hartman, Chester W. *City for sale : the transformation of San Francisco*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, 63-64.

⁶ Ibid., 63.

working class white men living in residential hotels. Residents organized against urban renewal and formed the group Tenants and Owners in Opposition to Redevelopment (TOOR), successfully fighting to have some replacement low-income senior housing built to offset the destruction of existing housing (though people were still displaced). TOOR eventually evolved into the affordable housing non-profit developer Tenants and Owners Development Corporation (TODCO), which is still in operation today. While initial plans for redevelopment in the South of Market were approved in 1966, the building of the Moscone convention center and later the Yerba Buena Gardens cultural/art facilities lasted several decades.⁷

The Growth Imperative and American Cities

The idea of growth is central to many of the planning and development debates currently occurring in cities. When analyzing proposals for growth within cities, it is crucial to ask: growth for who and growth for what? As Douglas Holtz-Eaken describes in a report for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, slow economic growth in the United States challenges both the future of the country as well as the American dream. As the report states:

we believe that every policy decision in today's debate can be - and must be - evaluated through a single prism: Will it accelerate growth and create jobs? And because global competitiveness and continuous innovation are so essential to any growth strategy in the 21st century economy, policymakers must also ask if the policies will enhance America's competitiveness and unleash innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship... America's future and standard of living are in jeopardy if our country does not adopt pro-growth economic policies.⁸

The report suggests that growth is not inevitable, but is instead a concrete policy choice that must be aggressively implemented. As Holtz-Eaken argues in the report, America must return to

⁷ Ibid., 13, 60-61, 69, 115, 213, 216-225.

⁸ Holtz-Eaken, Douglas. *The Growth Imperative: How Slow Growth Threatens Our Future and the American Dream*. Washington, DC:US Chamber Foundation, 2014, 1. Accessed April, 2017. <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/The%20Growth%20Imperative.pdf>

previous growth rates, creating jobs for the middle-class and pulling the U.S. away from debt. Such policy proposals include entitlement reform, (corporate) tax reform, (corporate) regulation reform, energy reform, and additional free trade agreements (all classic conservative goals). Such reform is said to benefit all Americans.⁹

As the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), a prominent urban think tank in San Francisco, describes, “SPUR works to channel the Bay Area’s growth into existing cities...These historic central cities...have the infrastructure in place to support continued growth.”¹⁰ As seen through SPUR, pro-growth ideology is inherent to their concept of how cities change through time. The focus is on accelerating and supporting “continued” growth. In another report by SPUR, the organization argues the need to expand (grow) San Francisco’s economic base, and challenges opponents writing:

Critics suggest that this approach to economic development ignores the economic challenges facing low-income residents or neighborhoods. They are wrong. The whole point of helping the economic base is to make sure that the city has a healthy economy to begin with. It is the spending by the economic base that creates the demand for the neighborhood-serving businesses that are the bulk of total employment. If there are no export-oriented firms that sell beyond the city, the economy will decline.¹¹

Thus the argument is made that everyone, regardless of income, will benefit from growth and new development.

New Forms of Planning and Development as Breaking with the Past

Often measuring against the past ills of Urban Renewal, new forms of urban planning and development in the United States have taken place, with some characterizing these new plans as

⁹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁰ *SPUR’s Agenda for Change in the San Francisco Bay Area*. San Francisco: San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association, 2016, 5. Accessed April, 2017. https://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/publications_pdfs/SPUR's_Agenda_for_Change_2016.pdf

¹¹ Terplan, Egon. *Organizing for Economic Growth: A New Approach to Business Attraction and Retention in San Francisco*. San Francisco: San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association, 2009, 7. Accessed April, 2017. http://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/migrated/anchors/SPUR_OrganizingforEconomicGrowth.pdf

positive and breaking with the past.

Richard Hu looks at transformations in planning and development in downtown San Francisco by analyzing the 1972 Urban Design Plan and the 1985 Downtown Plan (an area plan). Hu argues that these plans represented a paradigm shift in urban planning in San Francisco that moved away from the top-down process of urban renewal that was “minimally controlled” towards a responsive, interventionist, and balanced form of planning that guarantees a more equitable outcome, stating that the Downtown Plan has been successful in creating open space, preserving historical buildings, and building designs with better “urban form.”¹²

Further, Marcia Rosen and Wendy Sullivan discuss how in San Francisco as a result of the past harms of urban renewal, coupled with economic changes and rising housing costs, activists worked to ensure that new development and redevelopment plans took into account the housing needs of residents.¹³ As Rosen and Sullivan write, “By ensuring the creation and retention of a range of housing to serve diverse resident and community needs within the City, these forces have counteracted the detrimental effects of gentrification caused by market forces and have kept affordable community housing in the forefront of the City’s development and redevelopment decisions.”¹⁴ Rosen and Sullivan continue, detailing the Mission Bay project stating that:

[The Mission Bay project] has set the standard for affordable housing and public benefits in large scale development that has since been followed in the Hunters Point Shipyard, Treasure Island, and Transbay Plans. Approximately one-third of the housing units will be permanently affordable and contain housing for a diverse range of needs, and the new mixed-use neighborhoods will be equipped with child care, health and social services, as well as amenities such as neighborhood-serving retail, parks, libraries, and schools.¹⁵

¹² Hu, Richard. “Urban Design Plans for Downtown San Francisco: A Paradigm Shift?” *Journal of Urban Design* 18, no.4 (2013), 526, 529.

¹³ Rosen, Marcia, and Wendy Sullivan. *From Urban Renewal and Displacement to Economic Inclusion: San Francisco Affordable Housing Policy, 1978-2012*. San Francisco: National Housing Law Project, 2012, 1-2. Accessed April, 2017. <http://www.prrac.org/pdf/SanFranAffHsing.pdf>

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

As the authors further write, “By also ensuring that the needs of local residents are heard, San Francisco is demonstrating that the early urban renewal and displacement days are gone and have been replaced with a vision of creating the housing, jobs and services required to maintain and rebuild vibrant, diverse and thriving communities within the City.”¹⁶

David Habert, writing for SPUR, backs this claim describing how new redevelopment plans that are based in community needs are providing more positive examples of redevelopment. Habert writes, “As funding became less a matter between the federal government and the Redevelopment Agency, and more a matter of local priorities informed by the community, redevelopment became a far more sensitive, focused force.”¹⁷ Focusing on redevelopment projects at Mid-Market and Bayview Hunters Point that work to improve the area without displacement or gentrification, the author writes that “Concerned with holistic community revitalization, these projects represent a departure from past redevelopment projects.”¹⁸

In a similar vein, Amy Fauria and Shisher Mathur argue that redevelopment in Oakland California’s central business district in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s led to positive results such as increased property values as well as other successes in making the area more “vibrant.” As Fauria and Mathur write, “the redevelopment efforts undertaken during the period 2001–2006 have made observable progress in shifting the Central District from a business district to a more vibrant urban area that provides employment opportunities, a substantial number of renovated

¹⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹⁷ Habert, David, “Fifty Years of Redevelopment: Lessons for the Future,” SPUR. March 1, 1999. Accessed April, 2017. <http://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/1999-03-01/fifty-years-redevelopment>

¹⁸ Ibid.

historic amenities, as well as several new amenities.”¹⁹ The authors describe how this was initiated by the mayor’s 10K Plan whereby a plan was put in place to attract 10,000 new residents to the central business district into mostly market-rate housing.²⁰

New Forms of Planning and Development as Problematic

Other authors are more skeptical in their views and evaluations of new urban development plans. Derek Hyra discusses displacement due to new forms of redevelopment as both populations and capital flow back into cities in what has been termed the “back to the city movement” and the “new urban renewal.”^{21,22} Hyra discusses how the “new urban renewal” took place from 1992-2007 as the federal government invested billions of dollars in redeveloping public housing, replacing it with mixed-income housing – a process that led to the displacement of African Americans.²³ Mark Davidson touches on this topic by discussing “social mixing” policies, where the government actively promotes redevelopment projects that aim to deconcentrate poverty by attracting wealthier individuals into low-income communities to improve the area.²⁴

One the other hand, the type of new planning and development occurring in the U.S. has also been characterized as being profit-driven, versus driven by community needs. As Philips,

¹⁹ Fauria, Amy, and Shishir Mathur. "Impact of Targeted Redevelopment of Central Business District on Housing Prices in the Surrounding Neighborhoods: Evidence from Oakland, California." *Journal Of Urban Planning & Development* 138, no. 3 (2012), 246.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Hyra, Derek. "Conceptualizing the New Urban Renewal: Comparing the Past to the Present." *Urban Affairs Review* 48, no. 4 (2012). 498-527.

²² Hyra, Derek. "The back-to-the-city movement: Neighbourhood redevelopment and processes of political and cultural displacement." *Urban Studies* no.10 (2015). 1753.

²³ Hyra, "Conceptualizing the New Urban Renewal: Comparing the Past to the Present," 500.

²⁴ Davidson, Mark. "Spoiled Mixture: Where Does State-led 'Positive' Gentrification End?." *Urban Studies* no. 12 (2008). 2385.

Flores, and Henderson, writing for Causa Justa :: Just Cause, detail, the creation of neoliberal city development policies began in the 1970s and continues today in full force.²⁵ These profit-driven motives that worked to build up new economic bases and revenue streams in cities “rarely accounted for the needs and interests of existing residents.”²⁶ As Philips, Flores, and Henderson detail, one key feature of current neoliberal city development is reliance on the private sector to serve as the primary driver of economic growth and urban development, writing:

Most development in our cities reflects the priorities of private investors, corporate landlords, and large business interests. Whether it is a stadium project like the proposed Golden State Warriors waterfront stadium, a new campus for the biotech industry like Mission Bay, or hundreds of units of condos in downtown like Forest City, private interests dominate decisions about what gets developed, where, and when.²⁷

Further commenting on the current state of development plans in San Francisco, community planner Fernando Martí discusses the regionally adopted “Plan Bay Area” which calls for adding new housing units, jobs, people and cars into the Bay Area, including San Francisco, in the next thirty years to accommodate “growth,” all in the name of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Elaborating on these plans for San Francisco, Martí argues that under these plans, planning will be streamlined (undercutting zoning and environmental regulations to expedite building). Further, areas designated under the plan for redevelopment are primarily working class neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color, which Plan Bay Area has deemed “communities of concern” that are vulnerable to displacement due to new development.²⁸ Martí notes that Plan Bay Area does not address the issue of displacement of existing residents from existing communities writing:

²⁵ Philips, Dawn, Luis Flores, Jr., Jamila Henderson. *Development without displacement: resisting gentrification in the Bay Area*. Oakland: Causa Justa::Just Cause, 2013, 30-35. Accessed April, 2017. <https://cjjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/development-without-displacement.pdf>

²⁶ Ibid., 30.

²⁷ Ibid., 32-33.

²⁸ Martí, Fernando. *Whose Future?: ‘Smart Growth’ in San Francisco*. San Francisco: San Francisco Information Clearinghouse, 2013, 1-2. Accessed April, 2017. <http://www.sfccho.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Whose-Future-final.pdf>

By its own admission, Plan Bay Area will increase the risk of neighborhood disruption and displacement of existing residents and businesses, especially among the city's working class communities. The fact that the Plan readily acknowledges that the potential for “community disruption” and displacement will increase under the proposed Plan Bay Area scenario by 71% (from 21% displacement potential under its 2040 Baseline forecast to 36% displacement potential under Plan Bay Area) and yet offers no substantive or enforceable mitigations or solutions, is shocking.²⁹

Martí argues that the supply and demand basis for Plan Bay Area redevelopment is false, noting that it is based in neoliberal trickle-down economics.³⁰

Community Responses to Planning and Development

Urban development plans and projects in San Francisco, both past and present, have not occurred without responses from the community. Some have differing degrees of success in accomplishing their goals, yet community engagement with the planning process and resistance to developer-driven proposals have been common themes surrounding development in San Francisco.

Brahinsky shows that the way that urban renewal unfolded in Bayview Hunters Point was not a universal San Francisco experience, in terms of the degree of displacement. Describing the efforts of the “Big Five” organizers in Bayview Hunters Point who were all female, the author shows how this group worked to demand resources from the then shrinking redevelopment agency/Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in order to carry out community-directed redevelopment projects in Bayview Hunters Point. As the author shows, organizers fought to have new affordable housing built in an area known as Hunters Point Hill. While the massive displacement seen in the Fillmore did not occur here, some residents were still displaced, and the lack of economic development ultimately proved to be a huge drawback in the

²⁹ Ibid., 2.

³⁰ Ibid., 3-4.

redevelopment of the area.³¹

Another instance of community forces organizing to take control of urban renewal and the top-down process is shown by Eduardo Contreras, where organizing in the Mission District is shown to have led to different outcomes than were seen in the Western Addition and the Fillmore in the face of urban renewal. Contreras describes how Latinos and their allies organized the community and created a group called “Mission Council on Redevelopment” (MCOR) that sought to take direct local control of the urban renewal process, ultimately allying with white liberals to defeat the redevelopment proposal when full community control failed to materialize.³²

Again looking to organizing that took place in the Mission District, Brahinsky, Feldstein, and Chion look at how during the creation of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan in the early 2000’s, a neighborhood area plan for new development, activists and organizers in the Mission worked to implement community based planning goals within the plan during its development. Brahinsky et al. discuss how the Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition (MAC) based in the Mission successfully organized a community planning effort to work both in conjunction with and parallel to the Planning Department, where the group ultimately shifted the focus of the Planning Department to realize the issues regarding affordable housing, cultural values, and neighborhood assets.³³

Economic geographer David Harvey writes that in the United States there has been a backlash by urban social movements against “developers, who are backed by finance, corporate

³¹ Brahinsky, Rachel. “Race and the Making of Southeast San Francisco: Towards a Theory of Race-Class.” *Antipode* 46, no.5 (2013), 1265-1270.

³² Contreras, Eduardo. “Voice and Property: Latinos, White Conservatives, and Urban Renewal in 1960’s San Francisco.” *Western Historical Quarterly* 45, no.3 (2014), 253.

³³ Brahinsky, Rachel, Miriam Chion, and Lisa M. Feldstein. “Reflections on Community Planning in San Francisco.” *Spatial Justice* 5, (2013). Accessed April, 2017. <http://www.jssj.org/article/reflexions-sur-le-community-planning-a-san-francisco/>

capital and an increasingly entrepreneurially minded local state apparatus.”³⁴ It is in this context that Harvey argues for “the right to the city,” or the right to change ourselves by changing the city, something the author notes is one of the most precious yet neglected of our human rights.³⁵

Philips, Flores, and Henderson make the argument that in order for development to have different results than in the past, specifically in San Francisco and the Bay Area, “public agencies must support models of housing and community development that prioritize resident ownership and capacity-building over profit generation” while at the same time preventing harmful speculation.³⁶ They continue, stating that in order to prevent displacement of existing communities and residents, land use planning and development must not only involve input from affected community residents, but must also happen in partnership with them on a continual basis.³⁷

What has Been Left Out?

While there has been discussion surrounding the impacts of new forms of redevelopment plans and projects in San Francisco and the Bay Area (Rosen and Sullivan 2012, Habbert 1999, Fauria and Mathur 2012), the academic literature is lacking in research surrounding other forms of development occurring in San Francisco that are outside of the former redevelopment agency (redevelopment agencies were dissolved in California in 2012).

More specifically, with the exception of Brahinsky, Felstein, and Chion (2012) and Hu (2013), there is a lack of academic literature on the topic of neighborhood area plans in San

³⁴ Harvey, David. “The Right to the City.” *New Left Review* 53 (2008). Accessed April, 2017.

<https://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Philips, Flores, Henderson, *Development without displacement*, 80.

³⁷ Ibid.

Francisco. My research will seek to fill this gap in the literature by looking at the Central SoMa Plan as well as the larger growth debate happening in San Francisco surrounding planning and development.

Rationale for this Research Paper

This paper seeks to critically analyze and historically situate the Central SoMa Plan to help make sense of the meanings and implications of this effort by the city of San Francisco to alter who lives and works in the South of Market, and ultimately the larger city of San Francisco. In doing this, the paper seeks to make an argument about the potentials for displacement as a result of the changes made under the Central SoMa Plan, specifically of blue-collar jobs, working class residents, and low-income communities.

As San Francisco continues down a path of embracing the technology sector, while evictions and displacement continue unabated, this is essential to understand. Though it is a relatively un-examined plan that only looks at one neighborhood, the Central SoMa Plan raises many core questions facing the city and planners alike: Who or what is San Francisco planning for, and what is the future envisioned by city officials and planners?

Data and Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis is used in this research paper. Qualitative data analysis included looking at neighborhood area plans and reports and finding themes and indications of intent. When it comes to the Central SoMa Plan especially, this allowed for speculation on the potential impacts of the Plan. Quantitative data was drawn from City commissioned studies, census data, and other existing data studies from other relevant organizations. Methods included interviews, a deep literature review, and historical analysis. These methods were used to help speculate about possible impacts of the Central SoMa Plan.

Part 1: Social and Economic History of the South of Market and Relation to Downtown

This section will provide a social and economic history of the South of Market, as well as other relevant social and economic trends in San Francisco and the downtown core as they relate to the South of Market. First, the period roughly from the first inhabitants of the area through the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the South of Market will be discussed. This is followed by a history of the WWII and post-WWII period in San Francisco where the city underwent an economic restructuring. Then the period of urban renewal in the South of Market is discussed, followed by a discussion of the highrise expansion in the 1960's, 70's, and 80's, which coincided with an anti-highrise movement and the passage of Proposition M in 1986. Then the changing nature of work and the shift towards an "hourglass economy" in San Francisco will be discussed, concluding with a discussion of the first and second technology booms centered around the South of Market.

Original Inhabitants and the late 19th/early 20th Century South of Market

The South of Market neighborhood is located in the north-eastern portion of San Francisco, generally bounded by Market Street, the San Francisco Bay, and Highway 101 (see Fig. 1). The area has traditionally been home to different waves of working class immigrants and has historically been an industrial and blue-collar area.

The original inhabitants of areas near the South of Market, probably closer to the Bay, were people from the Yelamu tribal territory of the Ohlone. The original ecological makeup of the area, now known as South of Market, was largely sand dunes, marshlands, and water.

Spanish conquest of San Francisco, which marked the beginning of the decimation of the local Ohlone population due to colonization, eventually gave way to more permanent Mexican settlement following Mexican independence from Spain.³⁸

While there was less activity in the South of Market Area during the periods of Spanish and Mexican occupation, the seizure of California by the United States government in 1848 (via the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo) following the Mexican-American War combined with the discovery of gold in California (and later silver in Nevada) caused a population explosion in San Francisco and the South of Market. What followed was the increased development of industry (shipping, warehousing, manufacturing, and iron and steel working) and housing in the South of Market, the former largely due to the location's proximity to the Bay (location for trade) and the large street pattern that existed. Smaller scale commercial development also occurred closer to Market Street in the later 19th century, as well as the development of wholesalers and service industries.³⁹

In the second half of the 19th century, Irish immigrants became the dominant group living in the South of Market, along with mainly other European groups. It was also during this time that infrastructure development occurred to expand the area, including the levelling of sand dunes, filling of creeks and marshes, creation of streets, and the development of bridges and rail service. Following the 1906 earthquake, which largely levelled the South of Market, the area's industrial uses came to dominant reconstruction, with commercial and residential (including many residential hotels) uses also being reconstructed. During this period, the population of the area greatly declined, and those that remained were largely white American-born single males,

³⁸ *Historic Context Statement: South of Market Area San Francisco, California*. San Francisco: Page and Turnbull, Inc., 2009, 13-14. Accessed March, 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/372-SOMA_Historic_Context_Statement_06-30-2009.pdf

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 18-39, 42.

with some foreign-born Europeans, as well as enclaves of Greek and Japanese immigrants and later Filipino immigrants (who continue to have a presence in the South of Market and constitute one of the largest ethnic minorities in the area).⁴⁰ Two “main stems” that grew up after the earthquake in the South of Market included 3rd Street and Howard Street. On 3rd Street, many men would come to gamble in the saloons, and the Howard Street area came to be known as “the slave market” because of the “extraordinary exploitation and suffering that migratory and unskilled workers were subject to.”⁴¹ The area was still largely working class, as was especially evident in the historic 1934 Waterfront Strike of the longshoremen.^{42,43} Up until WWII and especially following the general strike, there were high rates of unionization amongst the city’s (mainly white) workers, with, as one example, nearly 100% of the city’s restaurant’s being unionized in San Francisco by the beginning of WWII.⁴⁴ The late 19th/early 20th century period in the South of Market was marked by a reserve of skilled and unskilled workers, hotels, lodging houses, saloons, pawnshops, secondhand stores, employment agencies, poolrooms, movie theaters, barber colleges, missions, and the headquarters of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).⁴⁵ As described by Rebecca Solnit:

It was a rough neighborhood, but it well served the old and infirm workingmen who could live there on savings, small pensions, and Social Security...Many of these men - and they were mostly men, though some women lived there as well - had worked on the waterfront in earlier decades. Some of them still bore the stamp of the radical politics and great labor battles of the 1930s and earlier.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.21, 33, 52-60.

⁴¹ Hartman, Chester W. *Yerba Buena: Land Grab and Community Resistance in San Francisco*. San Francisco: Glide Publications, 1974, 95.

⁴² Hartman, *City for sale*, 58.

⁴³ Carlsson, Chris. “The Progress Club: 1934 and Class Memory.” In *Reclaiming San Francisco: History Politics and Culture*, edited by James Brook, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998, 69-71.

⁴⁴ Carlsson, Chris. “The Smell of Ten Thousand Gallons of Mayonnaise and a Hundred Tons of Coffee.” In *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas*, edited by Rebecca Solnit. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010, 82.

⁴⁵ Hartman, *City for sale*, 56-58.

⁴⁶ Solnit, Rebecca. “Piled Up, Scraped Away.” In *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas*, edited by Rebecca Solnit. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010, 89.

WWII, Post WWII, and the Economic Restructuring of San Francisco and the Bay Area

WWII brought major migration to the Bay Area as people came to work in the war industry. Migration to the South of Market included African Americans, some Latinos, white Dust Bowl migrants, and larger numbers of Filipinos.⁴⁷ By 1960, the area was 75% white, 14% Black, and 9% Asian.⁴⁸ WWII also brought massive investment and development (especially from the federal government and especially in California). This spurred economic growth and set up the West to emerge from the war as an “economic pace-setter for the nation.”⁴⁹ In San Francisco, the post-WWII deindustrialization of the city was part of a larger regional restructuring of the Bay Area economy. In this regional economic restructuring, shipping moved to Oakland, heavy industry moved to the north and the East Bay, high-tech industries grew around universities and military bases, and San Francisco was imagined as the corporate headquarters of the region.⁵⁰ As described by Chris Carlsson:

What began as an effort to circumvent organized workers in San Francisco by regionalizing the local economy became a model for the globalization that has swept the world in the past quarter-century. San Francisco has been an important test site for our society’s most advanced techniques for improving and extending the control of capitalism.⁵¹

Richard DeLeon expands on this economic restructuring of San Francisco and the Bay Area writing:

Those who conceptualized the progrowth regime envisaged downtown San Francisco as the Bay Area’s commercial, financial, and administrative headquarters linking the United States to an emerging transpacific urban community that included Singapore, Seoul, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and other cities of the

⁴⁷ *Historic Context Statement: South of Market Area San Francisco, California*, 66.

⁴⁸ Groth, Paul. *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, 152.

⁴⁹ Nash, Gerald D. *The American West transformed: the impact of the second world war*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985, 17.

⁵⁰ Carlsson, “The Progress Club: 1934 and Class Memory,” 76.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

Far East. This ambition to make San Francisco a “world class” city and a gateway to the Pacific Rim dates back to wartime planning studies in the early 1940s.⁵²

In the South of Market following the war, the area still remained largely working class and single men, and the area remained affordable to live in; however, this reality was quickly challenged by larger forces in San Francisco and the region that sought to reimagine the city and the Bay Area.⁵³ Such regional planning and related efforts in the Bay Area were first experienced through the coordination and implementation of wartime spending and development in the Bay Area. During WWII, the Metropolitan Defense Committee (MDC) was set up as the Bay Area’s first regional planning agency, “composed of political appointees and influential citizens, mainly businessmen...[and] established a working model for later, more sophisticated modes of regional coordination and planning.”⁵⁴ The MDC led to the creation of the Bay Regional Council in 1944 which changed its name to the Bay Area Council (BAC) in 1945.⁵⁵ The BAC is “a private regional government whose purpose is to coordinate and plan functions especially important to the efficient conduct of business throughout the entire Bay Area.”⁵⁶ The BAC worked to regionally designate various parts of the region for specific economic activities. As Hartman writes:

Thus, the East Bay is the locus for heavier industry, chemicals, and petroleum and also serves as the regional transportation hub. The peninsula and South Bay are areas for light manufacturing, electronics, and the aerospace industry. Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Mateo Counties support recent secondary office development. San Francisco is the center for administration, finance, consulting, and entertainment.⁵⁷

The creation of a complex freeway system (beginning in the 1950’s) in the Bay Area and the construction of the Bay Area Rapid Transit system (BART - a direct BAC product, drawn up by

⁵² DeLeon, Richard E. *Left Coast City: Progressive Politics in San Francisco, 1975-1991*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992, 41.

⁵³ Hartman, *City for Sale*, 59-60.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

the Bechtel Corporation, and built in the 1960's) were also an integral part of this restructuring (especially BART), positioning San Francisco in the middle of it all.^{58,59}

Describing this period and the resulting post-WWII “progrowth regime,” DeLeon writes, “The city’s top business and political leaders invented the progrowth regime to transform San Francisco into a growth machine. The city’s function would be to provide the physical and social means of capitalist production and accumulation within a global division of labor.”⁶⁰ The changes produced by these forces would prove to be lasting and provoked major opposition from many of the city’s residents, neighborhoods, and communities.

Urban Renewal

Part of this regional restructuring also included the use of redevelopment, a program being implemented in cities across the United States following the war. One of the most well documented and well-known phases of urban planning in the United States came in the form of urban renewal where by specific communities that were deemed blighted were targeted for demolition and redevelopment across the United States. Here in San Francisco, two of the most infamous cases of urban renewal, though not the only cases, occurred in the Western Addition and the South of Market. Marked by the demolition of housing units and small businesses, and the massive displacement of majority low-income residents and residents of color, urban renewal in San Francisco came to be seen as a destructive force by many in the targeted communities. In the wake of such concerted efforts by the City of San Francisco to remove low-income residents

⁵⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁹ Walker, Richard. “An Appetite For the City.” In *Reclaiming San Francisco: History Politics and Culture*, edited by James Brook, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters, 1-21. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998, 3-4.

⁶⁰ DeLeon, *Left Coast City*, 40.

and residents of color from the City, community groups sprung up to challenge and oppose the top-down process of urban renewal. Using their voices, their bodies, the courts, and the ballot box, sustained efforts were made, though with varying degrees of success, to prevent any further demolition and displacement of existing communities in the Western Addition and South of Market.

The story of Urban Renewal continues to play an important symbolic role in planning and urban development in San Francisco. Often judged as a classic case of destructive top-down urban planning that does not take into account the concerns and needs of community residents, new rounds of urban development in San Francisco many times use this as a talking point to prove that new types of urban development are the exact opposite - inclusive and beneficial to all members of the community.⁶¹ For both its historic and symbolic roles, it is important to analyze and understand what led to the process of urban renewal and what its lasting effects were. With a clear understanding of the motives and outcomes of urban renewal, specifically looking at the case in the South of Market, better sense can be made of what exactly happened and how or if things have changed today for urban development and planning processes in San Francisco.

