

**East SOMA Community Meeting
Comments & Questions
October 3rd 2006**

Verbal Comments / Questions during the General Session

Land Use

- SLI (Service Light Industrial zoning district) – some people surprised to see SLI retained
 - SLI used to be designed to have mixed use housing.
 - Are you reverting back to 70's / 80's SLI? Look at the success of the Rincon Hill plan the public benefit dollars were produced by the market rate housing.
 - If you keep SLI where will the money come from for public benefits if our tax dollars are going to Iraq and there is no money anywhere?
 - What is the rationale if the SLI is close to transportation and there are many housing opportunity sites there?
 - The reintroduction of SLI is a radical change. It is procedurally problematic. In addition:
 - How do these substantive changes affect the EIR process
 - The SLI is adjacent to transportation so what kind of land use decision is if a non-housing area this doesn't converge with the principles of the Planning Department.

Housing

- How many units of housing are proposed or are intended to be accomplished with the Plan vs. what is the target in the Housing Element?
- What are the levels of affordability for the housing being proposed?

Open Space

- Should consider not only landscaping but also function – a place for children, quality and safety.
- The plan should include an element for dogs if parks and open space are being included.

Traffic / Parking / Transportation

- There are only 2 buses that serve the East SoMa area. The one-way streets make the traffic a problem.
- Suggest a parking management plan to address parking issues. This could include a permanent parking zone.
- Is there accommodation in the Plan for the fact that traffic from (or to?) the North and the Northeastern part of the City goes through SoMa?

Heights

- Can't locate all the housing between Folsom & Howard because SoMa will then become like any other housing area with some commercial here and there. SoMa can do better and should retain its diversity of uses.
- Why can't Geary, the Sunset and the Richmond have higher heights and affordable housing too? Why should all 85' heights be in this neighborhood?
- How many units of housing are proposed or are intended to be accomplished with the Plan vs. what is the target in the Housing Element?

- Houses on and around Townsend were nice to look at until the high-rise buildings came and covered them.
- In the 70's SoMa was designated to be a transitional area to downtown:
 - Raising the height limits ruins this entrance function to downtown SF
 - Proposing high rises is wrong and disrespectful and it needs to stop, Rincon Hill should be stopped

General Comments

- Surprised to see changes in the Plan from the 2002 document. May want to rethink some of what is in the new draft. Not all housing should be in SoMa but some of it should. Also, think of transit changes and give appropriate land use response through the Plan.
- The Planning Department has done a good job holding workshops for community input. We have to be aware that not all of us are going to agree 100% on the Plan. Some of us want some things and some of us don't want them. I am concerned about implementation. What is the goal / the timeline for getting this passed?
- When this process started years ago Rincon Hill and Transbay were not in process yet. If we allow for housing to drive this process we'll be nothing more than a neighborhood similar to any other in San Francisco. Pay attention to the changes, this is still a job center, what is the need for services to support this and what about other services. We should ask ourselves where we want the neighborhood to go.
- I disagree with previous comments and actually think that there is not a whole lot of change being proposed. SoMa has the ability to have flexibility and it makes sense not to have a high-rise only area, an affordable only area, a commercial only area, etc. There is some opportunity to make some changes to take advantage and keep that flexibility.
- In the Proposed Land Use Districts maps what is the grey box (Yerbabuena, etc.) – what is being proposed there in terms of zoning and land use changes?

Written Comments

Land Use

- Maps need scales and glossary for zoning designations
- Rezone SLI area to DTR/Market rate housing.
- No housing approach (Market Rate) until transit is running (“not planned”) that people can walk to in under two minutes (both ways). Folsom two way transit – five-minute headways in day, ten minutes at night.
- Needs to be safe to walk at night (freeway is dark and threatening).
- Recreation facilities-desperately needed.
- Areas around Central Freeway should have lower height limits.
- Ground floor PDR with Market Rate housing component with inclusionary on site in the SLI.
- Inventory existing housing in SLI (Market rate)
- Heights along Harrison should be reconsidered –(increased)
- Promote housing along transit
- Department should study incentives in SLI zoning to actually produce housing, given history of SLI district. Is eliminating CU req. enough?
- NCT still allowed under current proposal?

