



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Memo to the Planning Commission

HEARING DATE: JULY 24, 2014

*Date:* July 17, 2014  
*Case No.:* 2013.0154EKRVX  
*Project Name:* MOSCONE CENTER EXPANSION PROJECT  
*Project Address:* 747 HOWARD STREET  
*Zoning:* C-3-S (Downtown Support)  
340-I Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 3734/091  
*Applicant:* John Noguchi  
Director of Convention Facilities Department  
City and County of San Francisco  
747 Howard Street, 5th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
*Staff Contact:* Elizabeth Watty – (415) 558-6620  
[Elizabeth.Watty@sfgov.org](mailto:Elizabeth.Watty@sfgov.org)  
*Recommendation:* **Informational Item Only**

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
**415.558.6378**

Fax:  
**415.558.6409**

Planning  
Information:  
**415.558.6377**

### BACKGROUND

The presentation on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014 is for informational purposes only, and is intended to provide the Commission with a preliminary overview of the scope of the Moscone Center Expansion Project and its design. The Project will be back before the Commission on August 14, 2014, for Certification of the EIR and for all necessary Planning entitlements.

The Moscone Center, which is San Francisco's primary convention, exhibition, and meeting facility, is located on Howard Street between Third and Fourth Streets in the South of Market and Yerba Buena Gardens neighborhoods. The Project Site spans portions of two separate blocks and is made up of three main halls: Moscone North and Moscone South, which are located across Howard Street from each other between Third and Fourth Streets, and the Moscone West exhibition hall, located across Fourth Street, north of Howard Street. The Project Site is bordered by Third Street to the east; Folsom Street to the south; the Metreon (a commercial retail center housing shops, restaurants, and a movie theater), Children's Creativity Museum and Fourth Street to the west; and Yerba Buena Gardens and Mission Street to the north.

The proposed project is focused primarily on Moscone North and South, and no changes are proposed at Moscone West. Improvements to the Moscone North and South building would occur both below grade and above grade. Moscone North and South currently encompass a total of approximately 440,000 square feet of exhibition space (180,000 square feet at Moscone North and 260,000 square feet at Moscone South). All of the functional spaces at Moscone North and South are below grade, with the exception of the

street-level North and South lobbies and the Esplanade Ballroom, located at grade along the Third Street frontage of Moscone South.

The proposed Moscone Center Expansion Project would increase the size of the convention center facility by about 20 percent, from approximately 1.2 million square feet to 1.5 million square feet. Through this expansion, as well as through renovation and repurposing of the existing facility, the Project would result in an approximately 42 percent increase in functional space, to about 888,300 square feet from 625,600 square feet.

The Moscone Center Expansion Project is being undertaken jointly between the Moscone Expansion District (MED), managed by the San Francisco Tourism Improvement District (SFTID) Management Corporation, and the City. Construction is expected to commence in December 2014 and last approximately 44 months.

In response to community feedback, the Sponsor has implemented a few changes to the Project. The specific changes will be described in greater detail during the presentation on July 24, 2014, but are incorporated into the Project overview, detailed below.

The Moscone Center Expansion Project includes the following key components:

- **Maximize Contiguous Exhibition Space.** A primary goal of the Expansion Project is to maximize contiguous exhibition space below grade. Additional contiguous exhibition space would be created by excavating in one location under Howard Street and repurposing below-grade spaces between the existing North and South exhibition halls. Currently, the largest contiguous exhibition space is located at Moscone South, at 260,000 sf. The proposed project would create a total of approximately 515,000 sf of contiguous exhibition space below ground.
- **Moscone South & Esplanade Ballroom Expansion.** The proposed above-grade Moscone South improvements would consist of two elements: the Moscone Esplanade Ballroom Expansion and the Moscone South Expansion; the South Expansion and Esplanade Expansion would function and appear as one building. Above grade, Moscone South and the Esplanade functional space would expand by a combined 277 percent, from 71,100 square feet to 267,700 square feet. The completed building would be approximately 95 feet in height above Howard Street, but would include a 25 foot setback along the entire Howard Street edge, and a 70-foot setback along the southwest corner of the building, both at the third (top) level. These setbacks would both be used as programmable rooftop terraces. In addition, the setback along the southwest corner also reduces the relative height of the southern wall relative to the Children's Garden, from 82 feet to 57 feet.
- **Moscone North Expansion.** The Project includes minimal above-grade expansion of the Moscone North building. The Moscone North expansion is primarily an expansion to the existing lobby, with a two-story vertical circulation lobby at the east, providing access to meetings rooms located in Moscone South, via the proposed level 2 bridge over Howard Street. The remainder of the roof

of the Moscone North expansion would be a new public terrace, adding 8,000 square feet of new public open space and access to Yerba Buena Gardens through the Sisters' Cities Gardens.

- **Pedestrian Bridges.** Two pedestrian bridges would connect the proposed expansions between Moscone North and South above Howard Street, framing-in the main public arrival space at grade between the two buildings. The eastern bridge would be partially enclosed (naturally ventilated) to provide enhanced internal circulation for Moscone convention attendees, while the western bridge would remain an uncovered public walkway intended for use by pedestrians moving between the two Yerba Buena blocks located north and south of Howard Street. This public walkway would replace the existing circuitous pedestrian bridge located north of the existing Carousel for an improved circulation. The replacement western bridge would touch down in the Children's Garden directly across from the existing amphitheater, leaving an area between the bridge and the western façade of Moscone South for planting. The ramp location on the south side of Howard Street has been reconfigured to create more open space at the Carousel level for public programming.
- **Public Realm Enhancements.** The Project includes significant public realm improvements throughout and adjacent to the Site. Howard Street would be improved to include a reconfigured bus pick-up and drop-off facilities to reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts; Similarly, Third Street would be improved through widened sidewalks to minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflicts; and a paseo would be created behind the Moscone South Building to help break-up the length of the Third Street block, to activate the south block of Moscone, and to increase the access points to various activities located within the interior of the lot.
- **Yerba Buena Children's Garden Improvements.** The Project includes improvements to the Children's Garden south of Howard Street, including a new plaza located between the children's carousel and the proposed western pedestrian bridge, a tot lot with play equipment for children under age 5, relocation and expansion of the existing learning garden, replacement of the nature walk/allée of plum trees, an elevated social seating area providing improved views points throughout the garden, reconfiguration of the existing lawn, restrooms, and garden storage, and a public plaza alongside the Esplanade Ballroom.

## **REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTION**

No action required; this hearing is for informational purposes only.