The process of urban renewal in the South of Market and subsequent redevelopment spanned several decades and several mayors. The process was never clear and straightforward - the redevelopment areas and projects were continually subject to change, and there was sustained community resistance to the various planning processes and plan projects. Chester Hartman gives a thorough overview of redevelopment in the South of Market in his book *City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco*. As he describes, the larger impetus for redevelopment of the South of Market was the ultimate expansion of the downtown financial district into the more

⁶¹ Habert, David, "Fifty Years of Redevelopment: Lessons for the Future," SPUR. March 1, 1999. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/1999-03-01/fifty-years-redevelopment>.

industrial South of Market. As discussed earlier, in the post-WWII period, San Francisco worked to re-imagine itself as the economic and financial headquarters of the Western Pacific Rim. With corporate interests such as Bank of America, Standard Oil of California, Pacific Gas and Electric, Bechtel, and others leading the way, local organizations were created and the local government was brought into the fold as concrete on the ground committees and bodies were needed and necessary to carry out the actual functions of this economic restructuring. Some of the most important groups created in this process included the BAC, the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee (a more covert body composed of BAC members), and the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR - a direct product of the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee), later changing the “renewal” to “research.” SPUR’s role was to provide and drum-up open support for urban renewal in San Francisco and carry out many of the functions of the corporate interests at the local level, specifically in terms of organizing and planning the early phases of the redevelopment process in the South of Market in conjunction with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA).⁶²

When SPUR was initially conceived, it received direct funding from various corporations, many of whose directors sat on the board of SPUR. SPUR took immediate aim at the South of Market for redevelopment, and in 1960 the mayor of San Francisco, George Christopher, designated SPUR as the City’s “Citizens’ Advisory Committee.” This committee was required under federal urban renewal law, and the body, acting as a citizen’s group, subsequently gave its approval for redevelopment in the South of Market and the mayor moved to request that the SFRA undertake urban renewal in the South of Market. Plans for redevelopment in the South of Market grew out of an earlier failed attempt by a wealthy businessman, Benjamin Swig, to clear and redevelop the South of Market into a commercial

⁶² Hartman, *City for Sale*, 1-12.

zone proposed to contain a convention center, sports stadium, high-rise offices, a parking lot, a transportation terminal, a hotel, an auditorium and theater, and a large shopping center.⁶³

Portions of Swig's plan were ultimately revived by the SFRA, and a plan was implemented to redevelop the area into a convention-sports-office center. In addition to a massive budget, large staff, and federal powers of eminent domain, the SFRA also had general autonomy from City Hall and acted largely as an independent body. While urban renewal in the South of Market went through various phases of planning and development, the process ultimately led to the demolition and displacement of housing units, businesses, and residents. Many of the housing units lost were part of the city's affordable housing stock, and the businesses displaced had served the residents of the area who were primarily low-income and working class seniors. The most sustained response to urban renewal in the South of Market came from the community group Tenants and Owners in Opposition to Redevelopment (TOOR) who challenged the legality of the forced removal of residents (done without securing replacement housing). Through their opposition, TOOR won some replacement housing developments that have remained as permanent affordable low-income senior housing in the South of Market, and the legacy of the group survives today as the non-profit housing developer Tenants and Owners Development Corporation (TODCO).⁶⁴

What ultimately resulted from the redevelopment of the South of Market was the construction of the Moscone convention center (later expanded), Yerba Buena Gardens, Center for the Arts, and Children's Center (built with pressure from community activists to make the space more creative and publicly accessible), the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the

⁶³ Ibid., 11-12.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 14-16, 60-62, 68-69, 216.

Metreon entertainment center.^{65,66} The sites surrounding the redevelopment area were developed into new hotels, offices, apartments, condos, some more cultural facilities and some affordable housing. Further, the majority of office construction continued through the 1970's in the South of Market, especially in the area directly across from the financial district to the east of the Yerba Buena redevelopment zone.⁶⁷ As Hartman writes,

San Francisco's development history in the post-World War II period has been overwhelmingly dominated by business interests, by those in the position to reap the largest profits from this development. They have by and large controlled and peopled the city's government at all levels. They have established their own planning and watchdog mechanisms and agencies, and funded others, to ensure the kind of future they want...it is a confluence of powerful public- and private-sector actors operating in their class and personal interests.⁶⁸

Highrise Expansion, the Anti-highrise Movement, and 1986 Proposition M

The necessary components for the skyscraper emerged from the mines years before the Hallidie Building [the world's first glass-sheathed curtain-wall building and an eight-story prototype for postwar skyscrapers] or its taller neighbors in the financial district appeared...Ventilators, high-speed safety elevators, the early use of electric lighting and telephones, all were demanded and paid for by the prodigious output and prospects of the hydraulic mines of California and the hardrock mines of the Comstock Lode...As office buildings climbed higher, they produced for their owners profits in ground rents comparable to or exceeding those extracted from their mines - and far more lasting. Such buildings were among the choicest legacies that mining magnates passed on to their children. In doing so, they assured their families dynastic security and power.⁶⁹

- Gray Brechin, from the section "Financial Districts as Inverted Minescapes"

As redevelopment unfolded in the South of Market, other populations began inhabiting the still affordable housing that was located there. During the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's the area saw an influx of artists, activists, non-profit groups, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities including many LGBTQ oriented businesses (bars, bathhouses,

⁶⁵ Ibid., 213-214.

⁶⁶ *Historic Context Statement: South of Market Area San Francisco, California*, 69.

⁶⁷ Hartman, *City for Sale*, 155, 214.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 392-393.

⁶⁹ Brechin, Gray. *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, 66-67.

dance clubs). A gay leather community was also established in the South of Market, whose history is still evident through the Folsom Street Fair that happens every year.⁷⁰

This time period also saw the most intense boom in office construction in San Francisco up to that point in history. Between 1965 - 1981, San Francisco doubled its amount of office space reaching 55 million square feet, the majority of it located downtown and in the South of Market.⁷¹ As Alvin Duskin writes:

So San Francisco was going to become the headquarters city for the western states and for the Pacific. Winning that meant giving up what San Francisco was - a city of people who lived here, who raised their children here and who spent a lot of time playing, eating, walking, living in the city. And winning at headquarters city of the Pacific meant - because San Francisco is so much smaller in land area than New York - building an even more concentrated city: the Ultimate Highrise.⁷²

For several decades up until 1959, there was only one major high-rise office tower constructed in San Francisco - the Crown Zellerbach building on Market Street completed in 1959.⁷³ That would change as highrises began dotting the downtown financial district. Bruce Brugmann describes the forces behind the highrise boom in San Francisco, writing:

It wasn't the invisible hand of Adam Smith at work that tossed skyscrapers into San Francisco like Lincoln logs. It was a concentrated panoply of land and development forces and their power bloc of Bay Area Council/Chamber of Commerce/SPUR/Downtown Association that successfully promoted the key elements of big development policy: BART to bring commuters in and out, the Downtown Zoning Plan of 1967/the Urban Design Plan of 1971 to grease the way for more and more skyscrapers, highrise Redevelopment that started and then fueled the highrise boom in downtown San Francisco in the early and mid-1960s...The crucial point is that the forces making San Francisco the Wall Street of the West have worked hand in hand for years with City Hall.⁷⁴

Hartman describes the 1968 downtown zoning study (above quoted as the "Downtown Zoning Plan of 1967"), the 1971 urban design plan, and the 1972 establishment of height limit districts in the city as "at the time, a modicum of order regarding disorderly high-rise development" that

⁷⁰ *Historic Context Statement: South of Market Area San Francisco, California*, 72-73.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁷² Duskin, Alvin. "Foreword." In *The Ultimate Highrise: San Francisco's Mad Rush Toward the Sky...*, edited by Bruce Brugmann and Greggar Sletteland. San Francisco: The San Francisco Bay Guardian, 1971, 11.

⁷³ Hartman, *City for Sale*, 289.

⁷⁴ Brugmann, Bruce. "Politics of Highrise." In *The Ultimate Highrise: San Francisco's Mad Rush Toward the Sky...*, edited by Bruce Brugmann and Greggar Sletteland. San Francisco: The San Francisco Bay Guardian, 1971, 64.

activists still saw as in need of outside influence to prevent the “Manhattanization” of San Francisco.⁷⁵

Prior to 1968, downtown San Francisco had minimal zoning controls with no limits on height, bulk, or use.⁷⁶ The 1968 downtown zoning ordinance created four downtown use districts that “generously permitted, as of right, nearly all commercial uses, including office towers of almost limitless height and bulk, throughout the downtown area.”⁷⁷ Reflecting on the height and bulk controls of the 1971 urban design plan, Vettel writes “the height and bulk controls have had their urban design impact in residential neighborhoods [by respecting the scale of the neighborhood]...[they have not] adequately protected the central office district environment...structures too large to be integrated successfully into the city’s fiber have been approved under the ordinance.”⁷⁸

The explosion in downtown development drew waves of community activism in opposition to what was characterized as the Manhattanization of San Francisco. The anti-highrise movement grew out of activism from the Marina, Telegraph Hill, and Haight-Ashbury where residents were involved in stopping continued freeway construction and expansion that was planned for almost every part of the city. Attempts in the 1960’s and early 1970’s included architectural preservationists and environmentalists who fought the design and poor location of highrises. This was followed by attempts by Alvin Duskin to impose height limits on new developments, as well as several other attempts by organizers at the ballot box to limit height, bulk, and development, eventually culminating in the successful passage of Proposition M in

⁷⁵ Hartman, *City for Sale*, 294.

⁷⁶ Vettel, Steven L. “San Francisco’s Downtown Plan: Environmental and Urban Design Values in Central Business District Regulation.” *Ecology Law Quarterly* 12, no.3 (1985), 517.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 522-523.

1986 which most significantly limited the construction of new office space in San Francisco to 950,000 square feet annually (allowing roll-over into following years).⁷⁹

Also reacting to the rapid construction of highrises, the progressive newspaper *The San Francisco Bay Guardian* published the book *The Ultimate Highrise: San Francisco's Mad Rush Toward the Sky...* in 1971, which provided "The world's first comprehensive study of the true costs of skyscrapers, done by a special Guardian task force scouring every San Francisco neighborhood and every city department for every piece of evidence."⁸⁰ In analyzing the impacts of highrises on San Francisco, based on original research, the authors describe how:

The supposed economic benefits of skyscrapers have long been virtually a matter of faith to architects, politicians, businessmen and skyscraper owners. Their argument for viewing San Francisco simply as a choice piece of real estate to be exploited for private gain runs, in brief, something like this: As we build more, the city enjoys increased revenues (from property taxes on new buildings), lower taxes for residents, more jobs, and therefore less crime in the streets, less welfare, etc. What we came up with will not sit well with the Aliotos [Joseph Alioto was the mayor at the time] and Shoresteins [Walter Shorestein was a real estate developer]: 1) Far from "subsidizing" the municipal budget, as claimed by real estate interests, the downtown highrise district in 1970 actually contributed \$5 million *less* than it cost. 2) Property tax payments from the downtown, instead of providing relief for homeowners through assessments on expensive new highrises, actually *declined* by 16% as a proportion of the city total over the decade of the skyscraper boom. 3) Head-spinning growth in downtown land values "rippled out" to all San Francisco neighborhoods, causing assessment increases as high as 380% and leading, in many cases, to destruction of a neighborhood's original character. 4) Changing patterns of land-use and other highrise-related phenomena drove 100,000 middle-income San Franciscans to the suburbs and mauled the city's delicate demographic balance. 5) Highrises not only failed to provide new white collar jobs for San Franciscans, but caused the loss of 14,000 blue collar jobs. 6) Highrises were the prime villains in tripling the city's welfare costs over the decade. 7) Transportation facilities to service skyscrapers cost taxpayers a staggering \$5 *billion* over a ten-year period. 8) Police costs for protecting the downtown highrise district averaged at least ten times the cost for protecting the rest of the city. 9) Highrises caused vast amounts of air and water pollution which will cost the city close to \$1 *billion* to clean up.⁸¹

The above excerpt is worth quoting at length because it contains key questions and provides concrete answers based on data surrounding what the impacts of highrises are on the existing city. As shown above, in the beginning of the 1970's, highrises were actually a financial drain on the city in several different ways, and highrises had a "ripple out" effect where housing prices

⁷⁹ Hartman, *City for Sale*, 293-294, 303-304.

⁸⁰ Brugmann, Bruce and Greggar Sletteland. *The Ultimate Highrise: San Francisco's Mad Rush Towards the Sky...* San Francisco: The San Francisco Bay Guardian, 1971, 1.

⁸¹ Sletteland, Greggar. "Economics of Highrise." In *The Ultimate Highrise: San Francisco's Mad Rush Towards the Sky...*, edited by Bruce Brugmann and Greggar Sletteland. San Francisco: The San Francisco Bay Guardian, 1971, 31-32.

and rents increased.⁸² Further, during this time, the jobs produced in the highrises did not go to existing residents, and blue-collar jobs were actually lost.

The unprecedented downtown building explosion and the concerted community response that took place during the 1960's, 70's, and 80's led to the eventual passage by the city of the 1984 Downtown Plan.⁸³ As described by the Plan itself, it represented a shift in office construction across Market Street into part of the South of Market.⁸⁴ As Hartman writes:

the plan really did not limit office growth in San Francisco, but merely shifted it to the South of Market area...Under the plan, by the year 2000 there would have been 24 million square feet of new office space built (primarily in the South of Market area), housing 100,000 additional workers...the Plan did far too little to provide for the housing and transportation needs such growth would generate...What the Planning Commission approves are buildings to be soon built, whose impacts are soon felt; mitigation measures are more in the nature of a wish list.⁸⁵

As a result of community activism, however, other areas surrounding the downtown, as part of the plan, were rezoned (the Tenderloin, Chinatown, North Beach, and part of the South of Market below and west of Yerba Buena Center) shortly after the plan's passage to restrict commercial development and protect housing, neighborhood serving businesses, and neighborhood character.^{86,87,88,89} The 1988 rezoning of the portion of the South of Market described above, as illustrated in the 1988 South of Market Area Plan, sought to:

Protect and facilitate the expansion of industrial, artisan, home and business service, and neighborhood-serving retail and community service activities. Protect existing economic, social and cultural diversity. Preserve existing housing and encourage the development of new, affordable housing. Preserve existing amenities and improve neighborhood livability for South of Market residents, workers and visitors.⁹⁰

⁸² Ibid., 46.

⁸³ Vettel, "San Francisco's Downtown Plan," 39.

⁸⁴ *25 Years: Downtown Plan Monitoring Report 1985 - 2009*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2011, 1. Accessed on March, 2017. http://default.sfplanning.org/Citywide/25-Years_Downtown-Plan-Monitoring-Report-1985-2009.pdf

⁸⁵ Hartman, *City for Sale*, 297-298.

⁸⁶ Macris, Dean. "San Francisco's Downtown Plan." SPUR. August 1, 1999. Accessed April, 2017. <http://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/1999-08-01/san-franciscos-downtown-plan>

⁸⁷ *25 Years: Downtown Plan Monitoring Report 1985 - 2009*, 16.

⁸⁸ Robinson, Tony. "Gentrification and Grassroots Resistance in San Francisco's Tenderloin." *Urban Affairs Review* 30, no.4 (1995), 497-500.

⁸⁹ Rosen and Sullivan, *From Urban Renewal and Displacement to Economic Inclusion*, 25-26.

⁹⁰ *South of Market Plan: Proposal for Adoption*. San Francisco: San Francisco Department of City Planning, 1988, II.10.3. Accessed April, 2017. <https://archive.org/stream/southofmarketpla1988sanf#page/2/mode/2up>

To achieve these goals, the area was rezoned to largely restrict office development (and in some areas housing), with height limits put in place.⁹¹

An economic downturn, both regionally and nationally, slowed office construction from the mid-1980's through the 1990's, with "the savings and loans crisis, the state's real estate recession, and resultant high financial district vacancy rates stop[ping] the city's building boom."⁹² The progrowth regime established after WWII effectively collapsed due to a combination of changes in the national economy, opposition from activists, and the eventual passage of Proposition M.⁹³ The first dotcom boom that occurred in the late 1990's, however, brought about a new round of development and changes to the city, especially in the South of Market.

Shifting Job Types and the The First Dotcom Boom

Artists...are just bit-players in a major transformation of cities. Those who really orchestrate urban development have another agenda altogether. Neil Smith and Peter Williams summed it up in 1986: 'The direction of change is toward a new central city dominated by middle-class residential areas, a concentration of professional, administrative, and managerial employment, the upmarket recreation and entertainment facilities that cater to this population (as well as to tourists) ... The moment of the present restructuring is toward a more peripheralized working class, in geographical terms.' This is the context behind multimedia replacing meatpacking in the South of Market.⁹⁴

- Rebecca Solnit, *Hollow City*

The period of the 1970' and 1980's in San Francisco marked a shift away from industry towards a new "hourglass economy," marked by high paid professional and managerial work and

⁹¹ Ibid., II.10.7, II.10.18.

⁹² Hartman, *City for Sale*, 304.

⁹³ DeLeon, *Left Coast City*, 41.

⁹⁴ Solnit, Rebecca. *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*. New York: Verso, 2000, 20.

low paid service sector work.⁹⁵ In San Francisco, as industry work declined, office work was growing, “propelled by new technologies in banking, office automation, database systems, and new communications technologies.”⁹⁶ The economic downturn of the mid 1980’s marked another shift in employment types as the city lost major corporate interests in the late 1990’s/early 2000’s that were headquartered there, such as Bank of America, the Transamerica Corporation, and Chevron.⁹⁷ This period also saw a marked increase in office vacancy rates, going from 1-2% in 1982 to 14% by the end of the decade - this vacancy rate only rebounded with the onset of the dotcom boom, reaching 2% by 2000.⁹⁸

Prior to the first dotcom boom, the city began the process of looking to turn mid-market into a Redevelopment Area in order to “bring about social, economic, and physical regeneration of the whole area,” which included part of the South of Market near Market Street.⁹⁹ Starting in 1995, the city along with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency set about creating a plan for the Redevelopment of Mid-Market. This plan specifically focused on improving the neighborhood by “adding more housing (including significant affordable housing), retaining non-profit office space, retaining existing social service agencies, investing in public improvements to the streetscape, and reinforcing the area as a theater district,” with the plan eventually calling for 32% affordable housing.^{100,101} This plan would have departed from

⁹⁵ DeLeon, *Left Coast City*, 19.

⁹⁶ Drew, Jesse. “San Francisco Labor in the 1970’s.” In *Ten Years That Shook the City: San Francisco 1968 - 1978*, edited by Chris Carlsson. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2011, 269.

⁹⁷ Raine, George. “Ending an era, Chevron abandons S.F. headquarters / Exodus to San Ramon complete.” *SF Gate*, September 6, 2001. Accessed on March 28, 2016. <http://www.sfgate.com/realestate/article/Ending-an-era-Chevron-abandons-S-F-headquarters-2881586.php>

⁹⁸ *Downtown San Francisco: Market Demand, Growth Projections and Capacity Analysis*. San Francisco: Seifel Consulting, 2008, III-1. Accessed March, 2017. www.sf-planning.org/ftp/CDG/docs/transit_center/R_TransitCenter_051308_Final.pdf

⁹⁹ Gladstone, Brett. “Mid-Market Street Redevelopment District: A plan for incremental change.” SPUR. January 16, 2002. Accessed April, 2017. <http://www.spur.org/publications/spur-report/2002-01-16/mid-market-street-redevelopment-district>

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

existing zoning, which “foresaw developing Mid-Market into an extension of the downtown office zone.”¹⁰² While the plan was finalized and ready to pass in 2005, it died in committee when it went to the Board of Supervisors.¹⁰³ The subject of regenerating Mid-Market was later revisited by the city, but it took a different form and came after two successive dotcom booms.

The first expansion in the tech economy, long-brewing in Silicon Valley, arrived in San Francisco in the late 1990’s, bringing in some 500-700 internet-related companies and an estimated 55,000 new jobs, located mainly in the South of Market and Mission neighborhoods.¹⁰⁴ The boom also brought with it a dramatic increase in office and housing construction. The boom would add 10 million square feet of new office space, and saw the explosion of live/work loft construction in the South of Market.^{105,106} As the internet and the use of computers rapidly expanded, including online retailing, enormous sums of money began being invested in internet related companies in San Francisco and the Bay Area, creating a dotcom bubble that began to build in 1995 and continued to grow until it popped in 2001.¹⁰⁷ The result of the dotcom boom included increased rents, both commercial and residential, and increased displacement. These realities and the on the ground responses to the first dotcom boom are captured in Rebecca

¹⁰¹ Hedin, Mark. “The return of Mid-Market redevelopment: PAC reconvenes - dusts off plan in limbo 5 years.” *Central City Extra*, May, 2010, 8. Accessed April, 2017. <http://studycenter.org/test/cce/issues/100/ccx.100-cALL.pdf>

¹⁰² Gladstone, “Mid-Market Street Redevelopment.”

¹⁰³ Hedin, “The return of Mid-Market redevelopment,” 8.

¹⁰⁴ Hartman, *City for Sale*, 305.

¹⁰⁵ Walker, Richard. “Boom and Bombshell: New Economy Bubble and the Bay Area.” Originally written for “The Changing Economic Geography of Globalization,” edited by Giovanna Vertova, Routledge, 2005, as appears on FoundSF. Accessed on March, 2017.

http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Boom_and_Bombshell:_New_Economy_Bubble_and_the_Bay_Area

¹⁰⁶ Wetzel, Tom. “San Francisco’s Space Wars 2001.” Originally published in *Processed World* #2.001, Summer 2001, as appears on FoundSF. Accessed on March, 2017.

http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=San_Francisco%27s_Space_Wars_2001

¹⁰⁷ Geier, Ben. “What Did We Learn From the Dotcom Stock Bubble of 2000?” *Time*, March 12, 2015. Accessed March 2017. <http://time.com/3741681/2000-dotcom-stock-bust/>

Solnit's book *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*, where Solnit writes:

New businesses are coming in at a hectic pace, and they in turn generate new boutiques, restaurants and bars that displace earlier businesses, particularly nonprofits, and the new industry's workers have been outbidding for rentals and buying houses out from under tenants at a breakneck pace...Evictions have skyrocketed to make way for the new workers and profiteers of the new industries; at last estimate there were seven official evictions a day in San Francisco, and 70 percent of those evicted leave the city.¹⁰⁸

The dotcom boom saw the rise of evictions under the state Ellis Act (allowing a landlord to go out of the landlord business and evict all existing tenants) which continue to this day. In 1995 there were 14 apartments that received Ellis Act evictions and by 1999 that number had reached 664.¹⁰⁹

Many of the internet companies coming to San Francisco during this time set up shop in the South of Market, especially in the South Park area that came to be known as "Multimedia Gulch."¹¹⁰ Other serious problems began to arise from the dotcom boom in the South of Market, including illegal and unenforced conversions of industrial space to office use, lack of payment of linkage fees due to the vagueness of the legal definition of many of these companies as "non-office," and the development of the "live-work lofts" building explosion.¹¹¹

In terms of demographic changes in the South of Market, from 1980 - 2000 the African American and Latino populations stayed relatively steady (around 14% and 10% respectively), while the Asian Pacific Islander population slightly declined (from 30% to 27%) and the white population increased (from 41% to 44%). In 2000, 83% of the South of Market population were renters. In 2000, both the adult and senior poverty rates in the South of Market were more than double the rate in San Francisco, the median household income was \$6,000 less than the city

¹⁰⁸ Solnit, *Hollow City*, 14-15.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, Heather. "Dwellers and Drifters in the Shaky City." In *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas*, edited by Rebecca Solnit. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010, 120.

¹¹⁰ Raine, George. "Making sense of Multimedia Gulch," *SFGate*, October 31, 1999. Accessed on March, 2017. <http://www.sfgate.com/business/article/Making-sense-of-Multimedia-Gulch-3060560.php>

¹¹¹ Hartman, *City for Sale*, 306, 334-336.

median, and the per capita income was \$1,000 higher than the city's, highlighting the income disparity that exists within the neighborhood (with per capita income maps from 2000 showing a wealthier population in the eastern half of SoMa and a lower-income population in the western half of SoMa).¹¹²

As the dotcom boom came to sudden halt in 2001, rents and housing prices momentarily cooled down. But less than a decade later the technology sector would come back with a vengeance to San Francisco and the Bay Area.

The Second Technology Boom up to the Present

During the 1990's and 2000's, as San Francisco lost large corporate actors, job types shifted from larger to smaller employers and the financial district saw a decline in employment. This shift coincided with rising employment and jobs in the South of Market area, with from 1987 - 2008 the financial district losing around 40,000 jobs (mainly in office) and the South of Market gaining around 40,000 jobs (in cultural, institutional, educational, and office activities).¹¹³

As the dotcom boom came to an end in the early 2000's (followed by the September 11th attack in New York), San Francisco's economy and housing market slumped briefly before a real estate boom (experienced globally) saw housing prices rise again. During this time, many industrial buildings in the South of Market (some of which had just been converted to commercial use) were being converted to residential uses. The Planning Department also began

¹¹² *South of Market Neighborhood Profile: Demographics, Land Use, and Population San Francisco 2004*. San Francisco: Urban Solutions, 2004, 16, 23-24, 26. Accessed on March, 2017. <http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/7182-SoMaFullReport.pdf.pdf>

¹¹³ *25 Years: Downtown Plan Monitoring Report*, 31, 34.

implementing plans to develop new housing in Rincon Hill and adjoining areas, in the form of new highrise luxury condominium towers (several of which have been completed).¹¹⁴

Following the economic crash of 2008, housing construction dropped dramatically in San Francisco, housing prices dropped by 30%, and the city's economy was largely stagnant until 2012.^{115,116} The second technology boom started to pick up around 2010 in San Francisco, with 21,000 tech jobs added between 2010 - 2013 (close to half of all private sector jobs added during this time).¹¹⁷ In 2015, San Francisco had about 70,000 tech jobs with an average salary of \$175,000.¹¹⁸

City government has also actively courted technology companies to the city, as seen in the Twitter tax break, which exempted companies from payroll taxes if they located in the Mid-Market area.¹¹⁹ This tax break targeted the Mid-Market area (previously discussed as a possible Redevelopment Area) and looked almost exclusively to technology companies to "revitalize" the area. Passed in 2011 and adopted in 2012, the legislation has worked to attract technology companies and condo developers, all in the name of economic development. This is in sharp contrast to the proposed 2005 Mid-Market Redevelopment plan which sought to regenerate the area by focusing on the arts and increased affordable housing - not tech and market-rate condos.

¹¹⁴ *Historic Context Statement: South of Market Area San Francisco, California*, 76-77.

¹¹⁵ Shaw, Randy. "Is SF's Economic Boom Over?" *Beyond Chron*, January 21, 2016. Accessed on March, 2017. <http://www.beyondchron.org/31185-2/>

¹¹⁶ Wiley, Celia and Peter Wiley. "Boom and Bust and What Comes Next." *The Journal of California* 4, no.2 (2014), 108.

¹¹⁷ Mandel, Michael. *San Francisco and the Tech/Info Boom: Making the Transition to a Balanced and Growing Economy*. Washington D.C.: South Mountain Economics, 2014, 5-7. Accessed on March, 2017. https://data.bloomberglp.com/company/sites/2/2014/04/SouthMountainEconomics_SF_TechInfo_Boom.pdf

¹¹⁸ *Tech employment trends: Continuing to lead the pack*. San Francisco: JLL, 2016, 4. Accessed on March, 2017. http://img04.en25.com/Web/JLLAmericas/%7B20974a6a-2319-4659-be2f-4c443ae4cffe%7D_Tech_employment_trends_-_JLL_2016.pdf

¹¹⁹ Lang, Marissa. "Companies avoid \$34 million in city taxes thanks to 'Twitter tax break'" *SFGate*, October 19, 2015. Accessed on March, 2017. <http://www.sfgate.com/business/article/Companies-avoid-34M-in-city-taxes-thanks-to-6578396.php>

The technology boom has seen a rise in both residential and commercial construction. From a low of less than 500 new residential units constructed in 2011, San Francisco has seen a rapid increase in new housing production, reaching a high of close to 3,500 new units constructed in 2014.¹²⁰ In 2015, there were 12.5 million square feet of new office projects seeking approval, and in 2016 there was about 5 million square feet of office space under construction.^{121,122} The majority of new residential development has occurred in the eastern half of the city, including the South of Market.^{123,124} Nearly all of the recently completed, under construction, and proposed office buildings are located in the South of Market.^{125,126}

The second technology boom in San Francisco has brought tremendous amounts of capital to the city, resulting in increased rents, housing prices, and general cost of living, with in 2016 the median rent for a 1-bedroom apartment being \$3,590 and the median housing price being \$1.1 million (compared to around \$660,000 in 2012).^{127,128} This influx of capital has also meant increased evictions and displacement, with the number of evictions increasing every year since 2010.¹²⁹ Evictions in San Francisco are at the highest point in over a decade, with nearly

¹²⁰ *2015 San Francisco Housing Inventory*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2016, 6. Accessed March, 2017. http://default.sfplanning.org/publications_reports/2015_Housing_Inventory_Final_Web.pdf

¹²¹ Carlsen, Robert. "San Francisco Office Development Backlog Reaches 10MM Square Feet." *The Registry*, May 28, 2015. Accessed on March, 2017. <http://news.theregistrysf.com/san-francisco-office-development-backlog-reaches-10mm-square-feet/>

¹²² Dineen, J.K. "Building boom resumes in S.F. as tech firms crave office space." *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 11, 2016. Accessed on March, 2017. <http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Building-boom-resumes-in-S-F-as-tech-firms-crave-9135598.php>

¹²³ *2015 San Francisco Housing Inventory*, 36.

