



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Case Report Central SoMa Plan

HEARING DATE: MARCH 21, 2018

*Project Name:* **Central SoMa Plan**  
*Date:* March 14, 2018  
*Record Number:* **2011.1356MTZU**  
*Staff Contact:* Steve Wertheim, Principal Planner, Citywide Planning  
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*Recommendation:* **Provide review and comments on the proposed legislation related to the Central SoMa Plan**

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### REQUESTED ACTION

The action before the Historic Preservation Commission is to provide review and comments on the proposed legislation related to the Central SoMa Plan, currently under consideration by the Planning Commission.

### SUMMARY

Mayor Farrell, Supervisor Kim, and the San Francisco Planning Commission are seeking to adopt and implement the Central SoMa Plan ("the Plan"). 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, recommendation of amendments to the Administrative Code, and certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report and adoption of CEQA Findings. Such actions will occur at the Planning Commission no sooner than March 29, 2018. Further action to adopt the legislation will also be required at the Board of Supervisors.

The Plan is the result of a multi-year public and cooperative interagency planning process that began in 2011. Central SoMa is a 230-acre area that sits adjacent to downtown, has excellent transit access, and contains numerous underdeveloped sites. As such, the neighborhood is well positioned to accommodate needed employment, housing, and visitor facilities in the core of the city and Bay Area region. It is also a neighborhood with an incredible history and a rich, ongoing, cultural heritage. As it grows and evolves over the next 25 years, Central SoMa has the opportunity to become a complete, sustainable, and vital neighborhood without losing what makes it special and unique today. The Central SoMa Plan contains the goals, objectives, and policies to guide this growth and evolution such that the results serve the best interests of San Francisco – in the present and the future. This includes a public benefits package of over \$2 billion to serve the needs of the neighborhood.

## **PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission review and comment on the proposed Plan to help inform the decision making process at the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

## **PLAN BACKGROUND**

The desire for a Central SoMa Plan began during the Eastern Neighborhoods planning process. In 2008 the City adopted the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, including new land use controls and proposed community improvements for the eastern part of the South of Market neighborhood (SoMa), as well as the Central Waterfront, Mission, and Showplace Square/Potrero Hill neighborhoods. At that time, the City determined that the development potential of the industrially zoned part of East SoMa, coupled with the improved transit provided by the Central Subway, necessitated a subsequent, focused planning process that took into account the city's growth needs and City and regional environmental goals. The Central SoMa Plan is that subsequent process.

Similarly, the Western SoMa Area Plan, adopted in 2013, explicitly recognized the need to increase development capacity near transit in Objective 1.5, which states that the City should "Support continued evaluation of land uses near major transit infrastructure in recognition of citywide and regional sustainable growth needs." The explanatory text in Objective 1.5 concludes that "The City must continue evaluating how it can best meet citywide and regional objectives to direct growth to transit-oriented locations and whether current controls are meeting identified needs." The Objective's implementing Policy 1.5.1 states that the City should "Continue to explore and re-examine land use controls east of 6th Street, including as part of any future evaluation along the 4th Street corridor." The Central SoMa Plan is intended to fulfill the Western SoMa Plan's Objective 1.5 and Policy 1.5.1.

The process of creating the Central SoMa Plan began in 2011. Since that time, the Planning Department released a draft Plan and commenced the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process in April 2013, released an Initial Study in February of 2014, released a revised Draft Plan and Implementation Strategy in August of 2016, and released the Draft Environmental Impact Report in December of 2016.

Throughout the process, the Central SoMa Plan has been developed based on robust public input, including ten public open houses; twelve public hearings at the Planning Commission; two public hearings at the Board of Supervisor's Land Use & Transportation Committee; additional hearings at the Historic Preservation Commission, Arts Commission, and Youth Commission; a "technical advisory committee" consisting of multiple City and regional agencies; a "storefront charrette" (where the Planning Department set up shop in a retail space in the neighborhood); two walking tours, led by community members; two community surveys; an online discussion

board; meetings with over 30 of the neighborhoods groups and other community stakeholders; and thousands of individual meetings, phone calls, and emails with stakeholders.

The Central SoMa Plan Area runs from 2nd Street to 6th Street, Market Street to Townsend Street, exclusive of those areas that are part of the Downtown Plan that comprise much of the area north of Folsom Street (see “Plan Area”, below). 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. The Plan’s philosophy is to keep what is already successful about the neighborhood, and improve what is not. Utilizing the Plan’s philosophy to achieve the Plan’s vision will require implementing the following three strategies:

- Accommodate growth;
- Provide public benefits; and
- Respect and enhance neighborhood character.

