



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Public Sites Portfolio October 21, 2014 Community Meeting Summary

A community meeting for the Public Sites Portfolio project took place on Tuesday, **October 21, 2014** at the Bayanihan Center on 1010 Mission Street. Approximately 20-25 participants attended from various organizations and a few neighborhoods.

Participants: 1) heard an overview of the Public Sites Portfolio, including the criteria for selecting sites; and 2) engaged in small group discussions about the components of the project to give their feedback on the following:

- the priority areas (housing, transportation and neighborhood sustainability and resiliency) for selecting sites
- the draft principles that will guide each selected site's development
- other priority public benefits
- ideas for strategies and tools for achieving the public benefits
- ways to measure success; and
- potential sites to consider

A meeting with identical content took place on Tuesday, October 7 at 6 PM at James Lick Wilmerding High School. The same information was provided at both meetings in different locations of the City to ensure interested members of the public could have a chance to learn about the project.

Comments and questions attendees raised are summarized below:

### **General comments (on portfolio criteria, principles and general approach)**

- Transparency in the process is important and should be the first goal. Provide access to list/database of public sites (both for transparency and to inform the discussion more clearly). Seeing the full list (or map) of all publicly-owned sites would help contextualize the project and generate ideas and feedback about the public benefits that could be provided.
- Provide clarity on the Public Sites Portfolio goal – is it mainly aimed at affordable housing? Are all projects contingent upon building housing first? If housing not built, what other public benefits/uses could go on sites?
- The principles should include local economic development tied to workforce development as a principle.
- A PAC (project area committee) or similar community group could help ensure the principles get applied locally – engage the neighborhood.
- There is a desire for a community-driven process to determine the mix of uses.
- Group sites by regions/neighborhoods, and then build consensus from local level up.

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- Public sites have been underutilized for a long time, the concept isn't new [and therefore there is a desire to realize better use of them].
- Density bonuses and height incentives could be used as a tool for developers of these sites to provide more affordable housing and community space.
- Achieve high level of design.
- How does fair market value requirement affect development options?
- What kind of developers would the city try to attract?
- Need interdisciplinary team of experts for each site.
- Would rezoning be required in any instance? Would it be a ground lease or sale?
- Can the value of the public benefits (such as on the ground floor or the green infrastructure) being provided be discounted from the value on site?

## **Housing**

- Define affordability.
- Mixed-income housing is important.
- Affordable housing can be a catalyst for other community benefits (some participants pointed to 17<sup>th</sup> and Folsom as an example of this).
- Micro units-don't work for families but maybe are ok for students.
- Other criteria for selecting housing sites should include proximity to services of neighborhood commercial districts, transit, proximity to public open space, ability to provide private/common open space within developments, and accessibility considerations.
- Explore ways to use the subaccount (to create complete neighborhoods) currently within Housing Trust Fund that reserves money for area improvements.
- For the 4<sup>th</sup> and Folsom site target affordability for 80% of AMI and below as that is the highest need in SoMa, particularly the 30-60% AMI and for families as there are many families in SoMa's alleyways that are facing Ellis Act evictions. The site is also within the Youth and Family Zone SUD. There are many homeless veterans that need housing if the City can find a site in SoMa that can serve that population as well
- Today's SF economy is run by housing and office. Affordable housing developments provide best opportunity for affordable retail and community space.

## **Transportation**

### **Transit Capacity**

- Do a pro-active transit planning strategy.
- Align MTA service increases with public site development and population growth.

- SoMa has more transit options but other neighborhoods don't therefore transit capacity needs to be considered and improved. For example, the 8X and the 9 are crowded buses.

#### Infrastructure Improvements & Strategies

- Provide more pedestrian-only streets.
- Limit parking in favor of public transportation.
- If there is a robust transportation system in place, it is OK to reduce parking requirements in the proposed developments.
- Market-rate residential development should pay transit impact fees/fund transit improvements.
- Get the low-hanging fruit. Simple, low cost solutions (i.e. new bike lanes) can enhance corridors (near new development).

#### Baseline Conditions/Key Problem Areas

- Pedestrian safety is a major concern in SoMa, specifically the Bessie Carmichael School and the Middle School at 4th and Harrison because there is a conflict between state and local law as to whether it is designated a school zone for traffic speed. Since the MTA doesn't recognize it as a school zone the 15 mph speeds near these schools do not apply. There have been instances of crossing guards being harassed and hit by drivers coming off the freeways. Resolve conflict to allow 15 mph posting.
- There is congestion on the 8th and Market sidewalks and crosswalks, creating mid-block crossings here and similar hotspots could help alleviate that.
- The tech shuttles on 8th crowd the street and create problems for seniors, particularly those with mobility issues.
- The shuttle buses that wait in the SoMa neighborhood streets also take up neighborhood parking.

#### Neighborhood Resiliency and Sustainability

- City processes seeking sustainable development need to be better integrated – no silos.
- Sustainability objectives should be a prerequisite for development on all public sites.
- Most of the sustainability objectives are already or will soon be mandated through various codes and ordinances.
- These could be performance standards but have to factor in potential increased costs.
- Should look at operating costs as well as construction costs in structuring transaction and seeking sustainable features.

### Specific Strategies

- Consider achieving heat recovery (as energy source) from the 4<sup>th</sup> and Folsom site.
- Aim for net zero energy developments.
- Include PUC-type green infrastructure design elements in site design and features such as rooftop gardens, rain gardens, LEED housing.
- In SoMa and perhaps other areas, look at public sites under and along highway for green infrastructure opportunities to enhance the neighborhoods.

### Other Important Public Benefits (that public sites can provide)

- Open space is a high priority to have in neighborhoods. In SoMa it is a key priority but with lack of available space, it is necessary to get creative and use rooftops as open space and community gardens, making them accessible and, when possible, open to the public.
- Access to healthy food (could be in rooftop gardens) is a need in SoMa.
- Ground floor for community space, including recreation space since outside recreation/open space is hard to find and provide. The ground floor is also ideal for activities that cater to seniors since it is the most accessible location.
- Non-profit space, small businesses - How to preserve in corridors where rent is skyrocketing? Non-profits space is a need in SoMa.
- Community-serving ground floor retail - target existing retailers with rental assistance and/or small business incubation services
- Don't rule out chain retail, can be more affordable.
- Subsidized retail rents could have value in terms of place making and additional value that would be realized (for the community).
- Projects should be tied back to and deliver local workforce and economic development benefits – avoid having money bleed out of San Francisco. Aim to have the benefits of the project primarily benefit the surrounding area such as quarter or a half mile, as appropriate.
- Localized economic and workforce development.
- Don't lose value of possible recreational uses and focus solely on housing.
- SoMa needs a high school, many students go as far as Balboa and Galileo for high school – could some of the floors in a development be dedicated to this need?
- Balboa needs local-serving retail.
- Consider/respect cultural and historical context.

### **Ideas for metrics and data to track**

- Number of jobs the projects generate
- Amount of money that stays in the local economy.
- Metrics that show how the local community being sustained.
- Review before and after accidents data.
- Establish baselines for various issues.
- Number of affordable units being built and occupied by existing, local residents.
- Mode share of new residents.
- Reduction of noise and other mitigations (noise a big issue in SoMa).