¹²⁴ *2014 San Francisco Housing Inventory*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2015, 12. Accessed March, 2017. http://www.sf-planning.org/ftp/files/publications_reports/2014_Housing_Inventory.pdf

¹²⁵ Carlsen, "San Francisco Office Development Backlog Reaches 10MM Square Feet."

¹²⁶ Dineen, "Building boom resumes in S.F. as tech firms crave office space."

¹²⁷ Truong, Kevin. "The sky may not be the limit for S.F. rents as prices flatten." *Biz Journals*, June 28, 2016. Accessed on March, 2017. <http://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/blog/real-estate/2016/06/san-francisco-rental-market-map.html>

¹²⁸ Chew, Jonathan. "How a Billboard Exposed the Insanity of the San Francisco Housing Market." *Fortune*, April 9, 2016. Accessed March, 2017. <http://fortune.com/2016/04/09/billboard-summit800-san-francisco-housing/>

¹²⁹ *San Francisco's Eviction Crisis 2015*. San Francisco: San Francisco Anti-Displacement Coalition, 2015, 4. Accessed on March, 2017. <http://www.antievictionmappingproject.net/EvictionSurge.pdf>

2,400 evictions filed in 2016 (though the actual number is higher due to unreported evictions).^{130,131} It was also found that between 2011 - 2013, 69% of no-fault evictions occurred within four blocks of a tech shuttle bus stop.¹³² The technology boom has also seen a sharp increase in income inequality in San Francisco, with in 2015 San Francisco reaching the spot of second most unequal city in the United States in terms of income disparity.¹³³

During the period of 2010 - 2015, San Francisco experienced a huge inversion of population based on race and class - during this period the city saw a direct reversal and decline in low-income people of color (specifically African Americans and Latinos) and an increase in higher-income mainly white populations (in addition to an increase in the Asian population).¹³⁴ Looking at American Community Survey data from 2010 and 2015 through Social Explorer (an online mapping tool), during this five year period in the South of Market there was decline in the African American population and a sharp increase in per-capita incomes (the largest increase seen in the eastern half of the South of Market was from \$88,000 to \$114,000 during this time) (see Figs. 2, 3, 4, 5). The data further shows that there is still a large population of adults living in poverty in the western portion of the South of Market (See Figs. 6, 7).¹³⁵

¹³⁰ *Annual Eviction Report 2016*. San Francisco: Residential Rent and Stabilization and Arbitration Board, 2016, 1. Accessed on March, 2017. <http://sfrb.org/sites/default/files/Document/Statistics/2016%20AnnualEvctRpt.pdf>

¹³¹ *San Francisco's Eviction Crisis 2015*, 4.

¹³² "Tech Bus Stops and No-Fault Evictions." Anti-Eviction Mapping Project. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.antievictionmappingproject.net/techbusevictions.html>

¹³³ Ascarelli, Silva. "San Francisco is the Richest, but Atlanta is the Most Unequal." *Market Watch*, March 20, 2015. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/san-francisco-is-richest-but-atlanta-is-the-most-unequal-2015-03-20>

¹³⁴ Cohen, Peter, Fernando Marti, and Max Arnell. "Who is moving into - and out of - SF?" *48Hills*, October 17, 2016. Accessed March, 2017. <http://48hills.org/2016/10/17/who-is-moving-into-and-out-of-sf/>

¹³⁵ African American Population Map, 2010. Per-capita Income Map, 2010. African American Population Map, 2015. Per-capita Income Map, 2015. Adults Living in Poverty Map, 2015. Social Explorer, (based on data from U.S. Census Bureau; accessed on March 31, 2017).

Part I: Conclusion

This section offered a brief social and economic history of the South of Market, up to present time. While the South of Market historically has been a working class and blue-collar neighborhood, changes, especially since the post-WWII period, have attempted to restructure the area in the image of a financial and business center - large office buildings, a convention center, and largely high-end housing. More recently, the first and especially the second technology booms have given new life to development forces that went dormant in the 1980's. This has worked to fuel a new round of high end development (primarily in offices and housing) in the South of Market. Recently, demographic trends in San Francisco have indicated that low-income people of color have been exiting San Francisco and a primarily wealthier white population is coming in. In terms of the South of Market, this trend also seems to be holding true, although there are still large concentrations of poverty in the South of Market (while per-capita incomes are skyrocketing in other areas of the neighborhood).

Part 2: The Role of Urban Planning and Area Plans in San Francisco

This section will provide an overview of the role of urban planning and specifically “area plans” in shaping San Francisco. First, a brief history of urban planning in the United States will be explored. This is followed by a history of the creation and role of area plans in San Francisco. Next, three existing area plans will be analyzed - The Downtown Plan, The Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, and the Western SoMa Community Plan. Themes explored in the analysis of these area plans include what gave rise to the plans, what is the history of the development of the plans, what were the plans intended to do, and what were the results of the plans? By analyzing existing area plans and the implications of their implementation, an argument will be made in the next section about the implications of adopting the Central SoMa Plan in light of these existing area plans.

A Brief History of Urban Planning in the United States

The institution of urban planning in the United States came about largely in response to public concerns over the social and economic conditions brought on by industrialization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, beginning as a loose affiliation of architects, politicians, and public health officials. It was during this time that urban planning became professionalized and expanded to include economists, sociologists, geographers, and lawyers.¹³⁶

Coming on the heels of sanitary reform in cities, the “city beautiful movement” began at the turn of the 19th century and sought to bring art and civic improvements to localities in order

¹³⁶ Cavin, Andrew. “Preface.” In *Urban Planning*, edited by Andrew Cavin. New York: H.W. Wilson, 2003, vii.

to meet the demand for beauty, order, and cleanliness.¹³⁷ By 1915 this movement had waned, and between the period of 1915 - 1945 the professionalization of urban planning was further solidified.¹³⁸ As described by Krueckeberg, this was a period of “nationalizing and standardizing the planning movement and many of its inventions: zoning, the master plan, the planning commission, neighborhood design, public housing, the planning process, and state and federal roles.”¹³⁹

Following WWII, four major national programs largely shaped urban planning and gave way to post-war suburbanization (sprawl) and urbanization patterns. These programs included public housing, urban renewal, home mortgage insurance, and highway building.¹⁴⁰

The decades of the 1970’s and 1980’s began to see a reversal of urban planning trends. Ideas in urban planning of regulating urban space through the guidance and control of growth (which had always been weaker in the United States than in other parts of the world) began to give way to ideas of actively promoting growth at any cost necessary. As deindustrialization took hold and neoconservative forces began to restructure the postwar Keynesian policies of the social welfare state, the regulatory role of urban planning also came under attack as inhibiting market forces. These changes took the form of “urban revitalization” programs that looked to “creative partnerships” between city governments and the private sector.¹⁴¹

Continuing into the 1990’s, this attack on traditional land-use planning, coupled with the political and economic environment, created a situation in urban planning where, according to

¹³⁷ Peterson, Jon A. “The City Beautiful Movement: Forgotten Origins and Lost Meanings.” In *Introduction to Planning History in the United States*, edited by Donald A. Krueckeberg. New Brunswick: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1983, 54.

¹³⁸ Wilson, William H. “Moles and Skylarks.” In *Introduction to Planning History in the United States*, edited by Donald A. Krueckeberg. New Brunswick: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1983, 102.

¹³⁹ Krueckeberg, Donald A. “The Culture of Planning.” In *Introduction to Planning History in the United States*, edited by Donald A. Krueckeberg. New Brunswick: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1983, 8.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁴¹ Hall, Peter. *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880, 4th Ed.* West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014, 415-416, 419.

Peter Hall, it “became determinedly reactive, artisan, and anti-intellectual...Meanwhile, it faced a new range of problems, with which its practitioners were never equipped by education (and perhaps by inclination) to tackle: the problem of structural economic decline of whole urban economies and of rebuilding a new economy on the ruins of the old.”¹⁴² The period of the 1990’s also saw the emergence of the idea of sustainable urban development, where by the profession of urban planning largely subscribes to the notion that such sustainable development is possible without impeding economic growth.¹⁴³

Reflecting on the attack of the traditional role of land-use planning, Hall writes:

Will planning die away, then? Not entirely. Planning will survive, because in every advanced country it has a large - and in the long run, increasing - political constituency...in very advanced post-industrial societies - South East England, the San Francisco Bay Area - the politics of planning become ever more complex, ever more protracted, ever more bitter.¹⁴⁴

History of Area Plans in San Francisco

An important feature in the story of urban planning, land use, and development in San Francisco, especially for the South of Market and the larger eastern portion of the city, is the creation of “specific area plans” (here referred to as “area plans”). Area plans represented a shift in the type of planning being undertaken in San Francisco.

In 1979, an amendment to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) formalized the concept of an area plan, where city governments were given the ability to move away from site-by-site rezoning and development towards neighborhood wide rezoning and development.¹⁴⁵

This works to streamline development by exempting any new developments within the

¹⁴² Ibid., 442.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 462-463.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 440.

¹⁴⁵ White, Kate. “Specific Area Plans: Building consensus for infill housing.” SPUR. August 11, 1999. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/1999-08-01/specific-area-plans>

designated area plan from environmental review as long as the development meets the policies and regulations outlined in the area plan.¹⁴⁶ Individual developments are normally required to undergo an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that details the potential environmental impacts of the new development (such as impacts on traffic and air quality). However, under an adopted area plan, individual developments are exempted from this process. Before adoption, all area plans are required to undergo a neighborhood-level EIR that covers the entire plan area. Once adopted, all area plans are made part of the city's General Plan.

As discussed by the Board of Supervisors' Legislative Analyst, "Specific area planning allows local governments to formulate plans for neighborhood-wide development...This approach can also be used to build consensus through public involvement prior to development, allowing development to take place smoothly once developers commit to specific projects."¹⁴⁷ The logic is that area plans are supposed to be detailed and comprehensive and reflect the needs of both residents and developers. This is supposed to be achieved by a planning process that engages the public, public officials, and private developers, reflected in an area plan that balances these different interests.¹⁴⁸ The concepts of certainty, streamlining development, and having a smooth development process are central to area plans.

Area plans are also seen as a way to incorporate community planning into the official planning process, with a 2001 Legislative Analyst report stating "Community based planning is an evolution and reinvention of traditional planning, particularly specific area plan

¹⁴⁶ "Community Plan and Infill Exemptions." San Francisco Planning Department. Accessed March, 2017. <http://sf-planning.org/community-plan-exemptions>

¹⁴⁷ *San Francisco Housing Development: Legislative Analyst Report*. San Francisco: Office of the Legislative Analyst, 2003. Accessed March, 2017. <http://sfbos.org/san-francisco-housing-development>

¹⁴⁸ White, "Specific Area Plans."

development.”¹⁴⁹ The role of public outreach and participation in area plans is described by the city as a way of preventing future opposition to development and helping facilitate a more financially secure process for developers. As described by a 2003 Legislative Analyst report speaking about area plans:

If a neighborhood-level EIR is funded, developers will have the advantage of greater certainty about development costs. Developers will save a significant amount of time and money by knowing that an EIR has been completed. Furthermore, they will know that extensive community outreach has already taken place, and that the community is generally supportive of the neighborhood plan. This will reduce the probability of a project being held up through appeals and permit approval problems.¹⁵⁰

This motive for public input and participation is premised first as a means of streamlining development for developers by reducing outside input, and premised only second as a genuine means of reaching out to the public to gain community insight as to what the planning process and resultant development should be. As described by Tim Colen, the senior advisor and former executive director of the San Francisco Housing Action Committee (an organization that advocates for building more housing in San Francisco), “The thinking was that if we do area plans, we do an EIR, and you study it, and you do lots and lots and lots of community hearings, and public presentations at the planning commission, and rec. and park maybe, and other commissions as needed, you start to achieve the buy-in necessary to allow the rezoning.”¹⁵¹

These comments further highlight the way in which public outreach is done primarily to gain “buy-in” of the public to accept the plan, rather than as a way to genuinely include the public in the planning process.

As the Central SoMa Plan currently enters the stage of finalizing the EIR and then moving on to adoption and incorporation of the plan into the city’s General Plan, it is important to look back at the history of existing area plans. What gave rise to these plans and what has been

¹⁴⁹ *Community Based Planning: Legislative Analyst Report*. San Francisco: Office of the Legislative Analyst, 2001. Accessed March, 2017. <http://sfbos.org/legislative-analyst-report-community-based-planning-file-no-010599>

¹⁵⁰ *San Francisco Housing Development: Legislative Analyst Report*.

¹⁵¹ Colen, Tim, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, March 27, 2017.

the outcome? Do the stated goals reflect the realities of development and change that occurred? By looking back at specific case studies of existing area plans, a sense of what works and what does not work can be gained in order to help guide an understanding of what the larger implications of the Central SoMa Plan are.

The Downtown Plan

One of the early area plans created by the city of San Francisco was the Downtown Plan (See Figs. 8, 9). Adopted in 1984, the Downtown Plan and the resulting rezoning must be understood in its historical context to fully grasp what exactly gave rise to the plan and what it was intended to do.

Following the explosion in downtown development after WWII, early challenges to this type of development took root in places like the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* as well as Alvin Duskin's 1971 and 1972 initiative campaigns (regarding height limits). A permanent and rooted slow-growth movement was formed surrounding the wide-ranging coalition that came together to elect progressive George Moscone as mayor in 1975. This slow-growth movement, or "balanced growth" movement as it stressed the need for housing and transit to meet the needs of new development, was able to carry the momentum through the death of Moscone and put several slow-growth initiatives on the ballot starting with Proposition O in 1979, and culminating in the successful passage of Proposition M in 1986.¹⁵²

The strong showing (though it lost) of Proposition O in 1979, which sought to reduce height and bulk limits, prompted the City in 1980 to agree to do an EIR analyzing the effects of downtown growth on jobs, housing, transit, and the physical environment. After two and a half

¹⁵² DeLeon, *Left Coast City*, 58, 60.

years, the Planning Director at the time decided to redefine the document (which had showed the negative effects of unchecked downtown development) as a consultant’s report to be used to develop a “downtown plan,” therefore ensuring the EIR would have no legal standing (resulting in the downplaying of the EIR).¹⁵³ In the meantime, beginning in 1981, the city started requiring mandated mitigation fees for transit and housing for new developments that “clarified the rules of the game, reduced uncertainty, and insulated developers from political pressures for additional concessions.”¹⁵⁴ The slow-growth forces moved ahead with a 1983 ballot measure, Proposition M, which sought to “revise the city’s Master Plan to achieve internal consistency among the various plan elements...[and assign] precedence to the preservation and protection of neighborhoods, small businesses, and ethnic and cultural diversity” through a list of “priority policies,” greatly challenging the rapid growth of development in San Francisco.¹⁵⁵ The pressure that mounted from this campaign (as well as the proposition nearly winning with 49.4% of the vote) prompted the Planning Director at the time to unveil the Downtown Plan three months before the 1983 November election, giving the impression to the public that the City was acting on its own to address the problems associated with growth in San Francisco.¹⁵⁶

The Downtown Plan focused on the urban design of buildings (opting for slimmer, shorter highrises and banning “refrigerator box” designs), architectural preservation (allowing for the “transfer of development rights” or TDRs), and the implementation of new (childcare and open space) and existing (transit and housing) linkage fees. The Plan also included an annual limit on office construction (for buildings of 50,000 square feet or more) to 950,000 square feet per year which was set to expire after three years, excluding buildings that were in the

¹⁵³ Ibid., 60-62.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 62-64.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 63.

development pipeline (waiting for approval, approved, or under construction).¹⁵⁷ The Planning Director had pushed the plan as a growth limitation measure, but in actuality it did little to that end. As explicitly stated by the plan itself, it shifted new development from the financial district to part of the South of Market, while at the same time limiting growth in the Tenderloin, Chinatown, North Beach, and South of Market below and west of Yerba Buena Center. It further projected a growth rate of new office space that met 83% of the rate of growth from 1965-1981 in San Francisco, and failed to address housing and transportation needs associated with the projected office growth.¹⁵⁸

At the time of its passage, the Downtown Plan was nationally acclaimed for its new approach to urban design, even making the front page of the *New York Times*.¹⁵⁹ Downtown business leaders came to accept the plan as it allowed for continued development while at the same time having the appearance of appeasing social activists. As described by DeLeon:

[Business leaders] could tolerate the temporary growth limits during a period of glut in the supply of office space. Besides, the pipeline was packed and would continue to disgorge new office buildings without restriction. The exemption of smaller buildings...and the wide open spaces outside the downtown office district all gave developers considerable flexibility... What business leaders liked most about the Downtown Plan were precisely those features that slow-growth critics hated. The growth limits were only temporary...The plan applied mainly to downtown and placed few if any restrictions on development elsewhere in the city...No provision was made to enforce consistency among Master Plan elements or to formulate development planning priorities.¹⁶⁰

The subsequent passage of Proposition M in 1986 created further changes to the Downtown Plan as slow-growth forces sought to regulate downtown growth. Proposition M implemented a citywide limit on office construction (limiting office construction to 950,000 square feet annually, with a portion of this reserved for smaller buildings, and a limit of 475,000 square feet per year in new permits until the construction backlog disappeared to address the

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 63-64.

¹⁵⁸ Hartman, *City for Sale*, 298.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 297.

¹⁶⁰ DeLeon, *Left Coast City*, 64.

buildup in pipeline developments), required voter approval for large-scale projects that sought an exemption to the limit, and incorporated eight priority policies (in large part carried over from the 1983 Proposition M measure) into the existing Master Plan.¹⁶¹ As DeLeon writes:

Parts of the policy were precise...the numerical limits on high-rise office construction, for example...Other parts of the plan, however, were considerably more vague and open-ended. The list of eight ‘priority policies,’ for example, broadly prescribed the ‘preservation’ or ‘enhancement’ of certain values, such as neighborhood diversity and affordable housing. It was left to the planners to define these goals more exactly and to decide, when, where, how, and how much to convert them into action and results.¹⁶²

As discussed earlier, community activism also prompted the Planning Department, as part of the creation of the Downtown Plan, to implement rezonings of the areas surrounding the downtown (the Tenderloin, Chinatown, North Beach, and part of the South of Market below and west of Yerba Buena Center) in order to protect existing housing, neighborhood businesses, and neighborhood character by limiting office construction.

An economic downturn in the mid 1980’s both regionally and nationally coincided with reduced growth pressure and reduced development. This all picked up again, however, in the late 1990’s with the first dotcom boom.

Since the plan’s adoption in 1984, the San Francisco Planning Department has largely considered the plan a “success,” regarding improvements to “job and housing density, retail activity and overall character of the downtown.”¹⁶³ The plan shifted new commercial development to the South of Market as intended, with by 2009 having some 18.7 million new square feet of commercial space added in the plan area (75% of it was offices), the majority in the South of Market, and another 7.5 million square feet in areas nearby (primarily in the South of Market). The plan had envisioned a series of increasingly dense residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area, and according to the 1985 - 2009 Monitoring Report, “the Plan

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 69-70, 74-75.

¹⁶² Ibid., 84.

¹⁶³ *Downtown Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2015, ii. Accessed March, 2017. http://default.sfplanning.org/Citywide/Downtown_Plan_Monitoring_Report_2015.pdf

sought to build between 1,000 and 1,500 new units annually citywide...San Francisco housing production averaged over 1,670 units annually since 1985, exceeding the Downtown Plan’s goal for new housing construction.” The vast majority of this new housing was in the larger South of Market area, and only 18% of new housing units produced during this time were affordable.¹⁶⁴

There were similar trends in 2015, with 6.4 million square feet of commercial space in the pipeline in the plan area (80% of which is office), and with housing production across the city reaching 3,500 units in 2014 and 3,000 units in 2015 (with only 17% of new units in 2015 being affordable housing).^{165,166} Between 2011-2015, a third of new housing units constructed were located in the plan area and the nearby “Downtown Residential District” in the eastern portion of the South of Market, and another 12,000 housing units were in the pipeline for these areas.¹⁶⁷

While the Planning Department largely considers the plan a success, other indicators imply that the plan has been a failure. The 2015 Downtown Monitoring Report describes that:

In order to accommodate this growth, the Plan contains a series of goals, policies and targets designed to ensure that new development is supported with the infrastructure and services required of great places...without sufficient and appropriate housing to serve new commercial development, local housing costs would increase, thereby compromising the vitality of downtown. The Plan also states that if employment growth increases the number of cars downtown, thereby significantly increasing traffic, the area’s attractiveness and livability could be affected adversely.¹⁶⁸

As a result of the plan, commercial and residential development has proceeded. Yet, affordable housing has not kept pace and the majority of new housing is market-rate. Further, the plan has not done anything to keep housing prices from rising. Transportation infrastructure also has not been able to keep up with downtown development. In 2015, the Muni Metro (train) lines reached 125% of full capacity during peak hours, and from 2010-2015 for the San Francisco

¹⁶⁴ *25 Years: Downtown Plan Monitoring Report*, 8, 11-12, 15.

¹⁶⁵ *Downtown Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015*, 4, 9.

¹⁶⁶ *2015 San Francisco Housing Inventory*, 30.

¹⁶⁷ *Downtown Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015*, ii, 10.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, ii.

neighborhoods outside of downtown and the South of Market, transit demand increased by 26% while the capacity for new transit riders going to downtown/South of Market (via Muni, BART, Caltrain, and SamTrans) grew by only 6%.¹⁶⁹ Automobile congestion is also extremely bad in Downtown San Francisco.^{170,171} The new “open spaces” produced under the plan have largely been privatized open spaces, known as “Privately Owned Public Open Spaces,” that do not operate the same ways as publicly operated open spaces.^{172,173} Height limits are also routinely changed on a case by case basis for new developments, allowing for taller buildings through exemptions to the plan.¹⁷⁴ The rezonings of surrounding neighborhoods as result of community activism and as a part of the Downtown Plan, however, can be seen as a huge success of the Downtown Plan. This aspect of the plan, however, is being undermined by the rezoning to occur under the Central SoMa Plan.

The Eastern Neighborhoods Plan

The Eastern Neighborhoods Plan was adopted in late 2008 by the Board of Supervisors and signed by the mayor, becoming effective in early 2009. The area plan covers and rezones the areas of East SoMa, the Mission, Showplace Square/Potrero, and the Central Waterfront (see Figs. 10, 11). The plan’s stated goals are stabilizing and preserving production, distribution, and repair (PDR) uses, providing new housing at all income levels, and creating “complete

¹⁶⁹ Dong, Lauren and Anthony Bruzzone. *Core Capacity Transit Study Memorandum*. San Francisco: Arup, 2016, 8-9. Accessed March, 2017.

http://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/CCTS_SFMetro_CapacityandDemandSummary_FINAL.pdf

¹⁷⁰ Cabanatuan, Michael. “SF traffic: Numbers don’t show why it is really bad.” *SFGate*, May 16, 2015. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/S-F-traffic-Numbers-don-t-show-why-it-really-6268436.php>

¹⁷¹ “Congestion.” *SF Gov*. Accessed March, 2017. <http://sfgov.org/scorecards/congestion>

¹⁷² *25 Years: Downtown Plan Monitoring Report*, 20.

¹⁷³ *Downtown Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015*, 14.

¹⁷⁴ King, John. “Signs of Tarnish as Downtown Plan Nears 25,” *SF Gate*, May 26, 2009. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Signs-of-tarnish-as-Downtown-Plan-nears-25-3297616.php>

neighborhoods” (transportation, open space, community facilities) by providing amenities for new residents.¹⁷⁵ As described by the planning department’s senior policy analyst in 2002, the idea is to come up with a “smart growth plan to permanently shape the neighborhoods...We're trying to find the right balance and right mix that will work for residents and businesses of San Francisco.”¹⁷⁶ The plan rezoned many areas that were primarily previously zoned for industry as urban-mixed-use (allowing for residential and commercial developments), called for a 15% affordable housing requirement (per the city’s existing Affordable Housing Program), and implemented a community improvement fee (\$6 per square foot for residential and \$8 per square foot for commercial). The plan’s rezoning resulted in the loss of 2 million square feet of area dedicated to industrial land uses and allowed for a potential of 7,500 - 10,000 new housing units.¹⁷⁷

Planning for the areas that eventually became the larger “Eastern Neighborhoods” originally grew from concerns of community organizers, especially the Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition (MAC), reacting to the recent first dotcom boom, which caused increased rents and displacement and loss of industrial uses, residents, small businesses, and affordable housing.^{178,179} Meeting with a progressive newly elected board of supervisors (elected in 2000), organizers set about preparing interim zoning controls (passed in 2001) for many of the

¹⁷⁵ *East SoMa Area Plan*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2008, V-VIII. Accessed March, 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/2107-East_SoMa_Area_Plan_DEC_08_Final_Adopted.pdf

¹⁷⁶ Kim, Ryan. “Planners look hard at S.F.’s east flank; Rezoning will decide what’s in, what’s not,” *SF Gate*, March 30, 2002. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Planners-look-hard-at-S-F-s-east-flank-2860022.php>

¹⁷⁷ Beitel, Karl. “Rezoning the Eastern Neighborhoods in Early 2000s.” 2013. As appears on FoundSF. Accessed March, 2017. http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Rezoning_the_Eastern_Neighborhoods_in_Early_2000s

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Kim, “Planners look hard at S.F.’s east flank; Rezoning will decide what’s in, what’s not.”

Eastern Neighborhoods that were impacted by the influx of people and capital during the dotcom boom, where existing zoning had not been being enforced.^{180,181,182}

During this time, organizers in the Eastern Neighborhoods, especially the Mission and especially MAC, worked to open-up the planning process of the planning department's efforts to rezone the Eastern Neighborhoods. MAC ran their own parallel community planning workshops, engaged in direct actions targeting the planning department, made the planning meetings culturally relevant (by providing language translation, food, and childcare), and organized members of the community to partake in the public planning process led by the planning department.¹⁸³ As the planning process continued through the 2000s, initial neighborhood support waned and tensions between MAC and the planning department greatly lessened. The planning department meanwhile continued attempts to engage the public through mailed questionnaires, telephone interviews, focus groups, informational meetings, and community workshops.¹⁸⁴ MAC was successful in shifting official city planning focus to better realize issues regarding affordable housing, cultural values, and neighborhood assets; further, MAC eventually produced their own "People's Plan" that influenced the final adopted version of the city's Eastern Neighborhoods Plan.¹⁸⁵ Prior to adoption of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan in 2008, many community organizations and residents, including MAC, were rallying against the plan, with one member of the community organization the South of Market Community Action

¹⁸⁰ Beitel, Karl. "Rezoning the Eastern Neighborhoods in Early 2000s."

¹⁸¹ Chappell, Jim. "San Francisco's Response to the Housing Crisis." San Francisco Apartment Association. 2001. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.sfaa.org/0112chappell.html>

¹⁸² Kim, Ryan. "Planners look hard at S.F.'s east flank; Rezoning will decide what's in, what's not," *SF Gate*, March 30, 2002. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Planners-look-hard-at-S-F-s-east-flank-2860022.php>

¹⁸³ Brahinsky, Rachel, Miriam Chion, and Lisa M. Feldstein. "Reflections on Community Planning in San Francisco." *Spatial Justice* 5, (2013), 8-12.

¹⁸⁴ Beitel, Karl. "Rezoning the Eastern Neighborhoods in Early 2000s."

¹⁸⁵ Brahinsky, Rachel, Miriam Chion, and Lisa M. Feldstein. "Reflections on Community Planning in San Francisco," 12.

