



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Transit Center District Plan Initiation Packet Table of Contents

HEARING DATE: MAY 3, 2012

Case No.: **2007.0558MTZU**
*Transit Center District Plan –
Initiation of Amendments to the General Plan,
Planning Code and Zoning Maps*

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SUMMARY

The San Francisco Planning Department is seeking to adopt and implement the Transit Center District Plan (“the Plan”). The result of a multi-year public and cooperative interagency planning process that began in 2007, the Plan is a comprehensive vision for shaping growth on the southern side of Downtown to respond to and support the construction of the new Transbay Transit Center project, including the Downtown Rail Extension. In addition to laying out policy recommendations to accommodate additional transit-oriented growth, sculpt the downtown skyline, improve streets and open spaces, and expand protection of historic resources, the Plan would result in the potential to generate over \$575 million for public infrastructure, particularly the Downtown Rail Extension project.

Adoption of the Plan will consist of numerous actions. These include adoption of amendments to the General Plan, Planning Code, and Zoning Map Amendments, approval of an Implementation Document, and recommendation of amendments to the Administrative Code. Together with actions related to certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report and adoption of CEQA Findings, these actions will constitute the Commission’s approval of the Transit Center District Plan and its implementing mechanisms.

Prior to scheduling a hearing for the Commission to consider approving the General Plan, Planning Code, and Zoning Map amendments, the Commission must act to “initiate” these amendments. The initiation action allows for the scheduling of a hearing to consider adoption of these amendments and for the Planning Department to provide the necessary public notification of the adoption hearing. If the Planning Commission approves the Resolutions of Intent on May 3, the Department would subsequently provide public notice for a public hearing on the proposed amendments on or after May 24, 2012. Consideration of the other items that will be before the Planning Commission as part of the adoption actions, specifically recommendation of amendments to the Administrative Code and approval of the

Program Implementation Document, do not require a formal initiation action by the Commission. Nevertheless, these proposed documents are included in this package for informational purposes.

PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the draft Resolutions of Intent to initiate proposed amendments to the General Plan, Planning Code, and Zoning Maps.

PLAN BACKGROUND

In 1985 the City adopted the Downtown Plan into the General Plan to guide growth in the Downtown area. Recognizing the potential for transit-oriented growth in the vicinity of the Transbay Terminal south of Market Street, the Downtown Plan called for concentrating the City's greatest densities and building heights in this area, as well as creating a system to transfer development rights from other parts of the downtown to this area.

Since the adoption of the Downtown Plan several major infrastructure changes have happened or are being undertaken. The Embarcadero Freeway was removed following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, allowing for the renovation of the waterfront and rethinking of the southern side of the downtown. The City and region have embarked on a multi-billion dollar investment in improving and expanding transit infrastructure in the area through construction of a new Transbay Transit Center on the site of the former Transbay Terminal and an extension of intra-city rail from the current terminus near Mission Bay northward into the Transit Center. This is the single largest investment in public transit in San Francisco since the construction of BART and the Market Street Muni subway in the early 1970s. In 2005 the City adopted the Transbay Redevelopment Plan to direct funding toward the Transit Center project and direct the redevelopment of underutilized publicly-owned lands, primarily those that formerly housed the Embarcadero Freeway, into a new high-density residential neighborhood. Together with the Rincon Hill Plan, also adopted in 2005, this new urban neighborhood will become home to over 10,000 people.

In 2006 a Mayor's Interagency Working Group published a report calling for the City to undertake further land use studies around the Transit Center to investigate whether building densities and heights could be increased further in recognition of the transit investment and whether such growth could be leveraged to generate substantial new revenues to help fund the full Transit Center project, including the Downtown Rail Extension.

In 2007 the Planning Department initiated a public planning effort called the Transit Center District Plan, focused on the area roughly bounded by Market Street, Embarcadero, Folsom Street, and Hawthorne Street, whose five fundamental goals were to:

(1) Build on the General Plan's Urban Design Element and Downtown Plan, establishing controls, guidelines and standards to advance existing policies of livability, as well as those that protect the unique quality of place;

- (2) Capitalize on major transit investment with appropriate land use in the downtown core, with an eye toward long-term growth considerations;
- (3) Create a framework for a network of public streets and open spaces that support the transit system, and provides a wide variety of public amenities and a world-class pedestrian experience;
- (4) Generate financial support for the Transit Center project, district infrastructure, and other public improvements; and
- (5) Ensure that the Transit Center District is an example of comprehensive environmental sustainability in all regards.

The Planning Department held numerous public workshops and worked with consultants throughout 2008 and 2009, resulting in the publication of a Draft Transit Center District Plan in November 2009. In April 2012 the Planning Department published a Plan Addendum revising and clarifying aspects of the Draft Plan.