Housing

- The location of the SLI is misguided as it does not fully realize the potential considering the proximity to present and future transit lines.
- The land uses appear segregated. Why are you not doing mixed use?
- Make design or buffer considerations for noise design when residential uses are near busy streets and industry/heavy businesses.
- Consider requiring an increased number of affordable units in exchange for large height bonuses (from 40-85 feet). Only requiring one extra unit doesn’t give the City sufficient gains for the large increases in profits given by the city through height increases
- Consider mandating 8-story buildings on Folsom and require affordability rather than having it as bonuses
- Consider different ownership models, e.g. “limited equity” in order to secure better access to more groups
- 85 feet height limit along Folsom is much too high.
- Visual quality from freeway is important, so heights must be limited.
- Are you going to tear my building down, it is only two stories tall and will surely be targeted once new controls are in place?
- The housing problem can only be addressed through aggressive building. Zoning and corruption are impediments to building. Planning is in the way of increasing supply, and planners must realize the laws of supply and demand.

TRANSPORTATION

- City needs street improvements in the Harrison/Bryant/Brannan corridor.
- Brannan Street has a pedestrian scale that should be enhanced.

- Families in the area either need a minimum level of parking, or improved transit service, providing better links to a variety of activity sites (e.g., shopping, school).
- Should arcades be required as a means of widening sidewalks?
- Land use should respond to transportation improvements – intensify transit service prior to the introduction of new housing.
- Consider floating on-street parking, with bus lanes in the peak hours.
- Sidewalks are needed on Townsend west of Fourth Street.
- There is a problem in SoMa with one-way transit (line) pairs set so far apart.
- Improve Mission Street bus service.
- Invest more money in transit enhancements.
- Residential Parking Permit (RPP) program should include side streets and alleyways.
- Allow residents to park at meters.
- Establish “youth zones” near schools -- map youth activity pods and residential areas, and install pedestrian-friendly mid-block signals
- Existing plans should recognize the impacts of regional traffic entering the city through SoMa (e.g., noise, frenetic energy), as well as continuing on to other areas
- Increase the ratio of public refuge spaces (quiet areas).
- If some streets are kept one-way, city should consider introducing two-way bicycle lanes (which would mirror current use in some areas).
- Allow after-hour community parking at private garages.

OPEN SPACE

- What will be the process for identifying and acquiring new open spaces?
- How will the community be allowed to participate in the programming of new open spaces?
- What is the directionality of the relationship between the SoMa transportation plan, the SMP, and the area plan?
- How will use of new and existing open spaces, such as by homeless and drug users, be addressed?
- 5th/Clementina is a possible site for a new open space.
- City-owned/operated L-shaped impound parcel should be considered as possible open space site.
- Greyline bus parcel should be considered as a possible open space site.
- South Park ‘model’ should be replicated throughout plan area. How could we begin to think about a modern adaptation of this model in portions of underutilized right-of-ways/alleys?
- How will the impact fee be generated and how will it be governed?
- Question as to Folsom vs. Howard as a ‘civic connector.’ What was the logic behind choosing Folsom, and how will Howard be addressed? Suggestion that making these streets two-way might make them less friendly to cyclists.
- How will the Caltrans’ reconfiguration of the various on/off ramps relate to the 7th/Folsom corridors? Are new traffic patterns resulting from these configurations being considered? As the reconfiguration stands, 7th St will most likely get a lot more vehicular traffic. How does this play with the green connector idea?

- Has there been any consideration of non-car streets that could act as large pedestrian and bicycle promenades?
- Underutilized spaces along and under freeway should be considered, specifically as they relate to pedestrian viability and neighborhood connectivity.
- Art programs, such as those found in Emeryville, should be applied to areas underneath freeway as a way to activate and enliven the space.

Community Facilities

- Does assessment account for Soma stabilization fee. – ie. when you do your complete your needs assessment and start to account for fund resources such as general funds and other grants etc to address existing deficits be sure to account for expenditure of SoMa stabilization fee
- Coordinate fee collection with school fees.
- Historic deficit caused by development for youth center (teens/etc.) youth friendly spaces.
- Bessie C. is K-6, so community looking for High School instead is at Filipino Recreation Center- need open space at this site.
- Include recreation uses, built into open space planning (i.e. soccer fields).
- Encourage the development of multi-use community facilities.
- Increased community facilities to address impacts of citywide uses in Soma-like Moscone center.
- Impacts of Rincon Hill Transbay development (more workers, residents, cars).

Historic Resources

- Why is South Park not a Historical District?
- Does a Building need to be “Exceptional” to be a historical resource?
- Low scale housing in interior blocks are themselves a historic resource- neighborhood needs housing islands in old/former industrial area. Human scale and relief.
- Look at Cultural Preservation (human activities) vs. Buildings. (Culture supporting businesses-Filipino community sites Business./ Youth Culture/ trans culture.)
- Maintain heights and density so that “Old Town” doesn’t become “New Town” The older buildings will be torn down if there are development incentives.
- Preservation of Historic infrastructure-cobble stones granite curbs, “street lights”?
- Capp Street
- Pattern of development→No curbcuts on pristine blocks. Ground floor uses.