Network stating “I’ve been working on the Eastern Neighborhood's plans for 7 1/2 years. I'm also a resident of SOMA. (South of Market Area), they've really butchered the community input and translated it into the developer's language.”¹⁸⁶

Before the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan was adopted, temporary zoning policies were put in place by the planning commission that were in line with the priorities of the pending plan and allowed for new housing development.¹⁸⁷ Thus, while the area plan was not yet in effect, new development was still occurring. The plan was originally several separate area plans that eventually became combined into one large area plan (the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan) subject to one EIR. Before the process was initiated to perform an EIR for the areas now designated under the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, separate area plans were being drawn up for the Central Waterfront (under the Better Neighborhoods Plan) and the Mission, South of Market, Showplace Square/Potrero Hill, and Bayview Hunters Point (under the efforts discussed above regarding the planning department and MAC, as is reflected in the 2003 city report “Community Planning in the Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning Options Workbook Draft”).^{188,189}

Then in 2006, MAC challenged a development project at 2660 Harrison Street in the Mission that sought to rezone land from industrial to residential for some 68 condo units that had been exempted from doing an EIR. MAC argued that an EIR was necessary to understand the full impacts of the development in relation to housing (especially affordable housing) and jobs

¹⁸⁶ Crump, Marlon. “The People’s Plan! Deconstructing San Francisco’s Zoning/Gentrifying/Development Plans.” *POOR Magazine*, June 18, 2010. <http://www.poormagazine.org/node/2725>

¹⁸⁷ *Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Area Plans: Final EIR*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2008, S-1. Accessed March 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/3991-EN_Final-EIR_Part-1_Intro-Sum.pdf

¹⁸⁸ *Community Planning In the Eastern Neighborhoods: Rezoning Options Workbook Draft*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2003, 1. Accessed March 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/3659-cp_dworkbook_toc.pdf

¹⁸⁹ *Draft for Public Review: The Central Waterfront Neighborhood Plan*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2002, 1. Accessed March, 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/4875-CW_DPR_chapter1.pdf

(especially blue-collar PDR jobs). The Board of Supervisors upheld the appeal and required that the development at 2660 Mission Street and all similar developments in the Eastern Neighborhoods areas each individually undergo an EIR before they are approved, ultimately creating a moratorium on new residential development in the Eastern Neighborhoods.¹⁹⁰ This caused an immediate potential delay in some 52 housing projects representing some 4,600 units in the Eastern Neighborhoods.¹⁹¹

To overcome this development roadblock, the ongoing planning efforts in the Mission, East SoMa, Showplace Square/Potrero Hill, and Central Waterfront were combined into one large plan/“project area,” the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan (though each of the four neighborhoods would receive its own specific area plan to be incorporated into the General Plan), to be approved via the completion and approval of a neighborhood-level EIR.¹⁹² As Tony Kelly, an arts director and community activist in the Potrero neighborhood, explains, “They [the planning department] didn’t go in saying ‘let’s rezone 25% of the city and do it all at once.’ No, they had to and they had to do it as fast as they possibly could to get over the hurdle of this moratorium...the need to pass it [the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan] was because otherwise no one makes any money on development.”¹⁹³ Other areas in the Eastern Neighborhoods that were earlier being studied by the planning department for rezoning shifted into planning under the Redevelopment Agency (Bayview Hunters Point and Visitacion Valley) as well as community

¹⁹⁰ Ginsberg, Steve. “Stuck in the Pipeline: The Case of 2660 Mission.” *San Francisco Business Times*, June 21, 2006. Accessed on March, 2017. <http://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/stories/2006/06/26/focus7.html>

¹⁹¹ Lagos, Marisa. “Mission condo project opens a can of worms. Supes’ decision to halt construction has broader effect.” *SF Gate*, April 12, 2006. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.sfgate.com/realestate/article/SAN-FRANCISCO-Mission-condo-project-opens-a-can-2520080.php>

¹⁹² Selna, Robert. “Developers await verdict on planned residential units / Key zoning report will outline impact on city's eastern areas.” *SF Gate*, July 2, 2007. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/SAN-FRANCISCO-Developers-await-verdict-on-2571791.php>

¹⁹³ Kelly, Tony, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, December 12, 2016.

planning efforts (The Western SoMa Community Plan).¹⁹⁴ The Draft EIR was completed in June 2007 and the final EIR was completed in August 2008 prior to adoption of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan.

The main goals of the plan, as stated by the plan itself, of protecting PDR, providing housing for all incomes, and creating “complete communities” through infrastructure and open space improvements have largely failed. As Kelly states, “We are talking today essentially about the post-mortem of an Eastern Neighborhoods Plan that is essentially full and failed to do what it was supposed to do.”¹⁹⁵ As seen in the 2011 - 2015 Eastern Neighborhoods Plan Monitoring Report (the time of greatest growth since the implementation of the plan as stated by the report), nearly 1 million square feet of PDR has been lost (mainly to residential conversions) with another 1.3 million set to be lost through pipeline projects as of 2015.¹⁹⁶ 1,310 new housing units have been constructed (19% have been affordable housing) with another 10,340 units in the pipeline, compared to a max build out scenario (as identified by the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan EIR) of 9,800 new units by 2025, thus reaching the new housing unit mark in less than half the time anticipated.^{197,198} 915,335 square feet of office space has been added with another 1.9 million square feet in the pipeline.¹⁹⁹ Infrastructure (transit, open space, childcare facilities) has not kept up with development, with impact fees unable to provide the funds necessary for

¹⁹⁴ *Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Area Plans: Final EIR*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2008, S-1. Accessed March 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/3991-EN_Final-EIR_Part-1_Intro-Sum.pdf

¹⁹⁵ Kelly, Tony, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, December 12, 2016.

¹⁹⁶ *Eastern Neighborhoods Plan Monitoring Report 2011-2015*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2016, 4-5. Accessed March, 2017. http://default.sfplanning.org/Citywide/Info_Analysis_Grp/20101182CWP.pdf
*Note that the figures represented in the monitoring report include data for the Western SoMa Plan. I removed the Western SoMa Plan data to give a snapshot of the development occurring under the Eastern Neighborhood area plans that were passed under the plan in 2008 (which at the time excluded the Western SoMa Plan).

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁹⁸ *Eastern Neighborhoods Rezoning and Area Plans: Final EIR*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2008, 232. Accessed March 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/4001-EN_Final-EIR_Part-6_PopHousEmploy.pdf

¹⁹⁹ *Eastern Neighborhoods Plan Monitoring Report 2011-2015*, 4-5.

improvements.^{200,201} As admitted by the Planning Department, “Impact fees created through the Area Plans are a major source of revenue for infrastructure spending although they were never expected to provide 100% of funding for needed community improvements. Planning staff anticipated impact fees to pay for 30% of infrastructure need created by new development.”²⁰² Further, the Planning Department states that “Although impact fees are an important resource, they are reliant on the timing of development, which can be unpredictable and ‘lumpy.’ Implementing agencies are careful not to plan projects solely around irregular funding sources...As such, infrastructure projects reliant on impact fees often lag behind the development they are intended to serve.”²⁰³ As of 2016, of 50 infrastructure projects that were projected to be needed over a 20 year period (that addressed open space, streetscape, transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements), only five have been completed, representing an achievement of only 20% of anticipated projects in close to half the projected time period.²⁰⁴

The Western SoMa Community Plan

In the early 2000s, when the planning department was undertaking various planning processes in the Eastern Neighborhoods of San Francisco, residents in the western part of South of Market, led by resident and planning activist Jim Meko, broke off and started their own independent, grassroots, community-based planning process for the area.²⁰⁵ As reported by the

²⁰⁰ *Eastern Neighborhoods Plan Monitoring Report 2011-2015*, 9-11.

²⁰¹ Dong, Lauren and Anthony Bruzzone. *Core Capacity Transit Study Memorandum*, 8-9.

²⁰² *Eastern Neighborhoods Plan Monitoring Report 2011-2015*, 9.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Phelan, Sarah. “Citizen planning.” *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, July 3, 2007. Reprinted in *48Hills*. Accessed March, 2017.

http://48hills.org/sfbgarchive/2007/07/03/citizen-planning/?_sf_s=western+soma+community+plan

former *San Francisco Bay Guardian* newspaper, Meko is quoted saying that “A lot of us were offended by the Planning Department’s top-down, autocratic process,” fearing that the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan would impose a “one-size-fits-all mode that treated all of SoMa like post industrial wasteland.”²⁰⁶ Paul Lord, the former Planning Department project manager for the Western SoMa Community Plan, affirmed this description in his own recollections about the early phases of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan:

[The Planning Department] would hold these community meetings and say ok community what do you want? Or what do you think you need here or how can we solve this problem. And the community would lay out a list of recommendations, wish list, ideas that they wanted, and then they would come to the next meeting and none of that stuff would appear and the Planning Department would be presenting a whole new proposal that didn’t embrace any of those ideas that they’d asked for from the community before.²⁰⁷

In November 2004, the Board of Supervisors officially removed Western SoMa from the larger Eastern Neighborhoods Planning process, and the “Western SoMa Citizens Planning Taskforce” (made up of 26 members) was created to advise the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission on planning in West SoMa.^{208,209}

The Taskforce released a “Values Statement” in 2005, as seen in the Western SoMa Plan, that read:

The Western SoMa Citizens Planning Task Force shall promote neighborhood qualities and scale that maintain and enhance, rather than destroy, today’s living, historic and sustainable neighborhood character of social, cultural and economic diversity, while integrating appropriate land use, transportation and design opportunities into equitable, evolving and complete neighborhoods. Throughout the life of this Task Force, the membership shall respect one another, be responsive to the constituencies they represent and foster a citizen-based democratic decision-making process.²¹⁰

The Taskforce and the Western SoMa Community Plan worked to introduce new community focused aspects into neighborhood planning. These included initial planning principles

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Lord, Paul, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, March 3, 2017.

²⁰⁸ *Final Environmental Impact Report: Western SoMa Community Plan, Rezoning of Adjacent Parcels, and 350 Eighth Street Project*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2012, 2-4. Accessed March, 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/9034-2008.0877E_Motion_TOC_Summary.pdf

²⁰⁹ *Western SoMa Community Plan*. San Francisco: Western SoMa Citizens Planning Taskforce, 2011, vi. Accessed March, 2017. http://commissions.sfplanning.org/soma/FinalPlan_optimized.pdf

²¹⁰ Ibid., vii.

developed by the taskforce that reflected the needs of the whole community (safety and the public welfare; social heritage preservation; economic and workforce development; sustainable growth management programs) that were later adopted by the larger Eastern Neighborhoods planning process as the notion of developing “complete communities.” Other community focused aspects included collaborations with the Department of Public Health throughout the development of the plan that included applying a “Healthy Measurement Development Tool,” as well as an unprecedented level of community engagement and involvement.²¹¹

Speaking about the influence of the Western SoMa Community Plan on the larger planning department, Lord describes how the concept of cultural districts (as developed by the community plan specifically for the Filipino and LGBTQ communities) “now is being imitated by the Planning Department in the Mission, being imitated with ‘legacy businesses,’ it’s being imitated in a lot of different ways. But those were all ideas that we cultivated and developed and formalized in the Western SoMa and now they’re starting to spread.”²¹² Another unique aspect of the plan included a collaboration with the public health department to develop a “health impact assessment” that would help guide the creation of the plan. As Lord describes:

We had a very progressive department of public health for a while, that put in place some very interesting ideas that were much more institutionalized in Canada called ‘health impact assessments.’ Health impact assessments said let’s look at what is going to happen if you build out the community the way that you’ve envisioned it. How far are people going to have to go for a place to exercise, for a place to have quiet, for a place to find good food as opposed to ‘let’s go have burger king.’ So all these sorts of things were figured in: exercise, walkability, access to food, access to air, access to quiet. All these things were considered as health impact assessments. The Western SoMa Plan was the only plan in the city’s history to have gone through a full blown health impact assessment based on the proposal and then be modified to further meet the health impact indexes associated with those assessments that were developed by Rajid Bhatia and the Health Department and some of his staff before he was forced out by Mayor Ed Lee...We wanted to get housing away from the freeway noise, get it away from the highway...We had to deal with ‘how are we going to get the kids to Bessie Carmichael [Middle] School from these new housing projects without them getting murtilated on Folsom Street with high speed traffic?’ We considered all those things.²¹³

²¹¹ Ibid., vi-viii.

²¹² Lord, Paul, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, March 3, 2017.

²¹³ Ibid.

The Taskforce, which met frequently, especially in the early phases of the plan, developed several committees to oversee various aspects of the plan.²¹⁴ The plan ultimately was the result of hundreds of hours of committee meetings and has been vetted by three Town Hall meetings.²¹⁵ As detailed in the Western SoMa Community Plan:

Long-time residents and newcomers to the neighborhood, market-rate developers, non-profit housing providers, tenants rights activists, community-Based organizations, SRO hotel residents, small business owners, artists, organized labor, transportation, public health and urban planners and advocates for the disabled, youth, pedestrians and bicyclists, parks and open space, preservation and the entertainment industry have all contributed to the process.²¹⁶

Further, as Lord explains, “They [the community] were setting the agenda. They were saying we want to explore this idea, and then say ‘figure it out Paul and come back with some proposals,’ and I’d come back with three or four proposals and they’d go ‘we like this one, we don’t like this one, we’ll go with this but we want to make these changes to it,’ and then we’d start to go down that road. It was a totally different process [than other area plans]. So it really was empowering.”²¹⁷

The plan was completed and adopted as part of the city’s General Plan in 2013 (see Figs. 12, 13). The plan’s rezoning generally allows for increased office and residential uses. The plan allows new residential and resident-serving uses north of Harrison Street, and local and regional job producing uses south of Harrison Street.²¹⁸ Areas zoned exclusively for PDR uses were largely retained (except for a stretch on Townsend Street). Office uses are allowed, but in specific designated areas (smaller office uses on 9th, 10th, and Folsom Streets and larger office uses along Townsend Street).^{219,220,221}

²¹⁴ Phelan, Sarah. “Citizen planning.”

²¹⁵ *Western SoMa Community Plan*, vii.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, viii.

²¹⁷ Lord, Paul, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, March 3, 2017.

²¹⁸ *Western SoMa Community Plan*, 1:5.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:8-1:9.

The plan projected that it would accommodate 2,767 new housing units by the year 2030.²²² Since the implementation of the plan, sixty new housing units have been added (8% have been affordable housing) with another 1,288 units in the pipeline (about 8% to be affordable housing), thus reaching close to half of the planned housing units.²²³ Also since implementation, PDR space has declined by 87,220 square feet, with another 110,766 square feet to be lost due to pipeline projects. Since implementation, the area has seen an increase in 83,276 square feet of office space, with an additional 3,046,022 square feet in the pipeline (though this is all located in the Central SoMa Plan area that is to be rezoned to allow offices).²²⁴

The outcomes so far of the Western SoMa Community Plan are unclear. Very little affordable housing is being produced and PDR space is being lost (though it is unclear if the PDR space that could be lost due to pipeline development is a result of new development that is set to occur under the Central SoMa Plan rezoning). Since the plan was passed in 2013, much of the new development is still in the pipeline. And with the creation and probable passage of the Central SoMa Plan which rezones close to half of the area in the Western SoMa Community Plan (areas that are mostly zoned for PDR), the plan in general is being overridden by the Planning Department. The part of the Western SoMa Community Plan that is being rezoned (again) under the Central SoMa Plan is the portion that had what planners call the largest “development potential,” yet the preservation of this area as mainly for PDR (and arts and nightlife uses) was

²²⁰ *Western SoMa Adopted Height/Bulk Districts*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2013.

Accessed March, 2017. http://commissions.sfplanning.org/soma/WesternSoMa_Final%20Adopted_Heights.pdf

²²¹ *Western SoMa Adopted Zoning Districts*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department. 2013. Accessed March, 2017. http://commissions.sfplanning.org/soma/WesternSoMa_Final%20Adopted_Zoning.pdf

²²² *Final Environmental Impact Report: Western SoMa Community Plan*, 4.C-13

²²³ *Western SoMa Plan Monitoring Report 2011-2015*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2016, 23;25;29. Accessed March, 2017.

http://default.sfplanning.org/Citywide/Info_Analysis_Grp/2016_ENMR_WesternSoMa_FINAL.pdf

*Note the data taken from this monitoring report reflects construction/loss of space since the implementation of the plan in 2013, the data taken does not include data from 2011-2012 (before the plan was implemented).

²²⁴ *Western SoMa Plan Monitoring Report 2011-2015*, 11-14.

an integral part of the Western SoMa Community Plan (including the exclusion of housing in this area).^{225,226} The impact fee used for the plan area was rolled over from the existing Western SoMa Special Use District Impact Fee (that existed before the implementation of the Western SoMa Community Plan) and incorporated into the larger Eastern Neighborhoods Community Benefits Fund, indicating that this fee, like the larger Eastern Neighborhoods Impact Fee, will be insufficient to meet the infrastructure needs associated with the increased development.²²⁷

Other aspects involving the actual development of the plan and some of the new concepts and proposals made by the plan, however, can be seen as successes. This includes empowering residents through a bottom-up planning structure, developing the notion of “complete communities,” developing the structure for future community cultural districts, and using the “health impact assessment” to guide the creation of the plan (this practice was not adopted by the Planning Department; however, a Sustainable Communities Health Assessment was conducted by the Department of Public Health at the request of the Planning Department for the initial draft of the Central SoMa Plan, then referred to as the Central Corridor Plan).

Another interesting aspect about the development of the Western SoMa Community Plan is that those developing the plan unsuccessfully tried to get what community planners called “boom proof zoning” incorporated into the plan. Boom proof zoning, inspired by 1986 Proposition M, would have worked by identifying the current mix of land uses by type, size, and income (such as current levels of affordable housing and market-rate housing and size of the housing) and would have required developers to meet existing proportions in new development in order to proceed with the development. This would work to prevent one new type of use to

²²⁵ *Western SoMa Community Plan*, 1:3, 1:5-1:6.

²²⁶ *Draft Environmental Impact Report: Central SoMa Plan*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2017, III-6. Accessed March, 2017. http://sfmea.sfplanning.org/CentralSoMaPlanDEIR_2016-12-14.pdf

²²⁷ *Western SoMa Community Plan*, 1:6.

dominate new development and would work to preserve the existing proportions of land uses. For instance, in the area of the South of Market covered under the Western SoMa Community Plan, those developing the plan found that the area had a high proportion of existing affordable housing, so boom proof zoning would have ensured that new development would have reflected the existing housing stock.²²⁸

Part 2: Conclusion

This section looked at the history and development of urban planning in the United States and more specifically of area plans in San Francisco. Area plans in San Francisco, which generally work to streamline new development, were analyzed by looking at three existing cases of adopted plans - The Downtown Plan, the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, and the Western SoMa Community Plan. In general, all of the plans achieved the primary goals of adding new housing and office space (though this goal was less pronounced in the Western SoMa Community Plan). Yet, other major goals of the plans have not been met. These include failing to stabilize and protect existing PDR space (in the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan and the Western SoMa Community Plan), failing to provide housing at various income levels (the majority of housing that was built under the plans was market-rate), and failing to provide the infrastructure necessary to meet the population demands of new development. Major questions that come up when analyzing existing area plans include development for who and for what? What type of jobs is San Francisco creating and who can access those jobs? What type of housing is San Francisco creating and who can access that housing? In the meantime, what existing uses are being displaced? In general, San Francisco appears to be developing for a wealthier, high-

²²⁸ Lord, Paul, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, March 3, 2017.

earning, higher-educated, and more racially homogenous group of people - largely at the expense of existing blue-collar jobs, working class residents, and low-income communities.

Part 3: The Central SoMa Plan

This section analyzes and discusses the Central SoMa Plan and offers a critique of the plan and its possible effects based on details from the plan itself as well as insight gained from the three existing area plans previously analyzed. First, the main aims and goals of the plan will be discussed along with the background surrounding the development of the plan. This will include looking into the development of the Central Subway project, one of the core drivers of the plan. This is followed by a critique of the plan, specifically focusing on the topics of land use, jobs, housing, displacement, Prop M, public benefits, funding sources, and public outreach and engagement. Then, the three previously analyzed area plans will be discussed in relation to the Central SoMa Plan.

Description and Background

The Central SoMa Plan (formerly the Central Corridor Plan) is a proposed area plan that aims to rezone largely industrial areas in the South of Market to allow primarily for offices and also housing over the next 25 years (see Figs. 14, 15, 16, 17).²²⁹ The plan will allow for over 10 million square feet of new office space under the rezoning in the next 20 years.²³⁰ Specifically, the scope of the plan is described as follows:

The vision of the Central SoMa Plan is to create a sustainable neighborhood by 2040, where the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Central SoMa Plan seeks to achieve sustainability in each of its aspects – social, economic, and environmental. Additionally, achieving sustainability in Central SoMa should complement movements

²²⁹ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2016, 35. Accessed March, 2017. http://default.sfplanning.org/Citywide/Central_Corridor/Central_SoMa_Plan_Part01-Central_SoMa_Plan_FINAL.pdf

²³⁰ *Draft Environmental Impact Report: Central SoMa Plan*, III-20.

towards sustainability in the city, region, nation, and planet...Achieving neighborhood sustainability requires keeping what is already successful about the neighborhood, and improving what is not.²³¹

Largely based on the concept of “transit oriented development” (TOD), the idea that building housing and commercial space near transit will reduce driving and therefore greenhouse gas emissions, the plan calls for “accommodating growth” while at the same time providing public benefits and “respecting the neighborhood character.”²³² The plan builds on the regional smart growth plan, Plan Bay Area, which focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Bay Area through implementing TOD in select “priority development areas,” which in San Francisco are located almost exclusively on the Eastern side of the city in working class neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color.^{233,234,235}

The planning process for the Central SoMa Plan began in 2011 (as the economy was recovering from the recession) and builds upon what planners refer to as the “development potential” of the industrially zoned areas of the South of Market as well as the creation of the Central Subway. The plan is overlaid on two existing plans, the Western SoMa Community Plan and the Eastern SoMa Plan, and rezones portions of those areas. The Central SoMa Plan calls for adding 45,000 jobs and 7,800 new housing units, while at the same time retaining a small area zoned for PDR. A large impetus for the plan was the construction of the Central Subway line (still underway) which will extend the T-Line to connect with the Caltrain station through 4th Street and into Chinatown. The plan further describes how the Planning Department has “prioritized listening, engagement, and dialogue” in the creation of the plan, holding open houses, public hearings, check-ins with the mayor’s and supervisor Kim’s (of the district) office,

²³¹ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 3.

²³² *Ibid.*, 5.

²³³ *Plan Bay Area*, 4, 76.

²³⁴ “Plan Bay Area Priority Development Area Showcase.” Association of Bay Area Governments. Accessed March, 2017. <http://gis.abag.ca.gov/website/PDAShowcase/>

²³⁵ Martí, *Whose Future?: ‘Smart Growth’ in San Francisco*, 1.

walking tours, community surveys, an online discussion board, and meetings with various stakeholder groups.²³⁶

During the creation of the Central SoMa Plan, TODCO also created its own alternative rezoning plan for the area being studied by the Planning Department. The “Central SoMa Community Plan,” developed by TODCO, does not represent a total shift away from the Central SoMa Plan, but rather a shift in the scale of the plan. The Central SoMa Community Plan generally calls for less office development than that seen in the Central SoMa Plan (though it still advocates for building offices for the tech sector) and more permanently affordable housing. The Plan does not challenge the rezoning of PDR space, but requires varying degrees of replacement PDR space. The plan calls for allowing new tech companies to thrive in the South of Market, as long as the existing neighborhood is respected and enhanced.²³⁷

A huge component of the Central SoMa Plan, that especially is publicly pushed, are the stated public benefits, such as affordable housing and transportation funds, that are to be gained from the plan’s rezoning. The plan states that:

The Central SoMa Plan is expected to generate up to \$2 billion in public benefits to serve the neighborhood over the life of the Plan. Without it, the neighborhood could receive approximately \$300 million in public benefits. The Plan therefore provides the potential for a 667 percent increase in public benefits for Central SoMa...This \$2 billion would be derived exclusively from new development allowing for approximately 5,000 market-rate housing units and approximately 40,000 new jobs.²³⁸

The top three public benefit categories to be funded (in order) are stated as affordable housing, transportation, and PDR.²³⁹

²³⁶ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 8.

²³⁷ “TODCO Group Central SoMa Community Plan: A Comprehensive Neighborhood Vision for 21st Century South of Market.” PowerPoint Presentation, SPUR, January 2015. Accessed April, 2017. http://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/events_pdfs/TODCO%20PLAN%20-%20SPUR%20FORUM%201202015_large.pdf

²³⁸ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 133.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

The Central Subway and the Role of Transit

The construction of the Central Subway (ongoing) is one of the core reasons stated for the creation of the Central SoMa Plan. The Central Subway, slated to extend service up 4th Street from the Caltrain station into Chinatown, is said to provide the opportunity for part of the South of Market to undergo “transit oriented development.”

Relating the topics of infrastructure (such as transit), development, and growth, Jason Henderson describes in the book *Street Fight: The Politics of Mobility in San Francisco*:

Capitalism has an extraordinary need for mobility, as mobility is part of the capital infrastructure that enables the production and circulation of capital. Roads and transit lines are the primary conduits of urban mobility, but they are also conduits of capital flows and arbiters of exchange value...As the scale of the capitalist economy grows, so does the demand for more mobility. Improving the speed and access of transportation systems becomes synonymous with economic growth and individual advancement...as the demands of the market change, these fixed infrastructures [of mobility] must be modified or destroyed and replaced...Thus neoliberals, in the guise of real estate developers, landowners, bankers, financiers, and producers of new mobility, communications, and distribution technologies, are actively engaged in the politics of mobility in order to ensure that the spaces they need are built and then reshuffled or destroyed and replaced under their terms.²⁴⁰

In this sense, the development of the Central Subway and the Central SoMa Plan can be seen in relation to the growing needs of the local capitalist economy, especially as the technology sector expands in San Francisco and the larger Bay Area.

The development of the Central SoMa Plan is strongly tied to transit, with the new Central Subway project providing much of the stated impetus for the plan. The plan was created with the Central Subway going right through the middle on 4th Street in order to “include areas within easy walking distance (i.e., two blocks) of the Central Subway’s 4th Street alignment,” building on calls from Plan Bay Area to do TOD.²⁴¹ The new Central Subway line is a project of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and will extend the Muni T-Line

²⁴⁰ Henderson, Jason. *Street Fight: The Politics of Mobility in San Francisco*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013, 24.

²⁴¹ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, ii.

from the stop at 4th and King Streets (by the Caltrain station) through South of Market and into Chinatown. Construction began in 2012 and the subway is set to open to the public in 2019, adding four new stops at 4th and Brannan Streets (4th and Brannan Station, street level), 4th and Folsom Streets (Yerba Buena/Moscone Station, underground), Stockton Street at Union Square (Union Square/Market Street Station, underground), and Stockton and Washington Streets (Chinatown Station, underground).²⁴²

The Planning Department began the planning process for the Central SoMa Plan in 2011 with funding from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the SFMTA.²⁴³ Further, as the Central SoMa Plan Initial Study details, “The Central SoMa Planning Process was informed by intensive community outreach efforts and by growth projections.”²⁴⁴ The growth projections for the plan were directly taken from Plan Bay Area, which was created by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Further, SFMTA is governed by a seven member board, all of whom are appointed by the mayor. This highlights the deep connection among the planning department, planning commission, local and regional transportation bodies, and the mayor.