The Transit Center District Plan (“the Plan”) supports and builds on the Downtown Plan’s vision for the area around the Transbay Transit Center as the heart of the new downtown. The Plan enhances and augments the Downtown Plan’s patterns of land use, urban form, public space, circulation, and historic preservation, and makes adjustments to this specific sub-area based on today’s understanding of the issues and constraints facing the area, particularly in light of the Transit Center project. The Plan’s core recommendations include:

- Increasing allowable density and strategically increasing height limits in the Plan area to augment the transit-oriented growth capacity of the area while recognizing the importance of these buildings with respect to city form and their physical influence on both immediate and neighboring districts;
- Ensuring that major development sites incorporate commercial space in order to preserve the job growth capacity for the downtown;
- Enhancing the public realm and circulation system to accommodate growth and provide a world-class pedestrian experience, including widening sidewalks, providing dedicated transit lanes, augmenting the bicycle network, adding signalized mid-block crosswalks, and converting certain alleys into pedestrian plazas;
- Identifying and funding opportunities for new public open space and improved access to planned spaces, including at 2nd/Howard, Transbay Park, Mission Square, and City Park on the roof of the Transit Center, as well as providing additional funding for park improvements in the downtown outside of the Plan area;
- Enlarging the New Montgomery-2nd Street Conservation District and updating individual resource ratings based on a newly-adopted survey;

- Identifying opportunities to explore advanced district-level energy and water utility systems to improve environmental performance beyond individual buildings; and
- Adopting a funding program including two new key revenue mechanisms – impact fees and a Mello-Roos Community Facilities District – to ensure that new development contributes substantially toward the implementation of necessary public infrastructure, including the Transit Center/Downtown Extension project. Between the two mechanisms, the Plan would create the potential for over \$570 million of new revenue for key public improvements, notably over \$400 million for the Transit Center and Downtown Rail Extension.

PLAN ELEMENTS

Transit Center District Plan (Draft for Public Review, November 2009) and Draft Plan Addendum (April 2012)

Taken together, these two documents represent the “Draft Plan.” The November 2009 *Transit Center District Plan: Draft for Public Review* document includes the full narrative, background context, illustrations, and analytical discussion of the issues shaping the Plan, in addition to the full complement of the Plan’s policy proposals and descriptions of key proposed implementing controls and actions. The April 2012 Draft Plan Addendum describes substantive revisions or important clarifications to the November 2009 document. The November 2009 Draft Plan for Public Review is attached as Exhibit I and the April 2012 Addendum is attached as Exhibit II.

Note that the Planning Commission (and Board of Supervisors) will *not* take action on the Draft Plan document itself (including the Plan Addendum). After Plan adoption, the Draft Plan document will be finalized and live on as a full record of the background context of Plan, containing the fuller discussion and background analysis than is appropriate for incorporation into the General Plan, Planning Code or other ordinances. The full Plan document will be updated and reprinted after final Plan adoption.

Following are the key documents whose adoption or approval will constitute adoption of the Transit Center District Plan. The first three of these documents, the General Plan, Planning Code, and Zoning Map Amendments, are before the Commission for initiation, which would enable the scheduling of a hearing to consider their approval. Full case reports detailing these are included in this package. The latter two items do not require an initiation action, and will be brought before the Commission along with the first three for approval at that hearing; they are briefly described below.

(1) General Plan Amendments

The core policies and supporting discussion in the Draft Plan have been incorporated into a Sub-Area Plan proposed to be added to the Downtown Plan. The General Plan Amendments also include various map updates and text amendments to update several Elements of the General Plan to reflect the specifics of the Transit Center District Plan. The case report, draft ordinance, draft General Plan amendments (including Transit Center District Sub-Area Plan), and draft Resolution of Intent to Initiate are included in Exhibit III.

(2) Planning Code Amendments

The primary regulatory changes proposed in the Plan are reflected in proposed amendments to the Planning Code, include changes to controls related to land use, density, urban form, parking, historic preservation, parking, and open space. A key component of the proposed additions to the Planning Code is the addition of several Sections that would establish the two Plan Impact Fees (Open Space, Transportation & Street Improvements) as well as thresholds for participation in the Plan's Mello-Roos Community Facilities District. The case report, draft Planning Code amendments, and draft Resolution of Intent to Initiate are included in Exhibit IV. (Note that a draft ordinance containing these Planning Code amendments, approved as to form by the City Attorney, will be provided prior to the hearing on May 3.)

(3) Zoning Map Amendments

The Zoning Map amendments reclassify properties as necessary throughout the Plan area to enable application of the Plan's policies via the Planning Code controls. The amendments include changes to zoning districts, special use districts, height limits, bulk districts and preservation districts. The case report, draft Zoning Map ordinance, and draft Resolution of Intent to Initiate are included in Exhibit V.