As Henderson describes, especially since the 1980’s and the passage of Proposition 13, San Francisco’s transportation policies have been largely shaped by conservative and neoliberal forces that see transit not as a social good, but rather as a system that must be re-claimed from lower-class riders and made safer, more efficient, and more businesslike. This is reflected not just in the funding structure of MUNI, where downtown commercial property assessments and

²⁴² *Central Corridor Plan: Draft for Public Review*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2013, 13. Accessed March, 2017. http://default.sfplanning.org/Citywide/Central_Corridor/Central-Corridor-Plan-DRAFT-FINAL-web.pdf

²⁴³ *Initial Study: Central SoMa Plan*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2014, 4. Accessed March, 2017. http://sfmea.sfplanning.org/2011.1356E_IS.pdf

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

adequate fees are dismissed in favor of local sales taxes, transfers from the general fund (at the expense of other city services), increased fares, and dependence on more uncertain state and federal funds, but also in the types of Muni projects themselves.²⁴⁵

One such example is the Central Subway project. Henderson writes:

The Central Subway might improve mobility somewhat between parts of Chinatown and the southeastern part of the city, but it also will enhance wealth in specific largely neoliberal locales [such as Mission Bay, upscale urban landfill in the Eastern Neighborhoods, the Moscone Convention Center and Yerba Buena Gardens, and the Union Square Area]. As currently manifested, the Central Subway is revanchist. It reflects not a more integrated, egalitarian, citywide approach to transit funding but a steering of public investment, such as limited sales tax revenue, to specific privileged spaces. In other words, San Francisco is investing in an expensive new rail line that enhances land values in a specific corridor identified as being profitable rather than in a more mundane improvement of overcrowded bus routes. Under contemporary neoliberalism, municipal government prioritizes an urban transportation policy, in this case the Central Subway, that enhances business competitiveness and provides a foundation for gentrification, which increases real estate values.²⁴⁶

Several problems that have been identified with the Central Subway, some of which were alluded to in the above excerpt, include poor allocation of funding (the Central Subway is a 1.7 mile, \$1.6 billion dollar project) that could have instead gone towards other existing transit needs (especially surface transit), the possibility of lost funds for other lines due to operating costs that might not be met, unreliable federal and state funding sources, lack of local funding sources, seismic and hydrology concerns, poor design that lacks major present and future connection points (such as lack of connection to the Market Street Muni Metro lines and the future Transbay Terminal), and general lack of scrutiny of the merits of the project by city government and the Board of Supervisors at the time of funding approval.²⁴⁷ Further, a 2011 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury Report found that there were several issues with the funding and design of the Central Subway, concluding that “the project must be redesigned.”²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Henderson, *Street Fight*, 146-147,160-162.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 167-168.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 165-167.

²⁴⁸ *Central Subway: Too Much for Too Little*. San Francisco: Civil Grand Jury City and County of San Francisco, 2011, 33. Accessed March, 2017. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BytJO_Tm7ZreWm9RQXVLRk5aRW8/view

This analysis helps to provide additional background regarding the impetus for the Central SoMa Plan. The construction of the Central Subway highlights the profit-driven priorities of local policy making in San Francisco - a highly questionable line that secures increased profits and “enhances business competitiveness” for certain private interests, while providing a questionable public service that may in the long term draw resources and services away from an already overburdened public transit system. The rezoning under the Central SoMa Plan, in this sense, is almost a given requirement for the forces behind the Central Subway line. The policies to be enacted by the city government through the Central SoMa Plan remain in line with the priorities seen in the development of the Central Subway.

Critique of the Central SoMa Plan: Land Use, Jobs, Housing, Displacement, Prop M, Public Benefits, Funding Sources, and Public Outreach and Engagement

The Central SoMa Plan is primarily concerned with building office space for technology companies and constructing market-rate housing.²⁴⁹ The public is said to benefit from increased fees and taxes that will go towards affordable housing, transit, and parks (among other stated benefits). Yet, the public benefits are seen as secondary (and more importantly are highly misleading) and the increased profit potential from rezoning as primary (couched in the logic of providing new commercial and residential space).

The plan demonstrates a continuing of historical trends, particularly since the Post WWII period, in terms of continuing the expansion of the downtown into the South of Market and shifting away from blue-collar land uses. The protections won by neighborhood and community activists in the late 1980's, of getting the areas surrounding the downtown rezoned to protect

²⁴⁹ *Central Corridor Plan: Draft for Public Review*, 17, 21.

housing, neighborhood businesses, and neighborhood character (including part of the South of Market) as part of the Downtown Plan, are now being undermined with the proposed rezoning under the Central SoMa Plan. The wedding of local government with business interests that was solidified in the post-WWII period continues to this day, with the close relationship between big tech and city hall represented in the mayor's donors and supporters, such as the angel-investor Ron Conway. The Central SoMa Plan reflects the needs and goals of the private market in San Francisco, today led and championed by the technology industry, at the expense of existing communities.

The historical challenges faced by the largely working class and low-income communities in the South of Market are today intensified by the second technology boom. Loss of blue-collar employment options and decreasing housing affordability are the realities for low-income residents who remain in the South of Market. The physical landscape of the area is further being altered to mimic the highrise office makeup of the financial district. Diagrams of new highrises dwarfing existing structures in the proposed Central SoMa Plan announce the future of the South of Market (see Fig. 18).²⁵⁰

DeLeon discusses the “progrowth regime” that was a product of the post-WWII attempt to create San Francisco as the corporate headquarters of the Pacific Rim, writing:

From the early 1960s to the mid-1980s...The city's top business and political leaders invented the progrowth regime to transform San Francisco into a growth machine. The city's function would be to provide the physical and social means of capitalist production and accumulation within a global division of labor. The progrowth regime became the author of the city's vision, architect of its plans, and source of its power to get things done.²⁵¹

Upon the collapse of the regime in the mid 1980's, DeLeon argued that there was for a moment an “antiregime” made up of those that fought the freeways, highrises, and downtown business

²⁵⁰ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 164-168.

²⁵¹ DeLeon, *Left Coast City*, 40.

leaders.²⁵² DeLeon writes, “The ultimate function of the antiregime is to protect community from capital...The primary instrument of this power is local government control over land use and development. In San Francisco, these growth controls have achieved unprecedented scope in the types of limits they impose on capital.”²⁵³ The antiregime, however, was not able to maintain power within City Hall, with the election of Art Agnos eventually giving way to the conservative Frank Jordan who was then succeeded by a wave of business friendly mayors (Willie Brown, Gavin Newsom, and currently Ed Lee). This is largely reflected in the land use priorities of local government, highlighted in planning documents such as the Central SoMa Plan, which seek to maximize profits at the expense of existing communities.

Land Use

The Central SoMa Plan rezones land that was zoned for PDR uses and rezones it to allow for offices and housing (which were previously banned in the PDR zones designated as Service/Light Industrial and Service/Arts/Light Industrial), with the exception of two small areas that retain PDR zoning in the western portion of the plan (by the freeway). This coincides with very large height increases in the area concentrated south of Harrison Street, going from an existing high in some areas of 85 feet to highs of 160, 250, and 400 feet in some of the rezoned areas.²⁵⁴ Such rezoning leads to speculation and displacement as lower paying uses are replaced by higher paying uses. As Zelda Bronstein, journalist and former Berkeley Planning Commissioner, describes:

²⁵² Ibid., 98.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 16-17, 20-22.

The Central SoMa Plan encouraged speculation, because the way the real estate market works is it takes a long time to get the money to assemble the resources to get the credit to put a project forward. In a downturn of a business cycle, there's such a thing as land banking where developers buy land at a relatively cheap rate and they hold onto it until they can develop it. The Central SoMa Plan was initiated in 2011, this is now almost 2017...When the Planning Department set out way back in 2011, they signaled to the real estate industry they were going to upzone this neighborhood. That's inviting speculation, because people know the land is going to be worth more because they can build more on it.²⁵⁵

Such reports of early speculation have been captured in the media, with one 2015 *San Francisco Business Times* article titled, "Lay of the land: Before the Central SoMa plan is complete, developers are already eagerly grabbing key sites in anticipation of a bonanza."²⁵⁶ As further described below, PDR uses play an integral role in maintaining social and economic diversity within San Francisco.

Jobs

The Central SoMa Plan calls for adding new office space, primarily for technology companies that are coming to, or want to come to San Francisco. There are several issues with the push for San Francisco to attract and build jobs primarily for the technology sector. First, technology companies do not hire locally in San Francisco, meaning that the new jobs produced will go to wealthier people who currently live outside of the city creating a demand for housing that cannot be met.^{257,258} Instead of providing for a diversity of jobs, the plan narrowly focuses on the most wealth producing uses to fill new development. Second, technology companies hire

²⁵⁵ Bronstein, Zelda, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, November 26, 2016.

²⁵⁶ "Lay of the land: Before the Central SoMa plan is complete, developers are already eagerly grabbing key sites in anticipation of a bonanza." *San Francisco Business Times*, February 27, 2015. Accessed March, 2017.

<http://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/print-edition/2015/02/27/key-development-sites-in-sf-soma.html>

²⁵⁷ Sabatini, Joshua. "Hearing on city's administrator's reappointment spotlights tech hiring in SF," *San Francisco Examiner*, February 8, 2017. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.sfoxaminer.com/hearing-city-administrators-reappointment-spotlights-tech-hiring-sf/>

²⁵⁸ Ha, Yoona. "Twitter, Other Tech Companies Get S.F. Tax Breaks but Show Little Progress Hiring in Neighborhood." *San Francisco Public Press*, November 11, 2013. Accessed March, 2017. <http://sfpublicpress.org/news/2013-11/twitter-other-tech-companies-get-sf-tax-breaks-but-show-little-progress-hiring-in-neighborhood>

primarily white and male workforces, thus increasing the homogenization of residents in San Francisco.^{259,260,261}

Further, by changing land uses, the plan decimates the existing blue-collar PDR businesses and jobs in the South of Market. PDR cannot compete with higher paying office uses and thus will face displacement due to rising rents. The efforts put in place to “protect” PDR in the plan area by preserving a small area zoned for PDR, limiting conversion of PDR space, and requiring PDR as part of large developments are inadequate and will not protect the existing PDR space as it exists nor meet the plan’s goal of ensuring “that the removal of protective zoning would not result in a net loss of PDR as a result of the plan.”²⁶² While the passage of Proposition X in 2016 (requiring replacement of certain PDR space) will provide additional policy aimed at retaining PDR in the South of Market, it is unknown at this point how successful this proposition will be. The fact that city government has not been able to keep up with enforcing the existing zoning in the South of Market, allowing illegal conversions of PDR space into office space, further speaks to the likelihood of PDR displacement under the new proposed zoning.²⁶³

PDR jobs provide higher wages for working class residents with the lowest levels of skills and education (especially compared to the wages paid by service sector jobs), are more stable than other sectors (especially office), and are an integral part of the diversity of the local

²⁵⁹ Trop, Jaclyn and Stacy Jones 2015, “See how the big tech companies compare on employee diversity” *Fortune*, July 30, 2015. Accessed March, 2017. <http://fortune.com/2015/07/30/tech-companies-diveristy/>

²⁶⁰ Daileida, Colin. “Tech is dominated by even more white dudes than the rest of the private sector” *Mashable*, May 19, 2016. Accessed March, 2017. <http://mashable.com/2016/05/19/diversity-report-silicon-valley-white-men/#SOVIRSMKouqa>

²⁶¹ Rodriguez, Salvador. “As Tech Giants Push for Diversity, Blacks and Latinos are Fleeing Once-Diverse San Francisco” *International Business Times*, April 9, 2015. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.ibtimes.com/tech-giants-push-diversity-blacks-latinos-are-fleeing-once-diverse-san-francisco-1872760>

²⁶² *Draft Environmental Impact Report: Central SoMa Plan*, III-6 - III-7.

²⁶³ Bronstein, Zelda. “SF finally cracks down on illegal offices,” *48Hills*, September 7, 2015. Accessed April, 2017. <http://48hills.org/2015/09/07/sf-finally-cracks-down-on-illegal-offices/>

economy.²⁶⁴ Further, the PDR sector has been growing in San Francisco.^{265,266} The only way to retain PDR businesses and jobs is to enforce and create protective zoning, ensuring that land and space is available for these uses.

Housing

The majority of new residential development in the plan (77%) is market-rate.²⁶⁷ The chronic over-building of market-rate units and chronic under building of affordable units will only work to exacerbate the inequality crisis that is plaguing San Francisco, as the private market caters to the highest paying individuals.^{268, 269} Not only are market-rate units unaffordable to low-income and middle-class South of Market residents, but the type of affordable housing being proposed, “below market-rate units,” are also not affordable for many current South of Market residents.²⁷⁰

This imbalance of housing types is also inconsistent with the Association of Bay Area Government’s (ABAG) Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) which provides projected housing needs by income for each of the Bay Area counties. The 2014 - 2022 RHNA calls for 42% of new housing to be market-rate (over 120% of Area Median Income), and 58% of new

²⁶⁴ *Industrial Land in San Francisco: Understanding Production, Distribution, and Repair*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2002, 29-33. Accessed April, 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/4893-CW_DPR_chapter5_2.pdf

²⁶⁵ Torres, Blanca. “Why S.F. manufacturing group opposes ballot proposal to save manufacturing space.” *San Francisco Business Times*, July 29, 2016. Accessed April, 2017. <http://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/blog/real-estate/2016/07/sf-made-san-francisco-ballot-pdr-jane-kim.html>

²⁶⁶ *Cities Need Manufacturing, and Manufacturing Needs our Cities*. San Francisco: SFMade, 2016, 3. Accessed April, 2017. http://www.sfmade.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2016_State-of-Urban-Manufacturing.pdf

²⁶⁷ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 136.

²⁶⁸ Redmond, Tim. “Why the private market can never solve SF’s housing crisis,” *48Hills*, April 14, 2014. Accessed July, 2017. <http://48hills.org/2014/04/14/private-market-can-never-solve-sfs-housing-crisis/>

²⁶⁹ Cohen, Peter. “Eye on the State: Housing crisis tied to income inequality,” *San Francisco Examiner*, February 3, 2017. Accessed July, 2017. <http://www.sfexaminer.com/eye-state-housing-crisis-tied-income-inequality/>

²⁷⁰ French, Sally. “How I bought a condo in San Francisco for \$268,000.” *Market Watch*, July 6, 2016. Accessed April, 2017. <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/how-i-bought-a-condo-in-san-francisco-for-268000-2016-07-05>

housing to be moderate/low/very low income (from 120% to less than 50% of Area Median Income).²⁷¹ This shows how the Central SoMa Plan will help to continue San Francisco's trend of over-building market-rate housing at the expense of lower and moderate income residents.

The other issue with building a majority of market-rate units is that market-rate units actually create the need for additional affordable housing. According to the Residential Nexus Analysis study commissioned by the City of San Francisco (which looks at the impact of the development of market-rate housing on affordable housing demand), for every 100 new market-rate units produced in San Francisco, it creates the need for an additional 43 units of new affordable housing.²⁷² San Francisco, however, does not build affordable housing at nearly the same rate as market-rate housing. Thus, the creation of market-rate units further exacerbates the affordability crisis.

Displacement

The plan discusses how increased land values are a direct product of both the rezoning by the plan and the construction of the central subway.²⁷³ Yet the plan does not protect against what results from increased land values - speculation, evictions, and displacement. The plan offers no new protections for existing residents, businesses, non-profits, and other community serving institutions against displacement or eviction.²⁷⁴ Other than the push to preserve specific historic

²⁷¹ *Regional Housing Need Plan: San Francisco Bay Area 2014-2022*. San Francisco: Association of Bay Area Governments, 2013, 21. Accessed March, 2017. http://www.abag.ca.gov/files/ABAG_Final_RHNA_Publication.pdf

²⁷² *Residential Nexus Analysis City and County of San Francisco*. San Francisco: Keyser Marston Associates, 2007, 7. Accessed March, 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/8380-FINAL%20Resid%20Nexus_04-4-07.pdf

²⁷³ *Central Corridor Plan: Draft for Public Review*, 101.

²⁷⁴ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 28-29.

areas and buildings, the plan does not address displacement that the city knows will occur due to new development, as is evident in the “communities of concern” laid out in Plan Bay Area.^{275,276}

Further, a University of California Berkeley report on transit oriented development and gentrification shows how areas in the Bay Area that are located close to transit are more likely to suffer gentrification and displacement (with displacement even more likely for areas where there are a majority of renters). In San Francisco, these areas include those near the Central Subway.²⁷⁷

The plan states the goal of “maintaining the diversity of residents,” yet the new policies enacted to meet this goal only include requiring a percentage of two and three bedroom units, a new Community Services Fee (addressed below in the “funding sources” section), and specific policies aimed at achieving 33% affordable housing.²⁷⁸ The issue with these policies is that they will not work to maintain the diversity of residents. Preventing against displacement is the only way to maintain the diversity of residents, otherwise, as has already been seen in San Francisco, low-income residents and disproportionately people of color will be displaced.

The plan also states the goal of “preserving and celebrating the neighborhood’s cultural heritage” with a particular focus on the Filipino and LGBTQ communities in the South of Market. This is mainly said to be achieved through creating cultural heritage districts and preserving certain historic sites and areas.²⁷⁹ It is unclear how the cultural heritage districts will function to preserve cultural heritage and if and how they will be able to prevent the displacement of existing communities, specifically the Filipino and LGBTQ communities. The

²⁷⁵ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 85-91.

²⁷⁶ *Plan Bay Area Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy for the San Francisco Bay Area 2013-2040*. San Francisco: Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments, 2013, 111-112.

²⁷⁷ Chapple, Karen. *Mapping Susceptibility to Gentrification: The Early Warning Toolkit*. Berkeley: Center for Community Innovation at UC-Berkeley, 2009, 6,9,11. Accessed March, 2017. <http://communityinnovation.berkeley.edu/reports/Gentrification-Report.pdf>

²⁷⁸ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 27-32.

²⁷⁹ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 83, 85-91.

focus on preserving buildings does not prevent actual people, businesses, and nonprofits from being displaced. As Angelica Cabande, a community activist and organizer in the South of Market, describes, “In Central SoMa they [the Planning Department] talk about there’s gentrification and displacement, in particular with the Filipino community, and then when you read the area plan it doesn’t specify how that’s going to be addressed, aside from being recognized that there is a SoMa Pilipinas Cultural Heritage District, it doesn’t specify those things.”²⁸⁰ In this sense, the Planning Department and the city are willing to recognize and name the problem (displacement) and the potential communities that will be affected (in this instance the Filipino and LGBTQ communities), yet no action is taken to create concrete policies to address concerns of displacement.

Proposition M

One issue with the Central SoMa Plan is the reality of Proposition M, the 1986 ballot measure that created an annual cap on office space development. The plan calls for a massive rezoning that will allow for the “potential” of more than 10 million square feet in office space to be built over the next 20 years. With Proposition M, however, there is an annual 950,000 square foot cap for new office development creating an immediate tension between existing and new city policy.²⁸¹ As the Draft EIR (DEIR) for the Central SoMa Plan describes, the more than 10 million in square feet of office space expected to be built “represents about 11 years of the annual limit’s large building allocation. However...there are other very large office projects

²⁸⁰ Cabande, Angelica, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, March 3, 2017.

²⁸¹ *Draft Environmental Impact Report: Central SoMa Plan*, III-20.

outside the Plan Area that would be anticipated to draw down the office space allocation.”²⁸²

Thus, the DEIR itself admits that there are existing problems with the anticipated growth to happen under the Central SoMa Plan versus other parts of the city in the face of this cap.

The purpose of Proposition M was to seek a balance among housing, transportation, and employment, a large part of which included regulating the rate at which office construction could occur. This has worked to help keep San Francisco’s economy from experiencing the pitfalls of others cities who overbuilt office space, with the 25 Year Downtown Plan Monitoring Report 1985 - 2009 stating that “With mandated office development caps, San Francisco did not see the level of speculative office development as other cities have experienced over the past 25 years.”²⁸³ Further, it has worked to help control the rate at which San Francisco develops and changes, working to help buffer neighborhood communities from the negative effects of rapid development during economic booms in San Francisco.

However, there have been successful attempts at undermining Proposition M, by taking large development projects to the ballot box for voter approval (as required in Proposition M for an exemption to the cap), as seen with the Candlestick Point/Hunters Point Shipyard development project (exempted in 2016).

Public Benefits

The plan outlines how money that is generated from new development will be allocated to new “public benefits.” They include: affordable housing (\$900 million), transit (\$500 million), PDR (\$180 million), parks and recreation (\$160 million), complete streets (\$130 million),

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ *25 Years: Downtown Plan Monitoring Report 1985 - 2009*, 10.

environmental sustainability (\$70 million), schools and childcare (\$50 million), cultural preservation (\$40 million), and community services (\$20 million).²⁸⁴

Looking just at the first three, affordable housing, transit, and PDR, much can be gained as to what can be expected from the plan in terms of benefits to the public.

The funds for affordable housing produced will go towards constructing 2,600 new (mainly “below market-rate”) housing units (33% of the total housing units being produced under the plan). Of these 2,600 units, 700 are expected to be built on-site and the other 1,900 are to be built off-site and/or funded through in-lieu fees, with the plan stating that the units built by in-lieu fees “could fall behind the market rate development that provided the fees or land, in some instances by several years, assuming that additional funding is not directed to the Plan area.”²⁸⁵ Further, over the last ten years San Francisco has lost affordable housing at almost the same rate that it has produced it, with 5,700 units being built and 4,200 units being lost.²⁸⁶ The plan provides no new means of protecting against the loss of existing affordable housing.²⁸⁷ This shows how the affordable housing produced has an unsure timeline and is already being lost at an exceptional rate, which obscures the commitment to the production of new affordable housing.

Of the funds produced for transit, two-thirds (\$333 million) will go towards the SFMTA and one-third (\$167 million) will go towards regional transit (BART, AC Transit, Caltrain, and long term transit studies).²⁸⁸ The funds that will go to SFMTA are stated as helping SFMTA, “to support a state of good repair on the existing Muni fleet and infrastructure, as well as

²⁸⁴ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 135.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁸⁶ *Housing Balance Report*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2016, 4. Accessed March, 2017. http://default.sfplanning.org/publications_reports/HousingBalanceReport-420160930_BoS.pdf

²⁸⁷ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 28

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 137.

enhancement and expansion of services.”²⁸⁹ The fact that one-third of the transit funds will go to regional transit flies in the face of “public benefits,” as the public here is extended to the larger Bay Area. Of the funds dedicated to the SFMTA, close to half (42%) are to accumulate “over the lifespan of the Plan and beyond.”²⁹⁰ While it is already highly questionable that \$333 million in funds for SFMTA would be enough for local transit to absorb tens of thousands of new workers and residents in San Francisco (SFMTA currently has an annual operating budget of over one billion dollars), the fact that close to half of these funds will come “over the lifespan of the Plan and beyond” is highly reflective of the dubious nature of the stated “public benefits.”²⁹¹ The last point shows how while the city can make changes to significantly increase the local population (both in terms of workers and residents) through rezoning, the city is much less capable of acquiring the funds necessary to address the infrastructure needs, here just in terms of transportation, to accommodate this new population.

The funds for PDR that are to be produced, set at the dollar amount of \$180 million, actually represents the dollar amount given to the new requirement in the plan of requiring large commercial developments to provide PDR space.²⁹² This “public benefit” actually represents a token effort by the city to require new PDR in certain new developments due to the loss of protected PDR space as a result of the rezoning of the plan. Thus, this “public benefit” is highly misleading as it is actually a defensive move to recuperate a small fraction of the PDR space that will be lost due to the plan.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ “Proposed Operating Budget: Fiscal Year 2017 & Fiscal Year 2018.” San Francisco: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, 2016. Accessed April, 2017. <https://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/agendaitems/2016/4-5-16%20Item%2014%20FY17-FY18%20Operating%20Budget%20Book.pdf>

²⁹² *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, 38.

Funding Sources

From the start, the plan's funding sources for infrastructure and public amenities assume that all of the development that is projected to happen under the plan will happen. The plan only implements three new taxes/fees on new development (one of which would be subject to voter approval). These include a Mello-Roos Community Facilities District Tax that goes primarily to transit (to be collected over the 25 year span of the plan and requires voter approval to be implemented), a Central SoMa Fee that goes towards affordable housing, and a Community Services Fee to go towards community services (to be collected over the span of the plan). The other fee that is required for the Central SoMa Plan is the Eastern Neighborhoods Impact Fee because the plan falls within the boundaries of the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan. The rest of the fees and requirements on new development are existing city policies on new development.²⁹³

The issue with the funding sources for infrastructure and public amenities is that they are simply not enough in relation to the proposed development under the Central SoMa Plan. As was seen with the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, the funding sources for infrastructure and public amenities were insufficient to provide the necessary improvements required for all the new development that took place/is taking place. With the case of the Central SoMa Plan, this issue looks to be largely repeated. Of the new fees/taxes, the Central SoMa Fee is fully dedicated to funding below market-rate units that will likely fall behind the rest of the development, the Community Services Fee is likely to fall behind the rest of development (as admitted by the plan), and the Mello-Roos Tax is annual, meaning that new development could outpace the projected benefits of this tax, not to mention that it is not a large enough tax to cover the types of

²⁹³ Ibid., 134.

transit improvements tens of thousands of new people require, and it needs to be approved by a vote.²⁹⁴

Public Outreach and Engagement

The Planning Department's public outreach and engagement process involved holding open houses, public hearings, check-ins with the mayor's and Supervisor Kim's office, walking tours, community surveys, an online discussion board, and meetings with various stakeholder groups.²⁹⁵ In an interview with the Central SoMa Plan project manager Steve Wertheim, the process was described in this way:

We just listened [to the public] for a year...Probably the most important thing we did was we reached out pro-actively to a bunch of community groups and said 'we want to talk to you.' A public meeting is a weird place because it's an environment you haven't been in before and people are talking at you. Whereas a community group that you're already showing up to, your community group, and it's your home and your rules and your turf, and we come to you and we listen to you or we hear what you have to say and we answer your questions. I always feel like that's the best thing. We're not trying to hide anything. The opposite, we're trying to share and make sure it works for people and their lived reality and they can understand our vision and buy in...Probably if I'd done it again [the Central SoMa Plan], I would have written down who the ideas were from as we incorporated them into the plan. But we incorporated those ideas into the plan all the time. People really like light and air and that's what makes SoMa special. It's dense but not oppressive. We developed all these special rules to set back the height limits...or for people the most important thing was sidewalks were so uncomfortable so we identified a bunch of money to make those sidewalks wider - all those ideas²⁹⁶

The above quote poses some conflicting accounts of public involvement in the creation of the plan. While specific ideas such as more access to light and air and better sidewalks were identified as being incorporated into the plan as a result of public engagement, the fact that the Planning Department was trying to "share [the plan] and make sure it works for people" suggests that the plan was largely developed prior to the public outreach performed by the planning department.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 141.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 8.

²⁹⁶ Wertheim, Steve, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, December 14, 2016.

Looking at the Central Corridor Background Report (May 2011) and the Central Corridor Public Realm Report (October 2011), released about the same time the public outreach and engagement process began, which describes the aims of the plan surrounding jobs, housing, and the public realm (open space, sidewalks, etc.), it appears the Planning Department had largely figured out what the core aims and goals of the Central SoMa Plan were before the public became involved (with the earliest public outreach efforts taking place in June 2011). The two reports contain the core principles of the final Central SoMa Plan (though with less specific detail) of increasing capacity for jobs and housing, facilitating TOD, and improving streets, sidewalks, open spaces, traffic, transit, biking conditions, and air quality (the Central SoMa Plan later added the additional goals of “maintaining the diversity of residents,” “preserving cultural heritage,” “creating an environmentally sustainable neighborhood,” and “ensuring that new buildings enhance the character of the neighborhood”).^{297,298,299} The two goals added of maintaining diversity and preserving cultural heritage were concepts that were largely absent from the 2011 reports, yet, as described above, are extremely lacking in terms of new policies needed to actually carry out these goals.

The fact that the Central SoMa Plan Initial Study also states that the planning process was informed by growth projections also speaks to the point of the plan being largely pre-determined.³⁰⁰

As described by Cabande:

²⁹⁷ *Central Corridor Planning Project Background Report*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2011. Accessed March, 2017.

http://default.sfplanning.org/Citywide/Central_Corridor/Central_Corridor_Background_Report.pdf

²⁹⁸ *Public Realm Existing Conditions Assessment Central Corridor Planning Project*. San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, 2011. Accessed March, 2017.

http://208.121.200.84/ftp/files/Citywide/Central_Corridor/CC_PublicRealmExistingConditionsReport_Oct2011.pdf

²⁹⁹ *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*, ii-iii.

³⁰⁰ *Initial Study: Central SoMa Plan*, 4.

It's been challenging because they [the Planning Department] would do community meetings without adequate outreach. For example last year or two years ago they even did an online 'where did people want fees from Central SoMa to come [to]?' And instead of having community meetings that are culturally competent they just put it on a website...They are including us but not prioritizing our needs. We're still seeing that the city is still tokenizing what we're saying in a way. It's still not in a place where there is a balance between community development and community input.³⁰¹

As described above, issues of cultural competency were present in the format of the Planning Department's outreach and engagement strategy. For an area as diverse in terms of languages and cultures as the South of Market, cultural competency is a crucial aspect of public outreach. Further, Cabande expressed the experience of the planning process as lacking a complete representation of community needs and desires.

My research included attending a Planning Commission Hearing on the Revised Central SoMa Plan in August 2016, and attending an open house on the Revised Central SoMa Plan in November 2016. The Planning Commission Hearing involved a presentation from Steve Wertheim (the Central SoMa Plan project manager), followed by public comment (of which I participated), and responses from the commission. It is unclear what impact the public comment had on the planning process (if any at all).

At the open house, planning department staff, led by Wertheim, presented a section of the revised Central SoMa Plan. As one walked into the room where the presentation was being held at the Bayanihan Center, there was a large poster board with the title "\$2 Billion in Public Benefits" on a stand near the entrance (see Fig. 19). The public in attendance was majority white and adult, and the entire presentation was held in English only. The presentation involved a PowerPoint presentation with direct pages taken out of the plan being presented and read, with no attempt to replace planning jargon. There was no question/answer period, and the presentation ended with the opportunity for members of the public to mingle and ask questions one on one with the planning department staff. There was a questionnaire given to each member of the

³⁰¹ Cabande, Angelica, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, March 3, 2017.

public which allowed some feedback, yet it is unclear what exactly was done with these questionnaires (see Fig. 20). According to Wertheim, he receives all the questionnaires and goes through them personally so that he can respond to people's questions and see if they are being heard.³⁰²

Based on my own ethnographic research, and existing Central SoMa Plan planning reports, it appears the public outreach and engagement process undertaken for the plan was more about presenting a pre-defined plan to the public to diffuse opposition first, and receiving feedback second. The fact that the core priorities stated in the preliminary 2011 reports coincide with the core priorities present in the final plan speak to this point.

Three major parts of the plan were ultimately altered. The first two seem to have been largely from outside public pressure - the changing of the name of the plan from the "Central Corridor Plan" to the "Central SoMa Plan," and provisions in the final draft of attempting to retain PDR (instead of instituting no controls on the loss of PDR). The final change was administrative, and came in the form of redrawing the boundaries in the northern portion of the plan to maintain general consistency with other existing plans (specifically the Downtown Plan).³⁰³

Lessons from other Area Plans

Looking to other existing area plans that have already been implemented in San Francisco helps give a sense of what may come as a result of the implementation of the Central SoMa Plan. The Downtown Plan, the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, and the Western SoMa

³⁰² Wertheim, Steve, San Francisco, November 15, 2016.

³⁰³ Wertheim, Steve. "Central SoMa Plan - Informational Presentation." San Francisco Planning Commission video, 38:00, August 11, 2016. http://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=20&clip_id=25976

Community Plan have all accomplished their primary goals of increasing development in San Francisco, in terms of both commercial and residential development. However, the outcomes of development have been highly uneven. Offices and market-rate housing have been the core drivers of new development under these area plans. This development aids the increase of a strictly wealthier, better-educated, and higher earning population of people in San Francisco. This comes at the cost of increased housing prices, displacement, evictions, and gentrification as higher paying individuals/businesses/corporations replace existing lower paying uses. As Lord explains, “Almost invariably when you get into a situation where a planning department comes in and upzones and increases property values by giving them greater development potential, you are going to get displacement. Invariably...I think that they’re [area plans] more enabling of displacement than they are of anything else. In terms of being able to address those issues, I don’t think they [area plans] do a very good job.”³⁰⁴

The increase in jobs and population have also led to a situation in San Francisco where infrastructure, as especially seen in transportation, cannot keep up with new development. As Kelly describes, “What happened in the Eastern Neighborhoods is the same thing that happens with all the other area plans. And it’s happening today with the Central SoMa Plan. Which is that planning identifies what the maximum possible impact fee is, which would be the amount sufficient to pay for the infrastructure, and developers scream bloody murder...So they reduce the impact fee.”³⁰⁵ Colen expands on this, stating:

There are some core battle zones in San Francisco...[and another one is] Infrastructure [and] benefits. ‘Ok, we approved this development, but we were promised parks, better transit, bike lanes - don’t see any of that.’ And they’re [the public] not wrong about that. One of the key things about area plans is this idea of height and upzoning, which confers enormous value to landowners who own the property. Accepted public wisdom is that you extract a certain portion of that, that goes to the community. It’s supposed to provide public benefits, and we haven’t solved that. So there’s a lot of fighting about, ‘This is bullshit. We see all

³⁰⁴ Lord, Paul, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, March 3, 2017.

³⁰⁵ Kelly, Tony, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, December 12, 2016.

the height, and our parks are shit, and we don't have the bike lanes, and the community groups are still being displaced.³⁰⁶

In addition to a lack of infrastructure, affordable housing is simply not being produced, and blue-collar PDR space is sacrificed wherever it exists. Further, development is occurring at a rate faster than expected in these decades long plans, often more subject to regional and global economic forces than local planning directives.

Taken together, these plans tend to do exactly what they were set up to do, help streamline new development while having the facade of public approval, engagement, and benefits. The problem is what the outcomes are for the existing population. As Kelly describes:

They [developers] don't want a site by site fight on spot zoning because then they have to do a brand new negotiation every single time. And neither do we, that's exhausting, we can't fight that every single time. So the idea of a neighborhood plan is saying what can we accept, will we be ok with, and what can they do so they have certainty. The problem is what if the plan is not to your satisfaction, on the neighborhood side. What if they screw you over with the neighborhood and everybody gets to go through *by-right* and you've got to try and throw log jams in their way. So that's one problem. The other problem is that they always try and intensify their use anyway, they try and get exceptions to the area plan - 'oh you don't mind if we go a little higher or a little more dense or not give you this little bit of open space' - they ask for exceptions and they get them like candy on Halloween. There are a number of ways, a couple dozen ways that the planning process is biased against neighborhoods. And this is another one. Developers get to ask for exceptions, the neighborhood does not. The area plan and the area plan protocols and exemptions are not a ceiling, they are a floor for developers, and it was sold to us in the neighborhoods as a ceiling and it isn't.³⁰⁷

Here, Kelly highlights many of the problems associated with the implementation of an area plan (even when there is real community support and interest in an area plan), specifically on the community side of the agreement made for rezoning. These are the same issues that face the South of Market neighborhood under the current rezoning proposal.

The Western SoMa Community Plan, however, is an interesting case of contestation within the history of area plans and larger planning in San Francisco under the Planning Department. The Western SoMa Community Plan took on a level of grassroots community planning that was very unique, having a degree of autonomy from the Planning Department that

³⁰⁶ Colen, Tim, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, March 27, 2017.

³⁰⁷ Kelly, Tony, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, December 12, 2016.

other area plans have not had. Yet, the outcomes of the Western SoMa Community Plan have been short-lived and undermined by the current rezoning happening in the Central SoMa Plan. In this sense, the area plan that may have had the most hope in terms of providing all of its stated goals did not last very long. But even the Western SoMa Community Plan faces questions about lack of affordable housing and challenges to providing infrastructure improvements for population growth.

Another core issue highlighted by existing area plans is the question of timing and implementation. The three area plans analyzed above did not foresee future changes that were to occur in San Francisco - specifically booms and busts in the local economy. This is a huge issue with area plans, as the EIR for a plan is done only once at a very specific moment in history. This demonstrates the way in which streamlining new development under an area plan can create unforeseen consequences that are not fully studied or understood by the initial plan. Another issue with the timing of area plans is who the “public” is during the creation of the plan versus when it is implemented. As Colen describes:

Eastern Neighborhoods [Plan] took I think ten, eleven, twelve years depending on how you count, from the time they started talking about rezoning old industrial land until it was delivered. And by the time it passes there are people that don't even know what it's about. 'Wait a minute, no one ever told me what this is about, how can you come in and rezone my neighborhood?' 'Well, we've been at it for years and years, so.' Presumably by the time Central SoMa came around, they've done it enough and they're getting better at it. So, Central SoMa's done a lot better and its been achieved faster. I think it's four, five years, six tops. Which is lightening speed in San Francisco to do a rezoning...One of the big fights right now is going to be to see if community groups can delegitimize the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan. So, contrast to Central SoMa, it's still too early but I haven't heard anyone - I guess it hasn't passed. But, who knows in a few years when tall buildings are starting to sprout up in Central SoMa, it's possible people say 'what the - who's the idiot that approved this, where did this come from? You can't do that, you're ruining the city, the skyline.'³⁰⁸

This shows several issues with the timing and implementation of area plans. When populations are changing, how can public “consensus” be achieved when the process of implementing an area plan can take several years or even over a decade?

³⁰⁸ Colen, Tim, interviewed by David Woo, San Francisco, March 27, 2017.

Another important case of development plans can be seen in the proposed 2005 Mid-Market Redevelopment plan and later the Mid-Market Twitter tax break. While these are not cases of area plans specifically, they highlight the possibilities and challenges of land-use planning in part of the South of Market (closest to Market Street). While the Twitter tax break has been a defining feature of the current administration's position towards planning and economic growth, the proposed Redevelopment area offers an alternative of what could have been and what could be. The Twitter tax break has worked to attract technology companies to San Francisco, as desired. In this sense, it is in line with the main priorities seen in the Central SoMa Plan. The proposed Mid-Market Redevelopment area, however, sought a different type of regeneration - one based in the arts and affordable housing. This type of planning may have worked to better stabilize this area against displacement and develop the area as a space for existing residents and businesses, instead of developing it as an extension of the downtown office district.

Reflecting back on the Central SoMa Plan in light of analyzing three other existing area plans, as well as the proposed and passed legislation for Mid-Market, much of the pitfalls apparent in the existing plans are apparent in the proposed Central SoMa Plan. These pitfalls for the Central SoMa Plan include a reliance on the development of office space and market-rate housing as the drivers for the plan. This is coupled with sources of funding for infrastructure improvements that are highly questionable as to whether or not they can meet the funding needs of the increased jobs and population that would result from new development under the plan. The goal of achieving 33% affordable housing, while higher than that achieved under the other area plans, would still be inadequate to meet the housing needs by income as projected by the Regional Housing Needs Allocation - seen the other way around, the plan calls for producing

77% market-rate housing. PDR space is set to be lost, with controls put in place that are unlikely to prevent displacement of these uses. As exhibited by the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, which sought as a primary goal to stabilize and retain PDR, such efforts have failed.

Part 3: Conclusion

This section critically analyzed the Central SoMa Plan and offered a critique of the problems associated with the proposed plan and rezoning of the South of Market. While the plan seeks to add 10 million square feet of new office space, 45,000 jobs, and 7,800 new housing units, it does not provide any new protections for residents, businesses, non-profits, and other community serving institutions against displacement or eviction. Further, the measures put in place to retain PDR are inadequate and will likely fail to prevent the displacement of PDR. The type of new development sought under the plan is high-end office and housing development - this type of development is for a strictly wealthier, higher-earning, higher-educated, and more homogenous population. In addition, the “public benefits” package is misleading in nature and will not provide enough funding to meet the increased public needs of such a population increase. In this same vein, the infrastructure needed to meet the proposed new development is not adequately funded by the requirements for new development outlined under the existing plan, and such infrastructure development will most likely fall behind the office and housing development (or simply not occur at all). By looking at three existing area plans (as well as the proposed Mid-Market Redevelopment plan) and the results of their implementation, the argument is made that the problems associated with these existing area plans will largely be repeated under the proposed Central SoMa Plan.

Part 4: What Kind of Growth? Fainstein’s Concept of the “Just City”

This section will offer an alternative vision of development, planning, and growth for cities that is in many ways opposite to the vision San Francisco currently holds. First, the concept of the “just city” as developed by Susan S. Fainstein will be discussed, as it relates to San Francisco. Then, the concept of the just city will be more fully fleshed out by looking at the core concepts of equity, diversity, and democracy surrounding planning and policy making in cities. It is then argued that San Francisco must take a “just city” approach to planning, development, and growth that seeks to address the needs of existing residents, especially residents that are least well off, if the city wants to maintain diversity based on race, class, and sexuality.

Fainstein and the Just City

San Francisco’s trajectory of growth and development has largely been led by private interests, captured in the restructuring of the local economy following WWII, the first and second technology booms, and the catering to private interests for decades by mayors with close business ties. This, however, has not come without challenges as activists, environmentalists, and many others have stood up to challenge inequitable development patterns. There have been many wins by these groups, such as the fight to halt freeway construction, the passage of Proposition M in 1986, and the eventual passage of rent control in San Francisco.

The priorities set by city policy makers are what ultimately get translated into physical development plans - the policy of increasing height limits gets translated into zoning map amendments that greenlight new types of development. In many ways, those who fight against

the business dominated development policies of City Hall come to embody many ideals of what Susan S. Fainstein calls the “just city.” As San Francisco works to actively restructure working class areas of the city to accommodate high end office and housing uses, the question remains, what other forms of development and growth exist? One alternative vision of development and growth comes from Fainstein’s concept of “the just city.” Fainstein describes the just city as “a city in which public investment and regulation...produce equitable outcomes rather than support those already well off,” and where public decisions are guided by the tenets of equity, democracy, and diversity.³⁰⁹ As cities across the country grapple with the same issues of affordability and income inequality that are seen locally in San Francisco, Fainstein’s model of the just city provides an alternative vision of change and growth for American cities that puts people ahead of profit and fights for justice as a main component in urban planning and policy making.^{310, 311} For this reason, it is worth briefly exploring Fainstein’s concept of the just city and how it would apply to San Francisco.

As Fainstein writes:

The choice of justice as the governing norm for evaluating urban policy is obviously value laden. It reacts to the current emphasis on competitiveness and the dominance in policy making of neoliberal formulations that aim at reducing government intervention and enabling market processes. Neoliberalism...refers to the doctrine that market processes result in the efficient allocation of resources and provide incentives that stimulate innovation and economic growth. For the market to work, state action that distorts prices and interferes with rewards to investors must be minimized.³¹²

It is in this context that Fainstein calls for a reformulation of the priorities of city policy makers that moves away from neoliberal notions of “competitiveness” towards a focus on producing just outcomes in city planning and policy making that reflect the ideas of equity, democracy, and diversity.

³⁰⁹ Fainstein, Susan S. *The Just City*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010, 3-5.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

³¹¹ Clark, Patrick. “America’s Cities Are Running Out of Room,” *Bloomberg*, May 22, 2017. Accessed July, 2017. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-05-22/america-s-cities-are-running-out-of-room>

³¹² Fainstein, *The Just City*, 8.

In describing equity, Fainstein writes, “[equity] refers to a distribution of both material and nonmaterial benefits derived from public policy that does not favor those who are already better off at the beginning. Further, it does not require that each person be treated the same but rather that treatment be appropriate.”³¹³ Fainstein continues, describing how the aim of equity focused planning and policy making would explicitly help those worst off and would work to realign the “urban policies, which are typically under the control of pro-growth regimes, [which] have favored the well-off over the disadvantaged” towards a pro-equity regime.³¹⁴ A pro-equity planning and policy focus does the opposite and focuses on the less well off, and “should be redistributive, not simply economically but also, as appropriate, politically, socially, and spatially.”³¹⁵ In terms of planning and policy recommendations to achieve equity, Fainstein suggests providing more below-median income housing as a result of new development, completely retaining the supply of existing affordable housing, not allowing homes or businesses to be involuntarily relocated for the purpose of economic development, requiring economic development to focus on employees and small business, subjecting megaprojects to heightened scrutiny, keeping transit fares very low, and requiring planners to take an active role in pressing for egalitarian solutions and blocking ones that favor the already well-off.³¹⁶

On democracy, Fainstein describes how:

There need not be an expectation of high levels of participation by people who do not wish to take part. The purpose of inclusion in decision making should be to have interests fairly represented, not to value participation in and of itself. If justice is the goal, the requirement of democracy is mainly instrumental - without it, those with less power are likely to be treated badly.³¹⁷

Fainstein goes on to explain that the focus on democracy comes second to that of equity, as the focus on democracy as a good in itself is less important in the discussion of the just city than the

³¹³ Ibid., 36.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 172-173.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 175.

ability of democracy to be an instrument in the “achievement of the just.” In terms of planning and policy recommendations to achieve democracy, Fainstein suggests allowing groups that are not able to participate directly in decision-making to be represented by advocates, requiring that development plans be done in consultation with the existing population though they should not be the sole decision makers, and that when planning is done in uninhabited or sparsely inhabited areas there should be broad consultation with groups that live outside the areas.³¹⁸

On diversity, Fainstein writes:

respect to diversity does not require that people who cannot get along live next door to each other. Indeed, people should have the right to protect themselves from others who do not respect their way of life. What is important is that people are not differentiated and excluded according to ascriptive characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, or homelessness.³¹⁹

In terms of planning and policy recommendations to achieve diversity, Fainstein suggests not requiring homes to move to achieve diversity but also requiring new communities that are built to resist segregation, requiring zoning to foster inclusion rather than be discriminatory, creating porous boundaries between districts, requiring public space to be widely accessible, requiring land uses to be mixed where practical and desired by affected populations, and requiring public authorities to assist historically disadvantaged groups in achieving access to housing, education, and employment.³²⁰

Fainstein reflects on the possibilities of achieving the just city, writing “there are obvious limits to what can be accomplished at the metropolitan level. At the very least, however, a concern with justice can prevent urban regimes from displacing residents involuntarily, destroying communities, and directing resources at costly megaprojects that offer few general benefits.”³²¹ Unfortunately, the proposed Central SoMa Plan does not reflect the goals outlined

³¹⁸ Ibid., 175.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 174-175.

³²⁰ Ibid., 174.

³²¹ Ibid., 183.

under the just city; in fact, the Central SoMa Plan and the larger growth strategy for San Francisco reflect the exact opposite. Under the tenets of equity, democracy, and diversity, the development and growth patterns of San Francisco (including those proposed under the Central SoMa Plan) largely fail on these three fronts (especially equity). San Francisco is becoming more homogenous in terms of class and race, yet an overview of the social and economic development of San Francisco shows a continued trend towards aiding and increasing this homogeneity.

In order to move away from a neoliberal growth model of “competitiveness,” San Francisco must embrace such planning and policy suggestions as outlined above that focus on the justice of a planning project or public policy decision especially as it relates to equity, diversity, democracy, and those least well-off in San Francisco. As the South of Market is home to a very diverse population, in terms of race, class, and sexuality, the concepts of the just city are especially relevant as the city moves towards a rezoning that aims to benefit the already well-off at the expense of an existing community.

Part 4: Conclusion

This section discussed Susan S. Fainstein’s concept of the “just city,” where planning and policy making focus on the goals of achieving equity, diversity, and democracy in cities. This approach moves away from a “competitiveness” model and puts people ahead of profit and fights for justice as a main component in urban planning and policy making. This section argues that such an approach to planning and policy making must be taken to ensure that people and not profits are at the center of development decisions. This section further argues that the proposed Central SoMa Plan fails on all three fronts of equity, diversity, and democracy.

Analytical Reflection on Summer Internship with the South of Market Community Action Network and Policy Recommendations

This section will discuss my summer internship and my experience dealing with the Central SoMa Plan in the context of engaging in community planning. This is followed by a set of policy recommendations regarding planning, development, and growth in San Francisco (and all cities that are facing similar conditions).

Summer Internship

During the summer of 2016, I interned with the South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN), a community based organization in the South of Market that engages in neighborhood organizing, community planning, and direct service work, as a Community Planning intern. My role as a Community Planning intern was to analyze and critique the Central SoMa Plan and create a series of presentations about the plan for residents and other community partners. In this process I also participated in speaking at Planning Commission hearings on the Central SoMa Plan. The internship provided me with the opportunity to get firsthand experience in land use planning and community planning. This research paper expands on the research and work I did with SOMCAN and delves more fully into the historical context of the Central SoMa Plan.

SOMCAN engages in community planning to ensure culturally competent community input in the planning process from low-income immigrant communities and people of color in San Francisco, seeking to address the impacts of such planning on vulnerable and existing

populations.³²² As seen in the analysis of the Central SoMa Plan, the voices represented by SOMCAN are not adequately represented and incorporated into the planning process in San Francisco, especially as seen in the creation of area plans. This highlights the importance of community based planning and organizing and the need to constantly put pressure on local city government and city agencies to represent those who are the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the internship described above and the research done in the paper, there are explicit policy recommendations to be made:

- 1) The city should support and actively promote community based planning models that prioritize the needs of existing residents and communities, not wealthy future populations. This could be done through a direct partnership between community partners and the planning department (as seen in the Western SoMa Community Plan), or through more extensive funding of and partnerships with existing community organizations that engage in community planning.
- 2) If the city states a commitment to preventing displacement and supporting existing cultures and diversity in planning efforts, this should be met with new concrete policy proposals that work directly towards those ends. For instance, if the city wants to maintain a variety of job types, it should actively protect working class PDR land uses, not eliminate them. If such goals cannot be met by existing policy, new policy should be

³²² “Community Planning Led by SOMCAN.” South of Market Community Action Network. 2016. Accessed March, 2017. <http://www.somcan.org/community-planning>

developed. If new policy cannot be developed, the city should not engage in development activities that actively promote displacement.

- 3) The city should require that developers pay for the costs (transportation, schools, parks, etc.) associated with the increase in population to San Francisco that results from new development. If new development cannot provide the resources necessary for new infrastructure/infrastructure improvements, it should not be allowed.

Conclusion

The Central SoMa Plan presents a snapshot of the current historical and economic moment in San Francisco - one marked by a wealthy technology sector, vast amounts of capital, and high rates of displacement. This plan, as well as other area plans in San Francisco, presents the local government's and the Planning Department's vision for the future of San Francisco, one where high end office jobs and market-rate housing dominate. With this vision comes a new, wealthier, and more homogenous population, all at the expense of existing populations and businesses, especially low-income populations, populations of color, and blue-collar jobs.

This moment, however, is part of a larger historical trend in San Francisco of the continual expansion of the largely built-up downtown/financial district into the traditionally working class neighborhood of the South of Market. This is aided by a continuation of the close relationship between high-profile corporate interests and city politicians (especially the mayors of San Francisco).

This restructuring proposed by the Central SoMa Plan of the South of Market primarily has one purpose - to remove lower-paying uses and replace them with higher paying uses. This ultimately means replacing blue-collar jobs and low-income residents with high-paying professional office jobs and wealthier residents. This works to further the displacement and eviction crisis plaguing San Francisco and enables the most destructive aspects of free market capitalism here locally in San Francisco.

Area plans generally reflect the tensions that exist between communities/neighborhoods and private development, as area plans seek to create a plan that will both facilitate private investment while at the same time guarantee public benefits and therefore public approval.

However, as the Central SoMa Plan works to deregulate land uses by removing existing land use protections while at the same time providing the facade of public benefits and engagement, the private sector is the one that ultimately wins at the expense of the public.

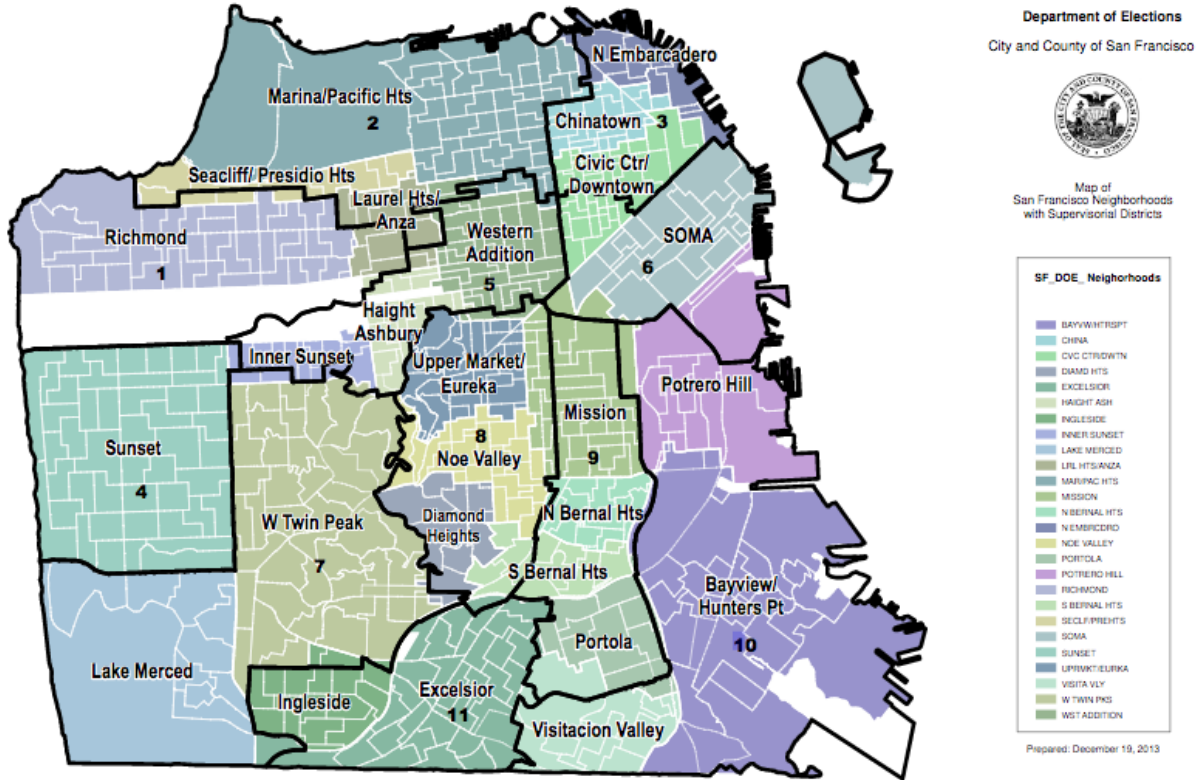
In order to combat these trends, communities must demand a bottom-up approach to planning and policy-making that has as its main goal protecting, stabilizing, and aiding the lives of existing residents, and not just catering to wealthy future residents, workers, and corporations. This must be achieved through activism, organizing, and coalition building, that builds power independent of city hall and the Planning Department and works to directly challenge the interests that those bodies currently represent. In the vein of Fainstein's concept of the just city, planning and policy-making must be held up to the values of equity, democracy, and diversity. On all these fronts the proposed Central SoMa Plan fails. The larger political context of the dynamics between development and city hall also requires a concerted political organizing effort that seeks to transform the current priorities of local government. Only by redefining San Francisco as a space for people, culture, and community, rather than as a space simply for wealth generation, can those fighting for justice in the city succeed.

There are many opportunities for future research concerning both the Central SoMa Plan specifically, as well as planning and development in San Francisco more generally. As the Central SoMa Plan is still yet to be adopted and approved, a study of the resulting effects of the plan on development and displacement (including studying shifts in demographics) could be done once the plan is adopted. The impacts on infrastructure could also be studied after the plan's likely implementation. On a wider scale, a more complete and thorough analysis of the effect and impact of specific area plans in San Francisco could be undertaken. Questions include, what has been the main function of specific area plans taken together as a whole? How do area

plans more broadly relate to development and displacement in San Francisco? How do area plans affect infrastructure, in relation to site-by-site development or no development at all? In terms of studies that relate to planning and development as a whole in San Francisco, the question of infrastructure is one major topic to be addressed. How does planning and development in San Francisco address the issue of new infrastructure needed to meet new populations? Does new development meet the needs of infrastructure? Larger demographic shifts (in terms of class, race, gender, and sexuality) could also be studied in relation to new planning and development patterns as set out by the Planning Department and the city.