(4) Administrative Code Amendments

Amendments to the City's Administrative Code would add the Transit Center District Plan to the list of adopted plans that are administered and monitored through certain established procedures and review bodies. Chapter 36 establishes the Interagency Plan Implementation Committee ("IPIC"), a body which tracks existing and projected Plan revenues, makes recommendations on expenditures of Plan revenues, and coordinates City agency work programs to forward implementation of the Plan's improvement projects. Proposed amendments to Chapter 36 would add the Plan to the list of plans for which the IPIC currently oversees implementation, including the Eastern Neighborhoods and Market & Octavia Plans (among others). The IPIC bases its recommendations on the Plan's Program Implementation Document. The proposed amendments also add the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) and BART to the list of public agencies invited to participate in the IPIC, which is chaired by the Planning Director. Chapter 10E establishes monitoring programs for various adopted plans, including the Downtown Plan. Reporting on outcomes and implementation of the Transit Center District Plan, adopted as a Sub-Area Plan of the Downtown Plan, would be explicitly incorporated into the existing monitoring program for the Downtown Plan required by Chapter 10E. The draft amendments to the Administrative Code are included in Exhibit VI.

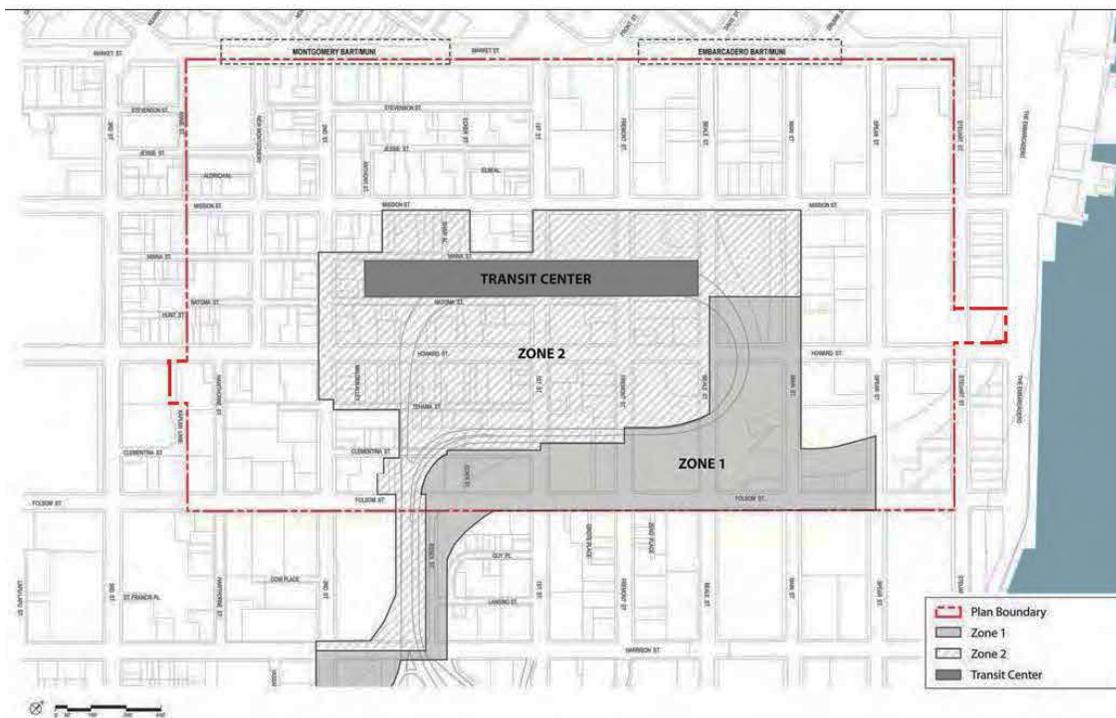
(5) Program Implementation Document

The inventory of public improvements and the comprehensive funding program to implement these improvements are described in the Transit Center District Plan Program Implementation Document. While the specific Impact Fees and Mello-Roos requirement would be established in the Planning Code, the Implementation Document summarizes the expected revenues from these and other non-Plan revenue sources and establishes a Funding Program that proposes allocations of expected revenues to the various public improvements. The Board of Supervisors will administer expenditures from the Plan revenues with recommendation by the IPIC based on the Plan's Implementation Document. Adjustments, re-

allocations and prioritization of improvements will have to be made over time by the Board and IPIC based on the readiness of improvements for funding and actual revenues, consistent with the allocations expressed in the Implementation Document's Funding Program. The draft Program Implementation Document is included in Exhibit VII.

PLAN AREA

The Transit Center District Plan Area consists of approximately 145 acres centered on the Transbay Transit Center, situated between the Northern Financial District, Rincon Hill, Yerba Buena Center and the Bay. The boundaries of the District are roughly Market Street on the north, Embarcadero on the east, Folsom Street on the south, and Hawthorne Street to the west. While these boundaries overlap with those of the Transbay Redevelopment Project Area, this Plan will not affect the adopted land use or development controls for Zone 1 of the Redevelopment Area and is consistent with the overall goals of the Transbay Redevelopment Plan.



ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Department published the Draft Environmental Impact Report on September 28, 2011. The Planning Commission will consider certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report on the Transit Center District Plan and adoption of CEQA findings at a hearing on or after May 24, 2012 prior to considering action on related General Plan, Planning Code and Zoning Map Amendments and other Plan items.