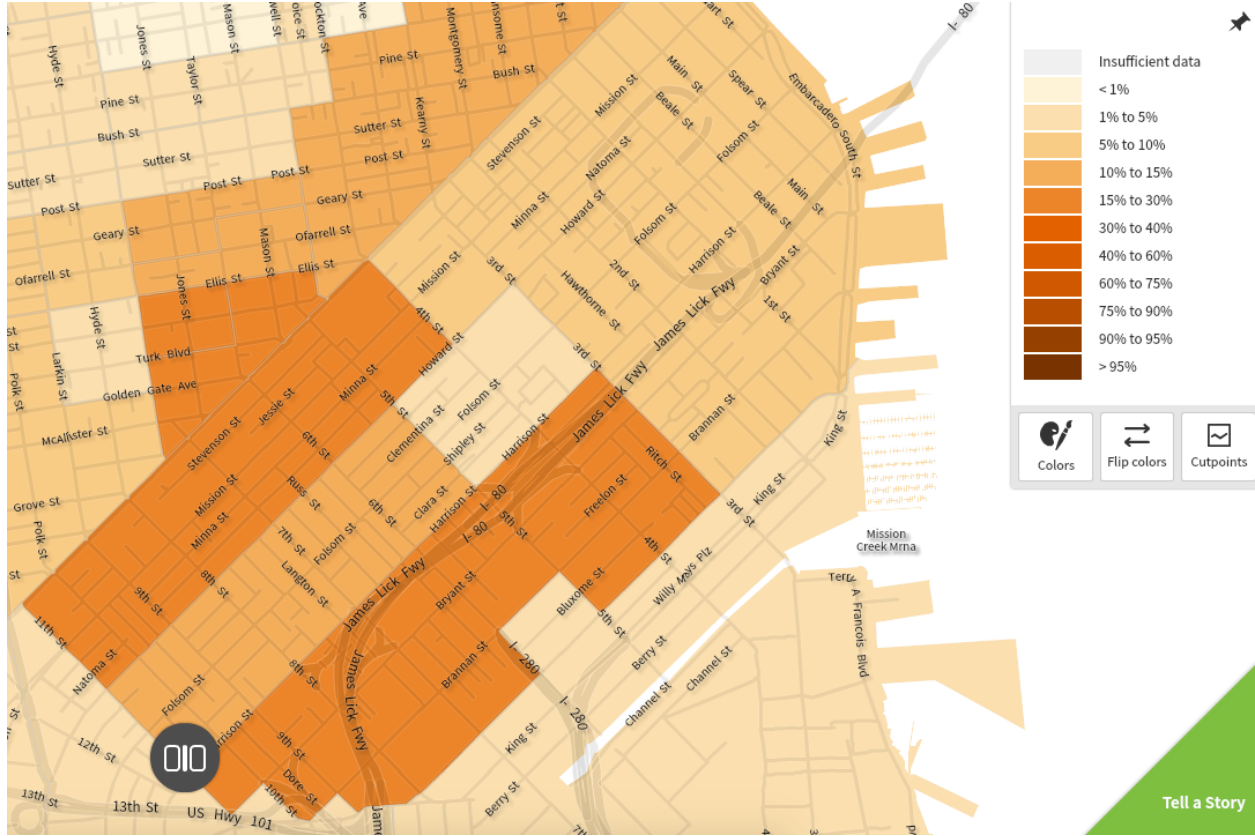
Figures

Figure 1: San Francisco Neighborhoods Map



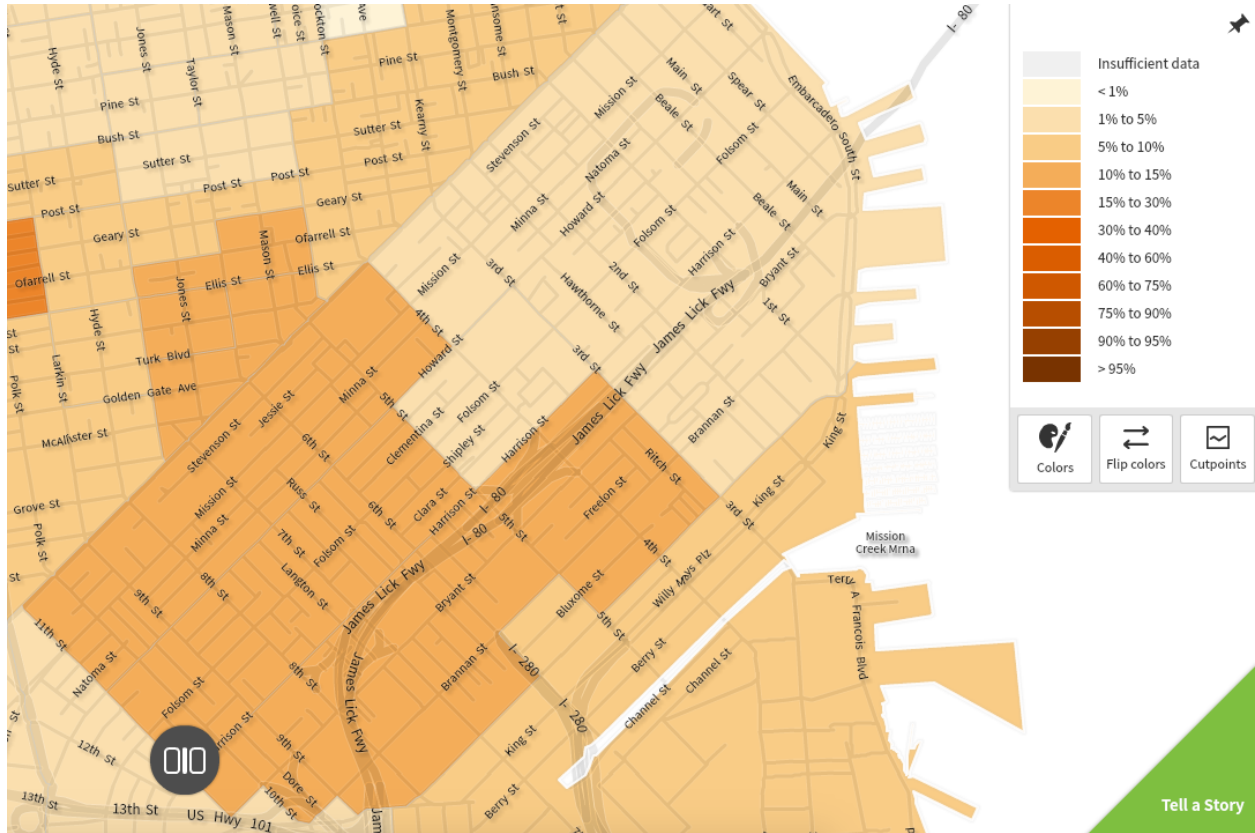
Source: City and County of San Francisco. Accessed April, 2017.
http://sfgov.org/elections/sites/default/files/SF_Neighborhoods_June_2014.pdf

Figure 2: Black or African American Population 2010 Map, South of Market



Source: Social Explorer

Figure 3: Black or African American Population 2015 Map, South of Market



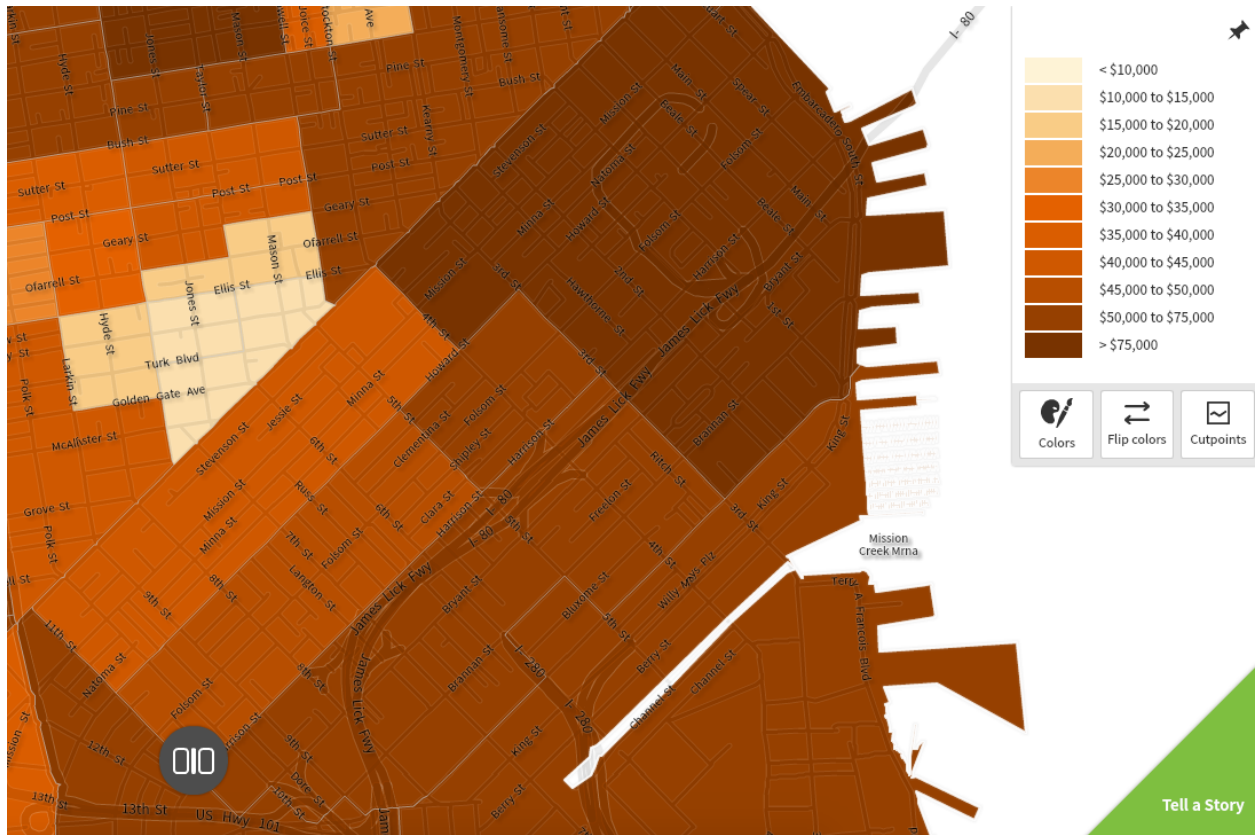
Source: Social Explorer

Figure 4: Per Capita Income 2010 Map, South of Market



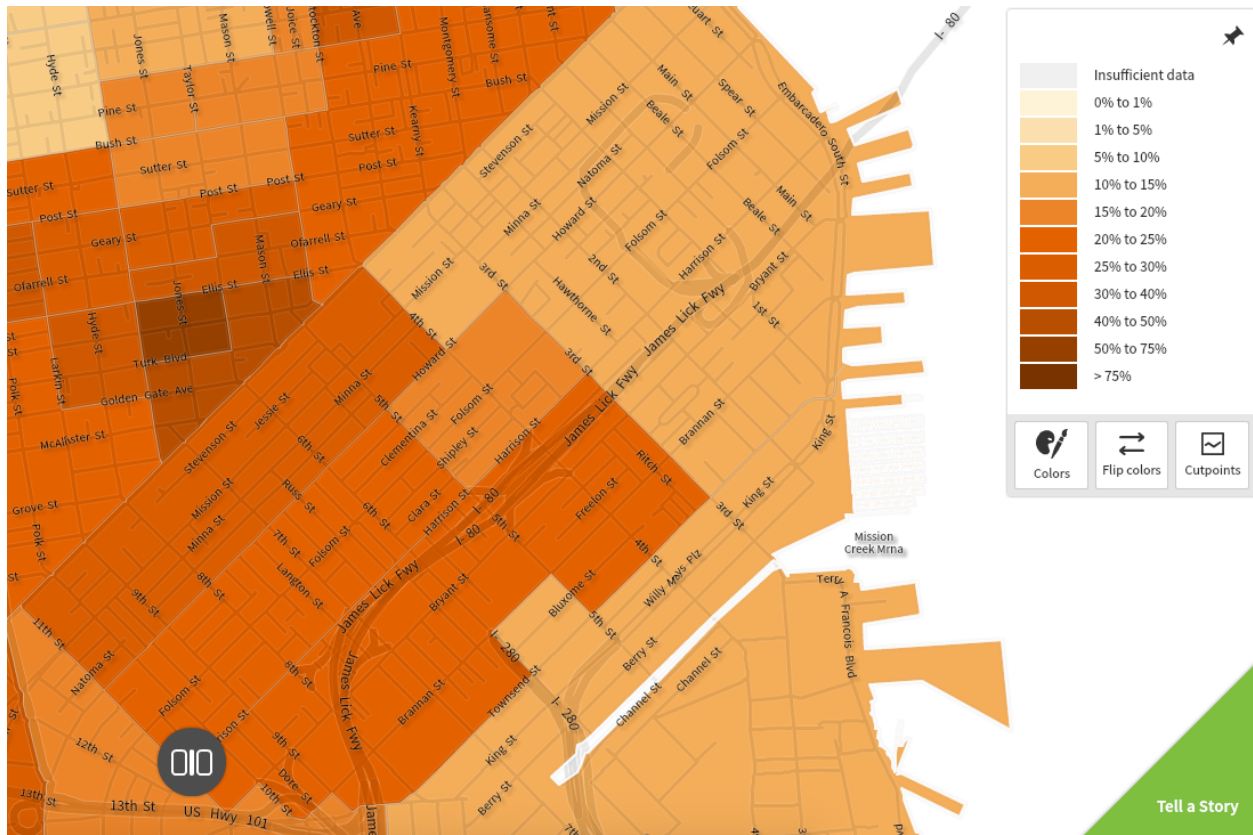
Source: Social Explorer

Figure 5: Per-Capita Income 2015 Map, South of Market



Source: Social Explorer

Figure 6: Age 18 - 64 Living in Poverty 2015 Map, South of Market



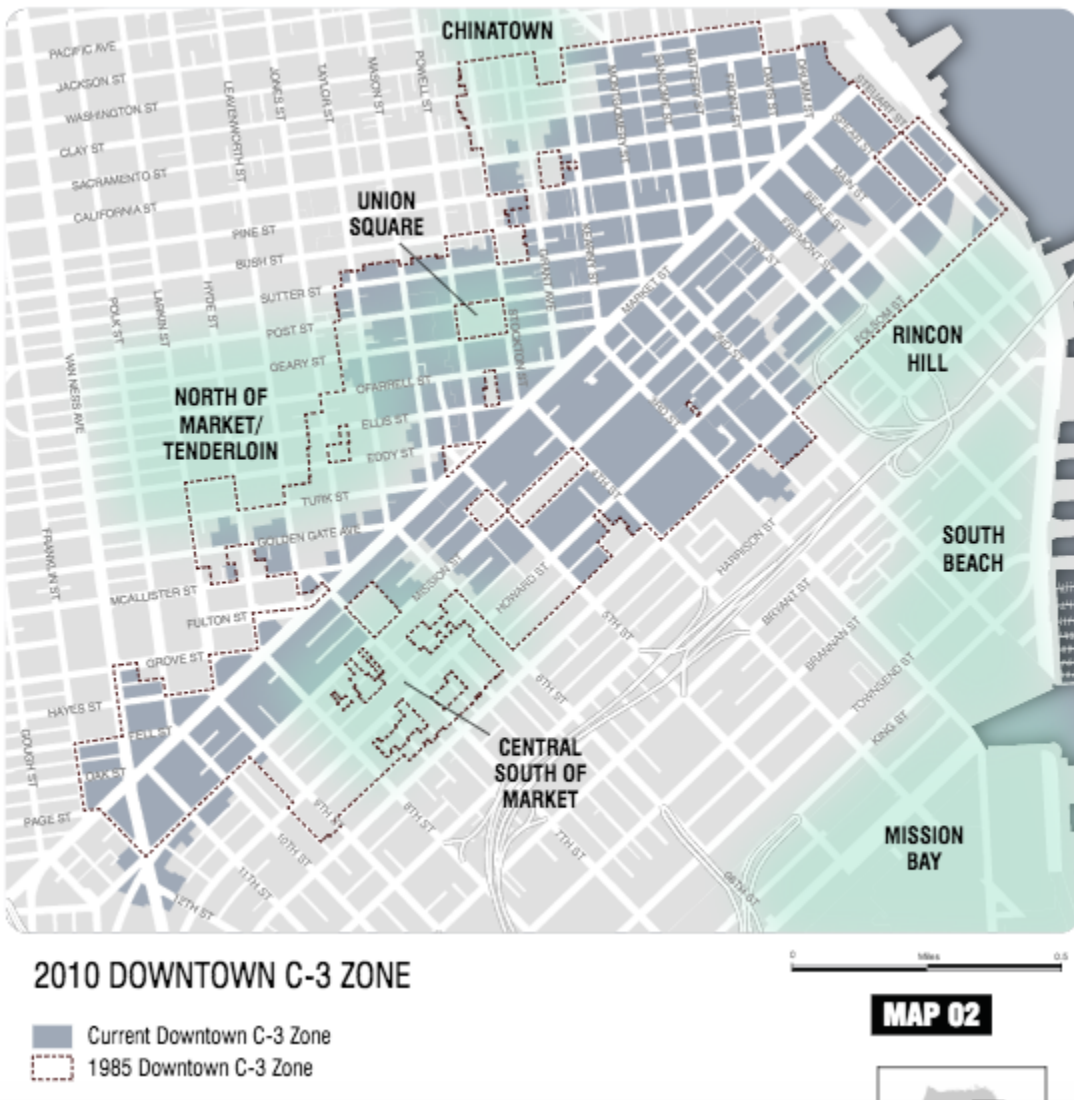
Source: Social Explorer

Figure 7: Age 65 and Older Living in Poverty 2015 Map, South of Market



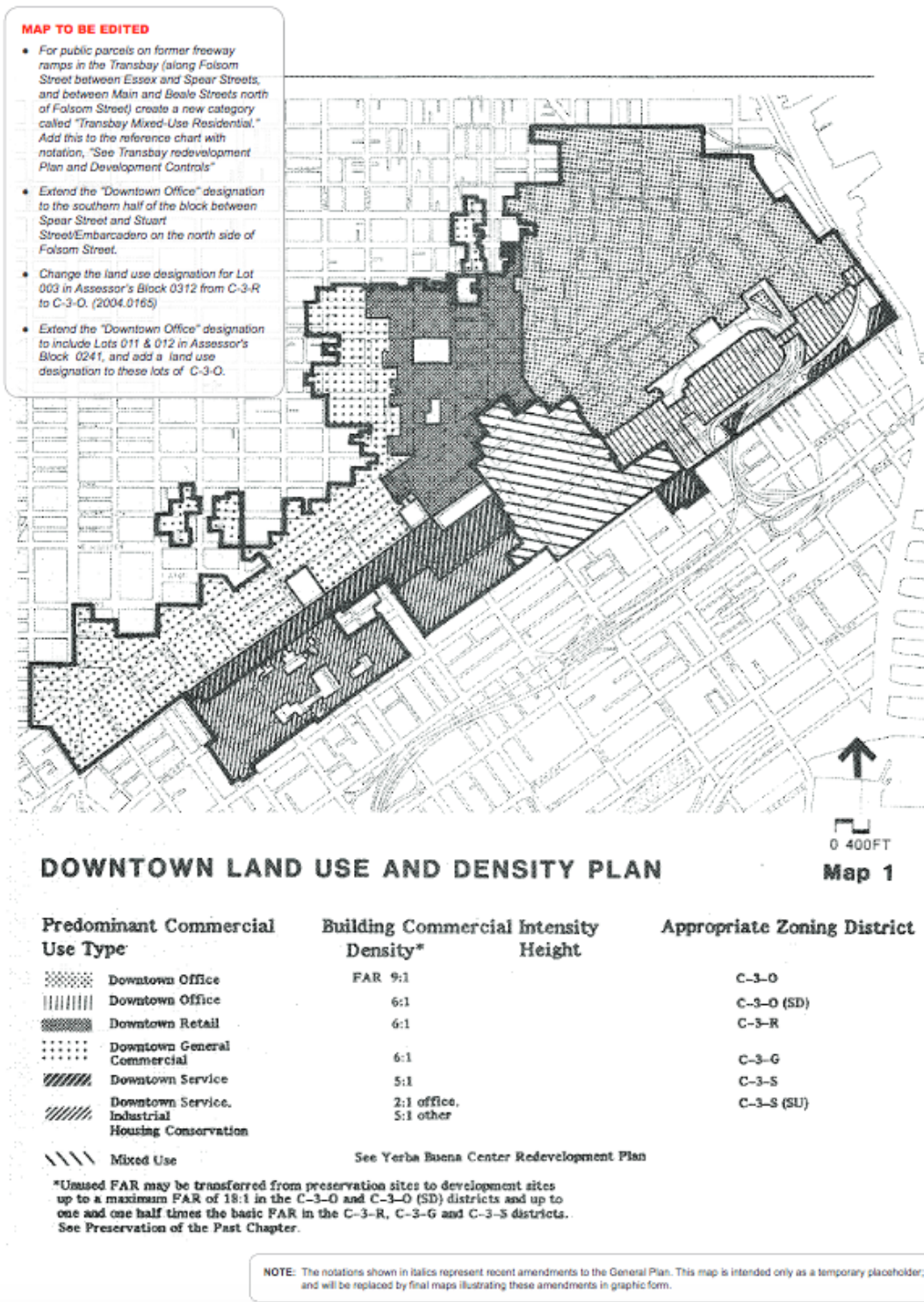
Source: Social Explorer

Figure 8: Downtown Plan Boundaries Map, 1985 and 2009 (labeled “Current Downtown C-3 Zone”)



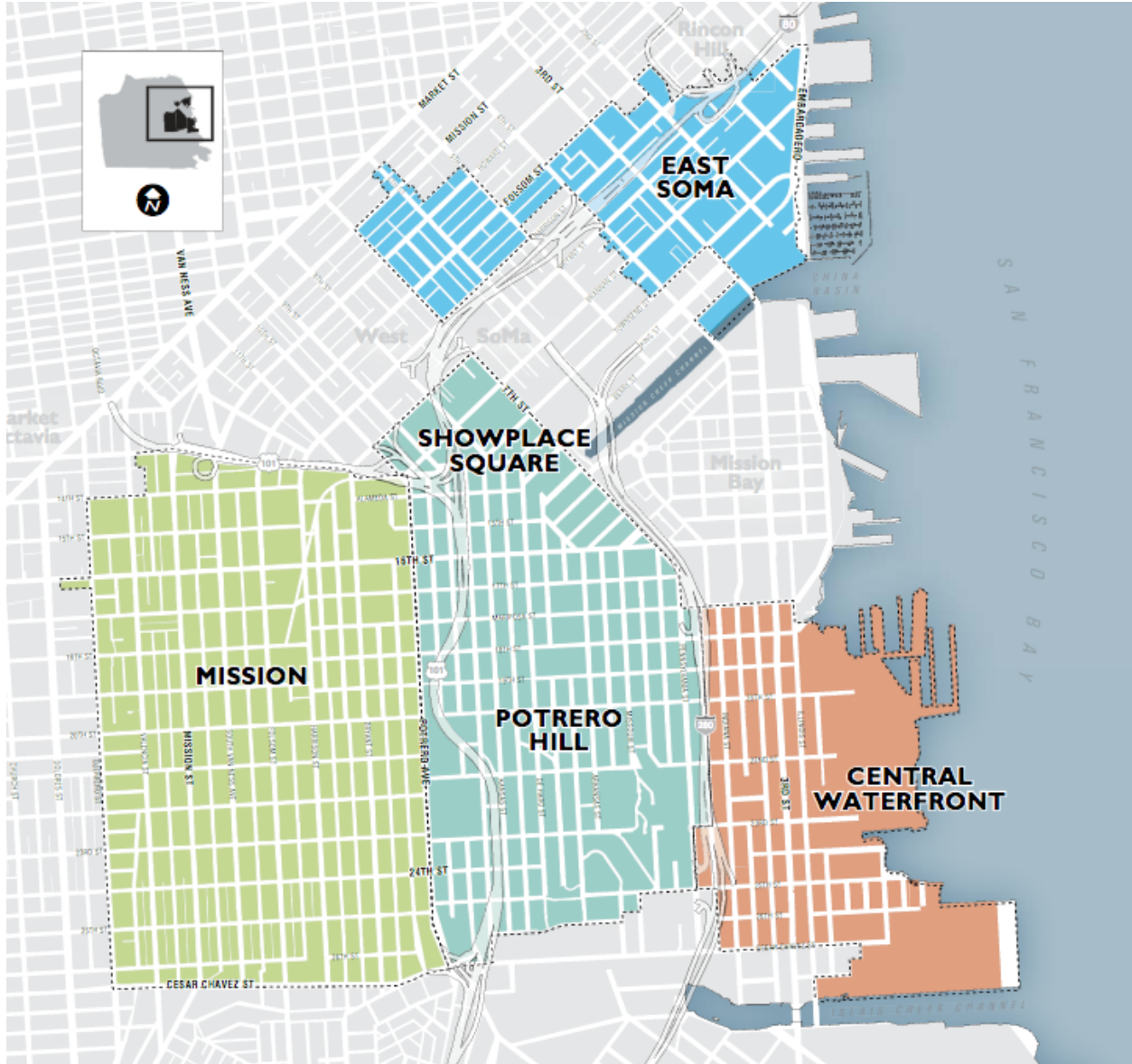
Source: *25 Years: Downtown Plan Monitoring Report*

Figure 9: Downtown Plan Rezoning Map



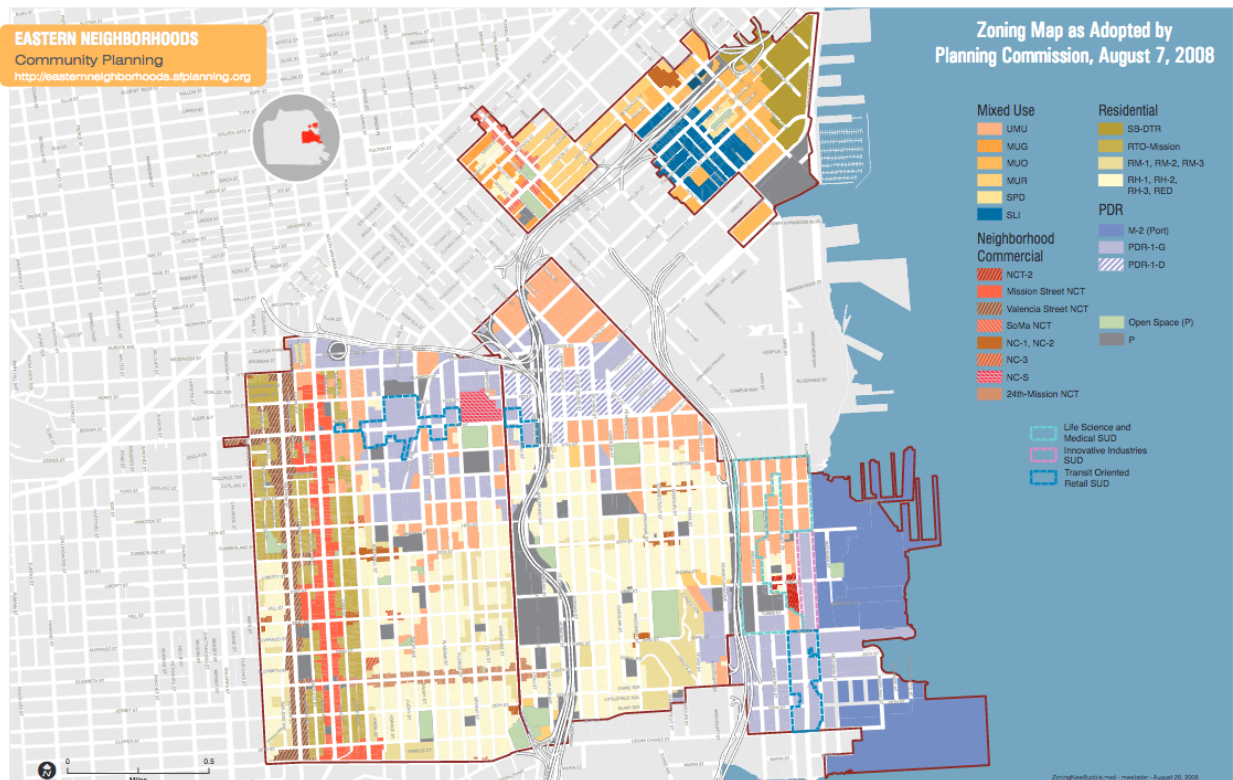
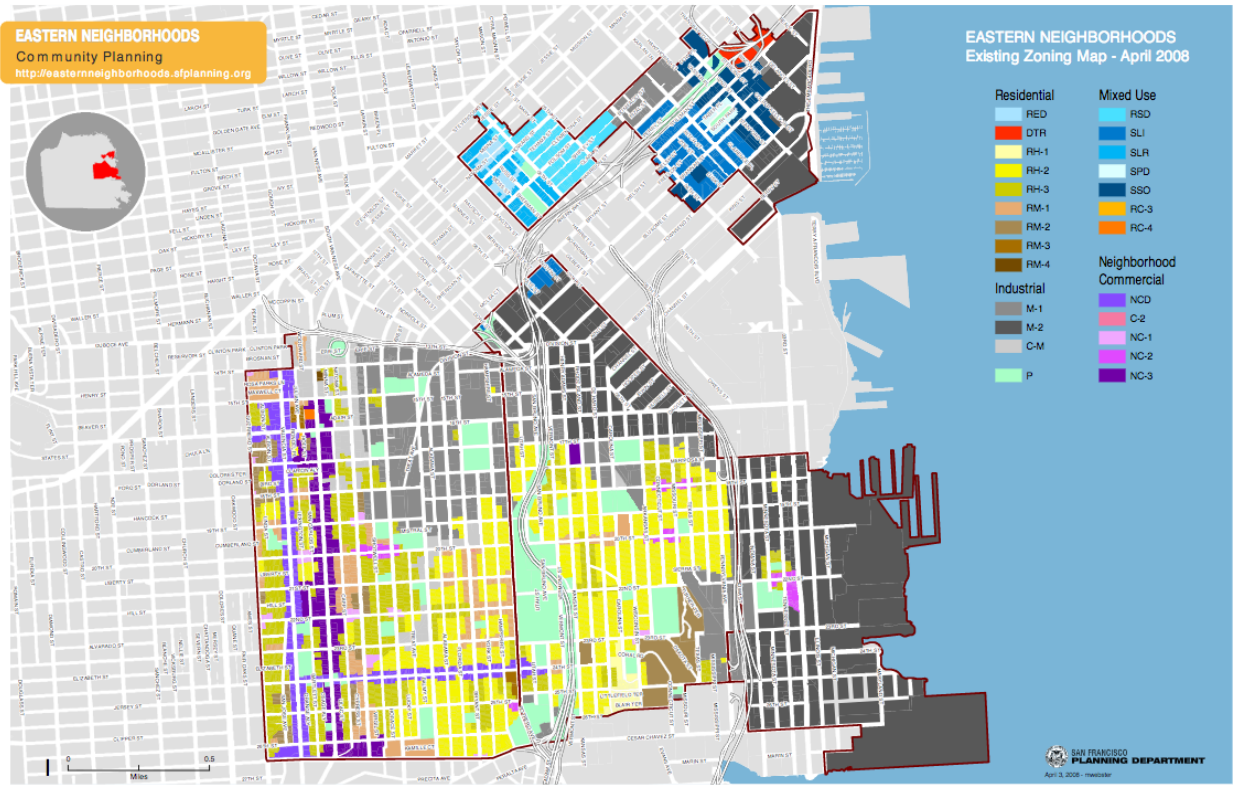
Source: San Francisco Planning Department. Accessed April, 2017.
http://generalplan.sfplanning.org/images/downtown/dtn_map1.pdf

Figure 10: The Eastern Neighborhoods Plan Boundaries Map



Source: San Francisco Planning Department. Accessed April, 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/1230-Eastern_Neighborhoods_Planning_Areas_Map.pdf

Figure 11: Eastern Neighborhoods Plan Rezoning Maps



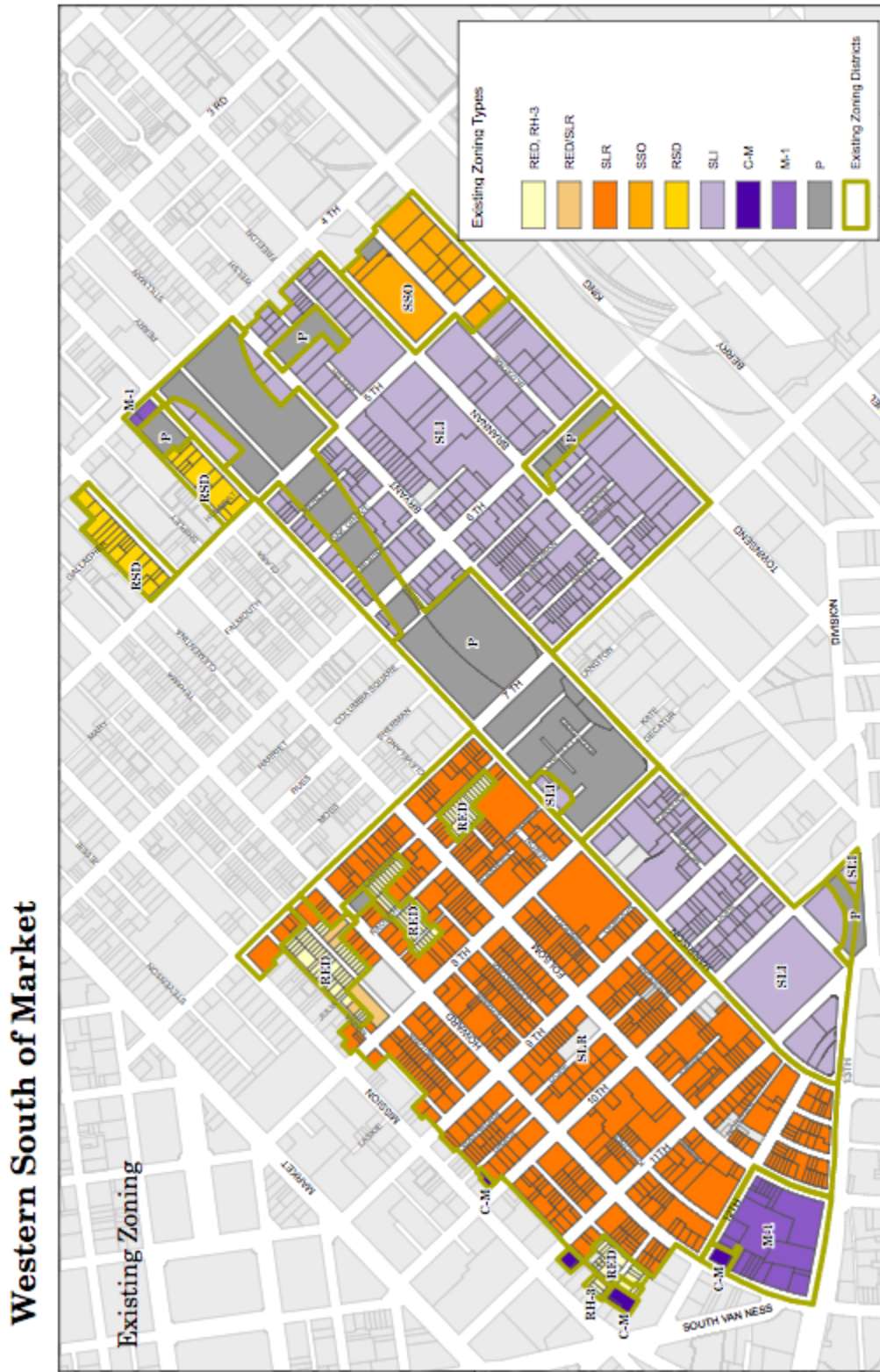
Source: San Francisco Planning Department. Accessed April, 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/1260-EN_Adoption_Packet_BOS_VOL1_Zoning%26HeightsMaps_web.pdf

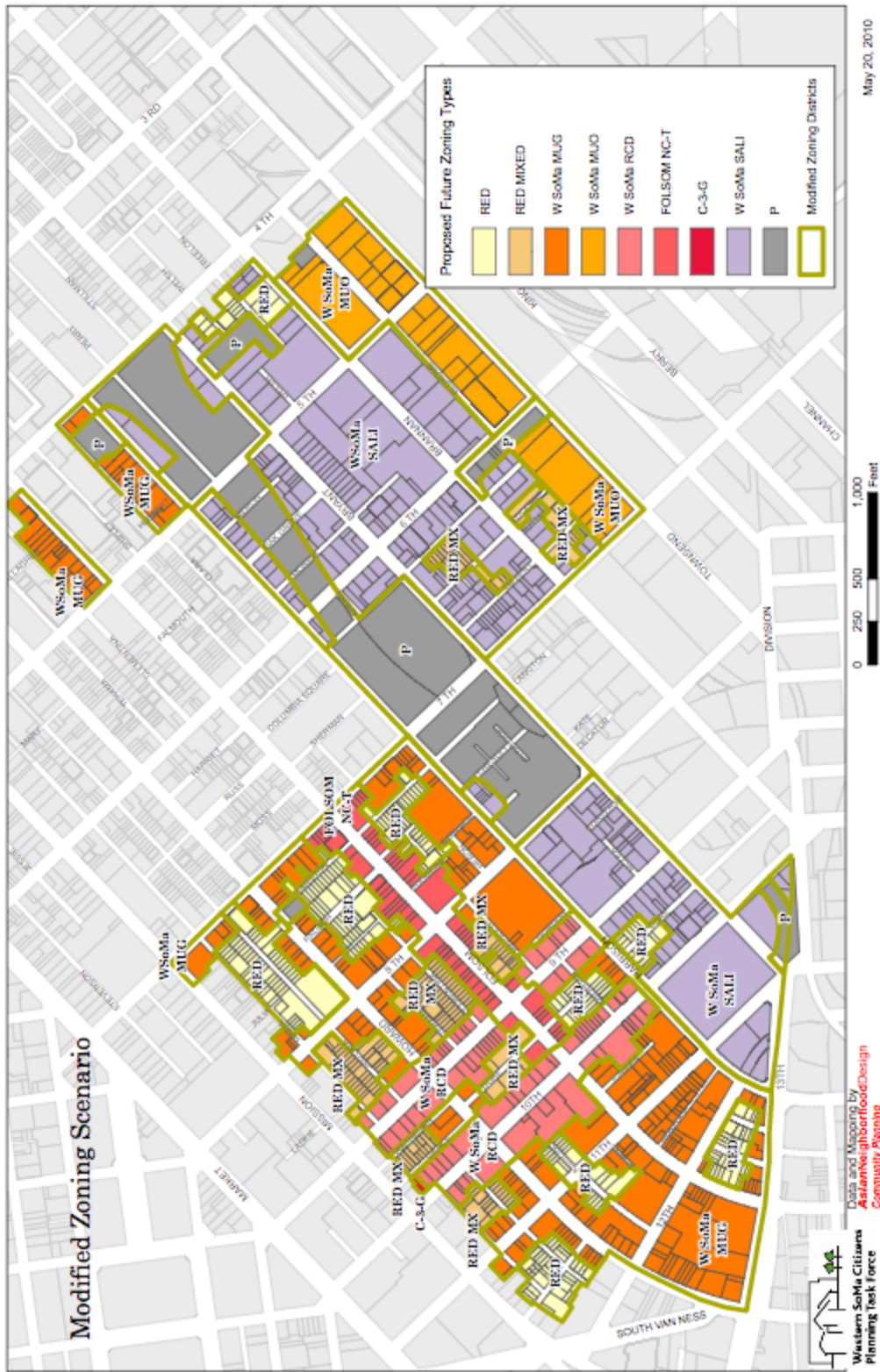
Figure 12: Western SoMa Community Plan Boundaries Map



Source: San Francisco Planning Department. Accessed April, 2017. http://sf-planning.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/7405-wsoma_basemap_0509_8x11_revised.pdf

Figure 13: Western SoMa Community Plan Rezoning





Source: *Western SoMa Community Plan*

Figure 14: Central SoMa Plan Boundaries Map



Figure A
PLAN AREA BOUNDARY

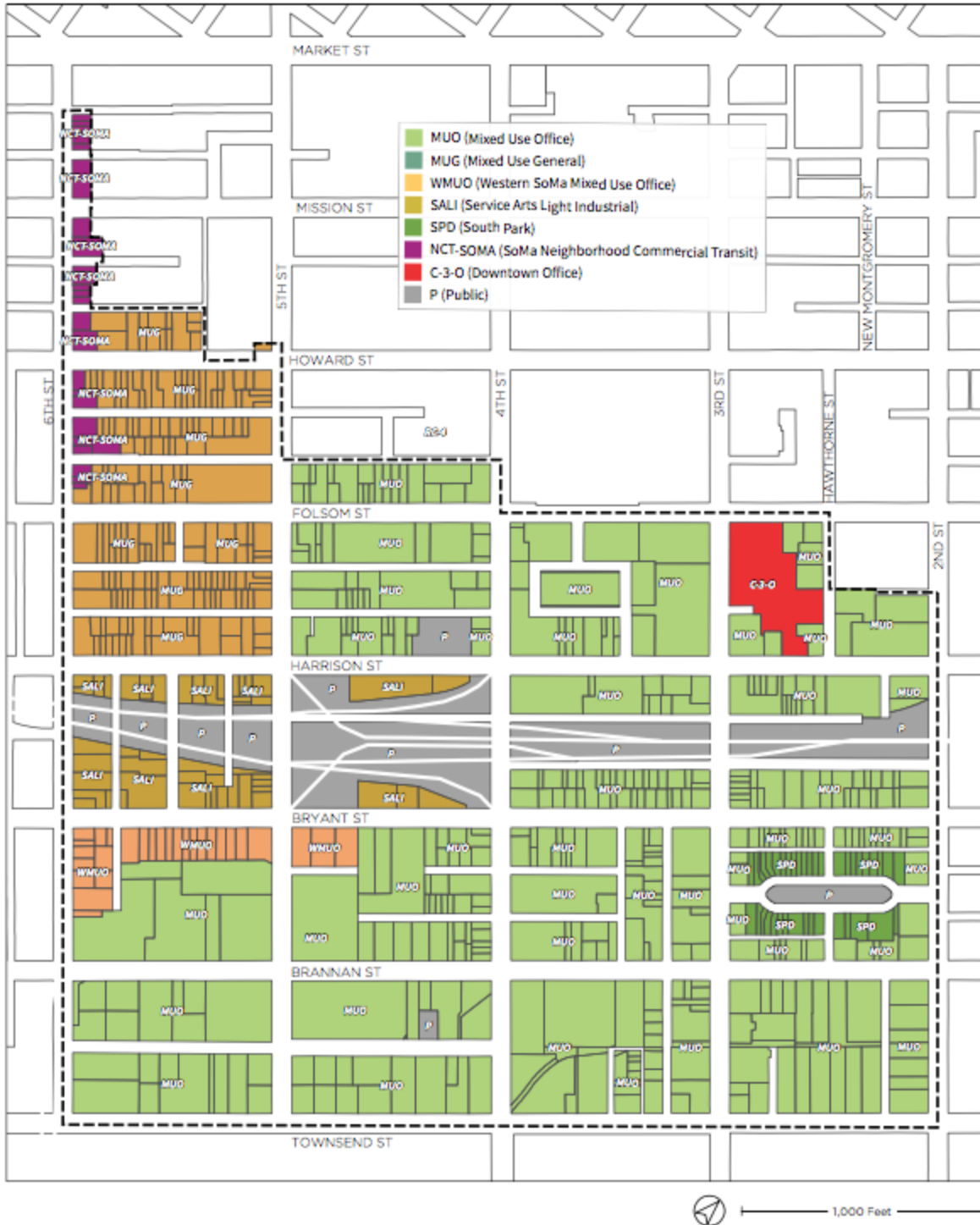
- - - Central Subway
under construction, expected to open in 2019
- - - BART/Muni Metro Subway
- Muni Metro (Surface)

Figure 15: Central SoMa Plan Rezoning Maps

Figure 1.3
EXISTING ZONING



Figure 1.4
PROPOSED ZONING



Source: *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*

Figure 16: Central SoMa Plan Height and Bulk Maps

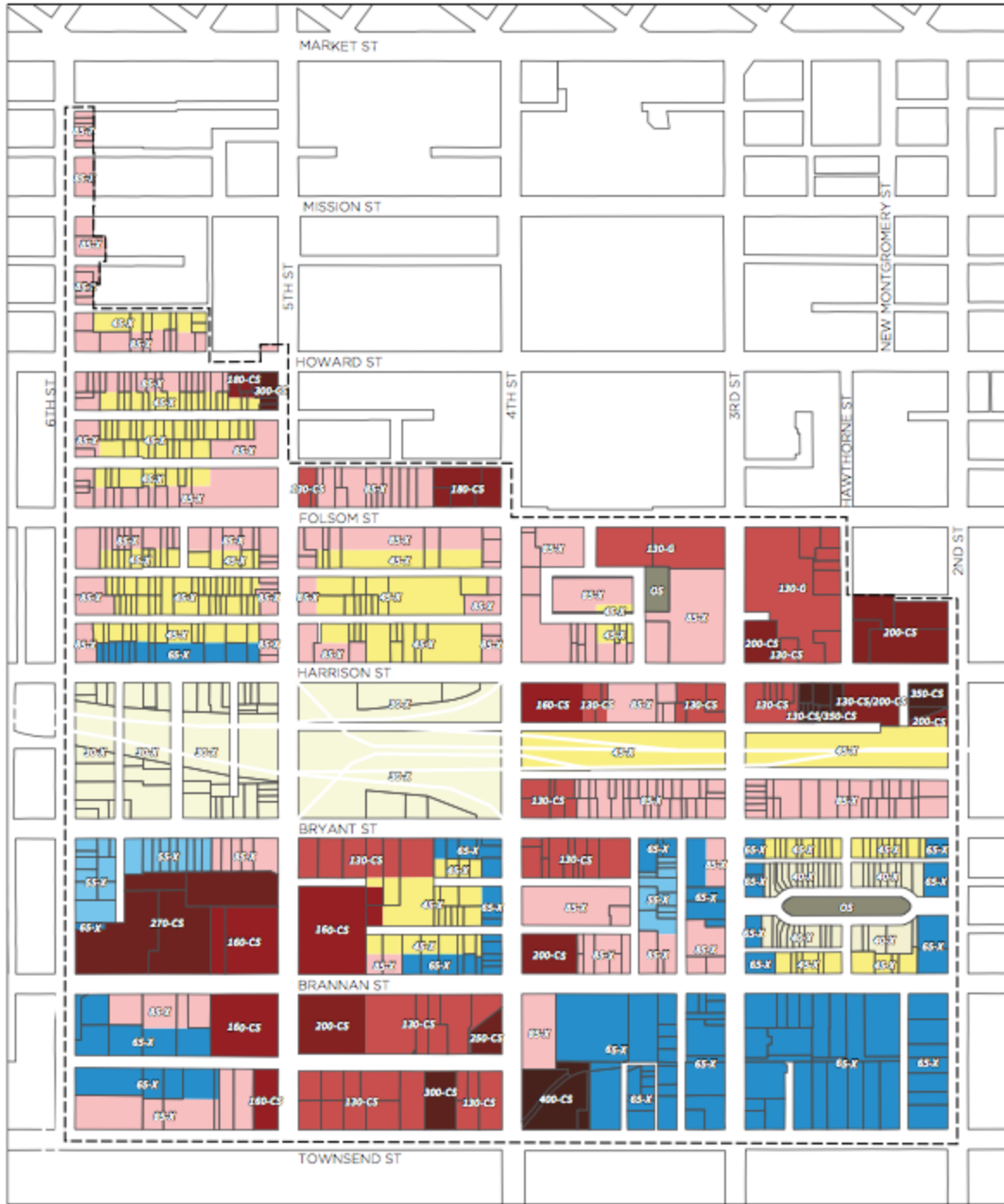
Figure 1.7
EXISTING HEIGHTS AND BULK LIMITS



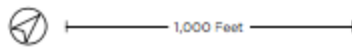
For bulk controls, reference Planning Code Section 270.



Figure 1.8
PROPOSED HEIGHT AND BULK LIMITS



For "CS" bulk controls reference the Central SoMa Implementation Matrix.
 For all other bulk controls, reference Planning Code Section 270.



Source: *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*

Figure 17: Central SoMa Plan Projected Development





Figure 8.2
VIEW OF DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FROM DOLORES PARK

Rendering by SOM

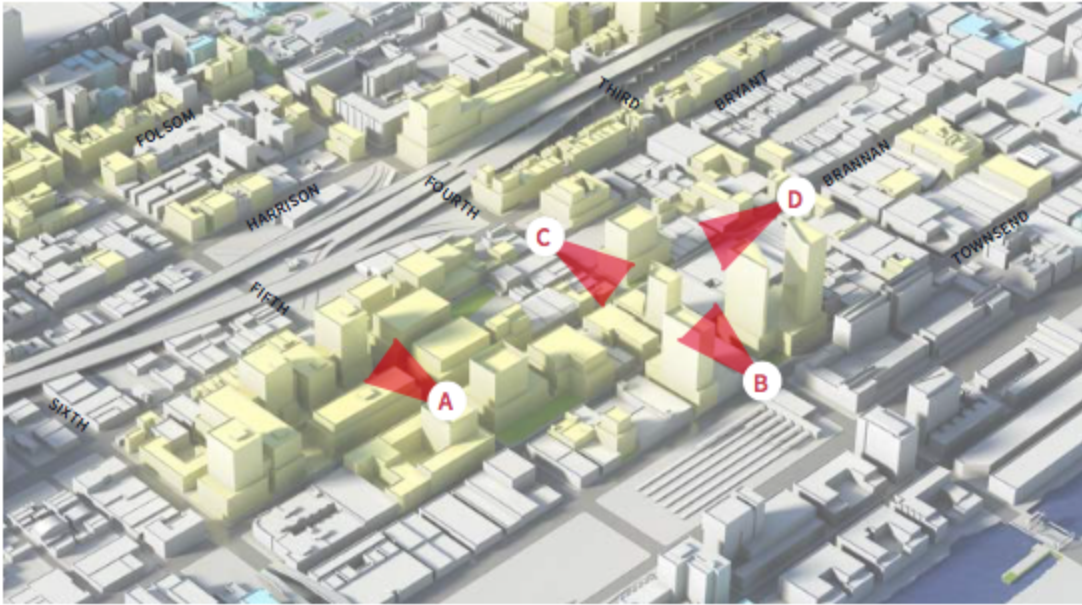


Figure 8.3
VIEW OF DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FROM POTRERO HILL

Rendering by SOM

-  CENTRAL SOMA DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
-  ANTICIPATED PROJECTS OUTSIDE OF CENTRAL SOMA

These images are intended to visualize the overall development capacity of the Central SoMa Plan. They are not meant to be a precise assessment of potential at the individual parcel level. It is certain that eventual development at these locations will look differently than rendered in these images.



View key locations of renderings found on the following pages.

Rendering by SOM; Diagram by SF Planning

Source: *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*

Figure 18: Renderings of new development (yellow) with existing buildings (grey)



A.1 View from Fifth and Brannan looking northwest (existing).

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning



A.2 View from Fifth and Brannan looking northwest (potential). This view, looking

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning



B.1 View from Fourth and Townsend looking northwest (existing).

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning



B.2 View from Fourth and Townsend looking northwest (potential). looking

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning



C.1 View from Fourth and Bryant looking southeast (existing).

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning



C.2 View from Fourth and Bryant looking southeast (potential). This view, looking

Rendering by SOM; Entourage by SF Planning



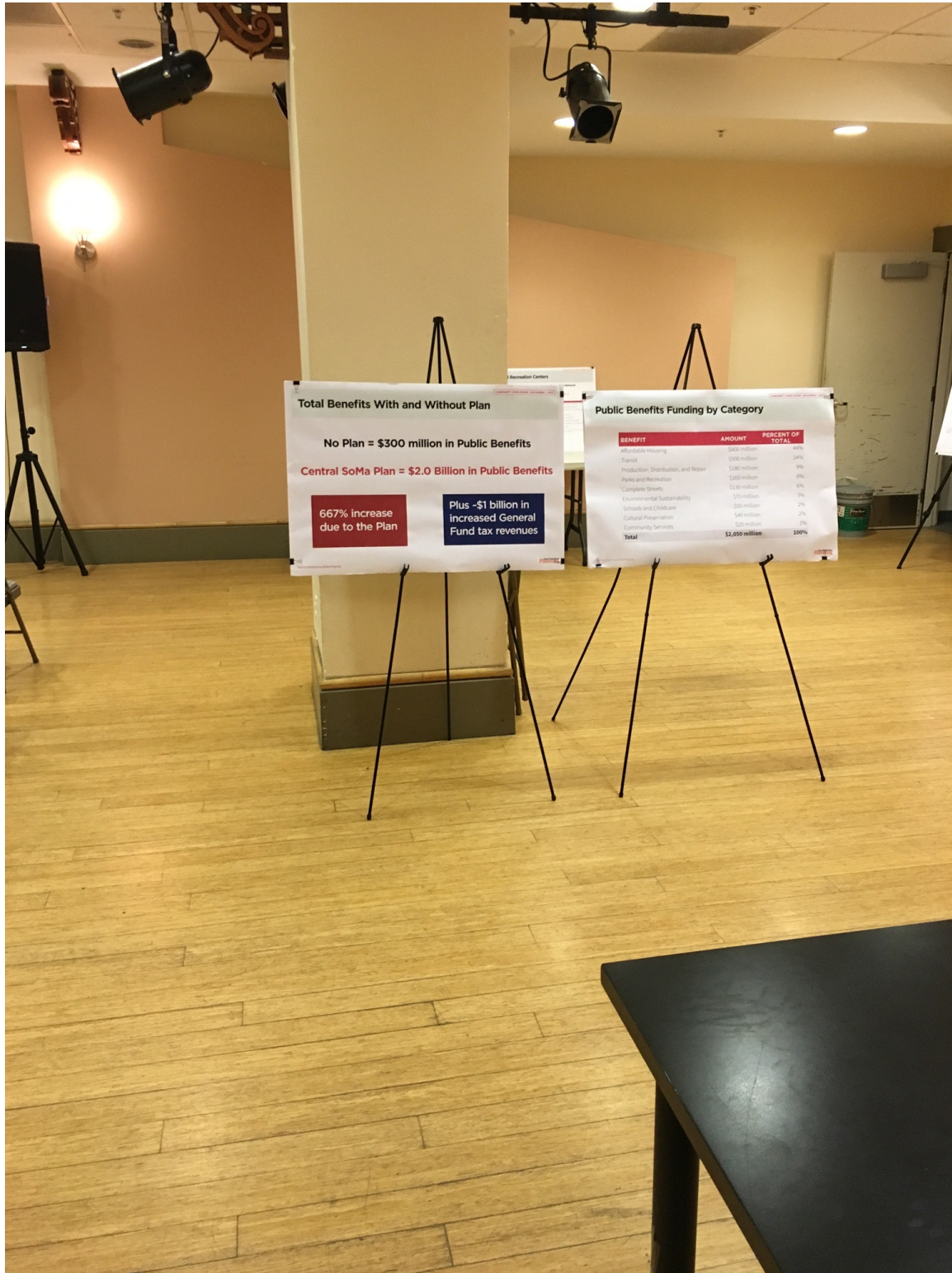
D.1 View from Third and Brannan looking southwest (existing)



D.2 View from Third and Brannan looking southwest (potential). This view, looking towards the Flower Mart,

Source: *Central SoMa: Plan and Implementation Strategy*

Figure 19: Central SoMa Plan Open House, Held at the Bayanihan Center on November 15, 2016





Source: David Woo, November 15, 2016

Figure 20: Central SoMa Plan Open House November 15, 2016 Questionnaire

The image shows a hand holding a questionnaire form. The form has the following text and layout:

- Logo:** The official seal of the City and County of San Francisco, featuring a grizzly bear and the text 'THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO 1849 • 1996'.
- Title:** **San Francisco Planning**
- Section Header:** **COMMENT AND FEEDBACK FORM**
- Event Title:** **Central SoMa Plan Community Meeting**
- Question:** **Do you have any questions or comments you would like to share with the Central SoMa Plan Project Team?**
- Response Area:** A series of horizontal lines for writing.
- Follow-up Question:** **Would you like a Project Team member to contact you after the Community Meeting to follow up on your comments and questions? Please provide your name and contact information.**
- Contact Fields:** Two lines labeled 'Name:' and 'Contact:' for providing personal information.
- Footer:** -over-



San Francisco Planning

In our continuous effort to work more effectively with the community, we appreciate your comments about today's meeting.

Please indicate the strength of your agreement with each statement below:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The purpose of the event was clear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The event was the right length of time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you disagreed with the above question, the event length was...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt comfortable voicing my ideas and that my input was heard by staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was clear how my input will be used.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The format and materials were appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The facilitators were effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am likely to participate again/stay involved with this project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I was satisfied with the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any additional comments about today's event?

How did you hear about today's meeting?

- Flyer
- Email
- Newsletter
- SF Planning website
- Newspaper
- Social media
- Community group
- Friend, colleague or relative
- Other: _____

Where else could we advertise the meeting?: _____

Optional:

Gender: Male Female
 Other Decline to State

Age: Under 40 Over 40

Disability: Yes No

Are you a resident of San Francisco?

Yes No

If yes: Your ZIP code: _____

What is your total household income?

\$22,050 or less

Over \$22,050

Language

What language is primarily spoken in your household?

Ethnicity:

- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin
- Not Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin

Race:

- African American/Black
- Asian: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese
- Caucasian
- Native American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander: Guamanian, Chamorro, Samoan
- Two or more races
- Other: _____

Source: David Woo, November 15, 2016