Implementing the Plan’s strategies will require addressing all the facets of a sustainable neighborhood. Doing so can be accomplished by meeting all of the Plan’s eight Goals:

1. Accommodate a Substantial Amount of Jobs and Housing
2. Maintain the Diversity of Residents
3. Facilitate an Economically Diversified and Lively Jobs Center
4. Provide Safe and Convenient Transportation that Prioritizes Walking, Bicycling, and Transit
5. Offer an Abundance of Parks and Recreational Opportunities
6. Create an Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient Neighborhood
7. Preserve and Celebrate the Neighborhood’s Cultural Heritage
8. Ensure that New Buildings Enhance the Character of the Neighborhood and the City

The implementation of the Plan would fulfill its vision, philosophy, and goals by:

- Accommodating development capacity for up to 40,000 jobs and 7,000 housing units by removing much of the area’s industrially-protective zoning and increasing height limits on many of the area’s parcels;
- Maintaining the diversity of residents by requiring that over 33% of new housing units are affordable to low- and moderate-income households and requiring that these new units are built in SoMa;
- Facilitating an economically diversified and lively jobs center by requiring most large sites to be jobs-oriented, by requiring production, distribution, and repair uses in many projects, and by allowing retail, hotels, and entertainment uses in much of the Plan Area;
- Providing safe and convenient transportation by funding capital projects that would improve conditions for people walking, bicycling, and taking transit;

- Offering an abundance of parks and recreational opportunities by funding the rehabilitation and construction of parks and recreation centers in the area and requiring large non-residential projects to provide publicly-accessible open space;
- Creating an environmentally sustainable and resilient neighborhood by requiring green roofs and use of non-greenhouse gas energy sources, while funding projects to improve air quality, provide biodiversity, and help manage stormwater;
- Preserving and celebrating the neighborhood’s cultural heritage by helping fund the rehabilitation and maintenance of historic buildings and funding social programs for the neighborhood’s existing residents and organizations; and
- Ensuring that new buildings enhance the character of the neighborhood and the city by implementing design controls that would generally help protect the neighborhood’s mid-rise character and street fabric, create a strong street wall, and facilitate innovative yet contextual architecture.

## **PLAN ELEMENTS**

This section discusses the information contained in the legislative packet introduced by Mayor Farrell and Supervisor Kim on February 27, 2018 (including the proposed Planning Code and Administrative Code amendments and the proposed Zoning Map amendments) and initiated by the Planning Commission on March 1, 2018 (the General Plan amendments), as well as the Plan’s Implementation Program. It also includes a discussion of the Supplemental Information provided in the legislative packet to help inform decision makers and stakeholders.

In addition to these elements, the Plan includes amendments to Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code designating new landmarks and buildings of significance in Central SoMa. These amendments are anticipated to be initiated by the Historic Preservation Commission on March 21.

The content of each section is briefly described below, with additional emphasis provided for strategies addressing cultural preservation:

### **(I) General Plan Amendments**

The primary General Plan Amendment proposed is the creation of a Central SoMa Area Plan. This new Area Plan contains eight Goals (as stated above), as well as Objectives, Policies, and related contextual information. The General Plan Amendments also include amendments to the East SoMa Area Plan and Western SoMa Area Plan, reflecting that the creation of the Central SoMa Plan will require amendments to the boundaries of these other Plan Areas. Finally, the General Plan Amendments include various map updates and text amendments to update several Elements of the General Plan to reflect the specifics of the Central SoMa Plan.

Specific to cultural preservation, Goal 7 of the Central SoMa Plan is to “Preserve and Celebrate the Neighborhood’s Cultural Heritage.” The accompanying Objectives and Policies speak to both the tangible and intangible components of that history. For tangible elements, the Plan speaks to strategies to document and protect cultural heritage resources (Objectives 7.1, 7.4, and 7.5), as well ways to maintain the areas with a high caliber of physical character (Objective 7.6). For intangible elements, the Plan speaks to strategies to support two culturally important

communities, the Filipino and LGBTQ community (Objective 7.2). Finally, the Plan speaks to keeping the tangible and intangible character of the area's industrial and arts legacy (Objective 7.3).

## **(II) Planning Code and Administrative Code Amendments**

The primary regulatory changes proposed in the Plan are reflected in proposed amendments to the Planning Code and Administrative Code, include changes to controls related to land use, density, urban form, open space, parking and loading, review procedures, and impact fees.

Specific to cultural preservation, the Planning Code and Administrative Code amendments include the following:

- For preservation and maintenance of historic buildings, extend to Central SoMa the ability of important historic buildings to sell their Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) (Section 128.1) while requiring purchase of such TDRs (Section 249.78);
- For preservation of the arts and industrial character, require production, distribution, and repair (PDR) uses in new office development (Section 249.78), complementing the existing replacement requirements adopted in 2016's Proposition X (Section 202.8);
- For physical character, ban the consolidation of lots containing buildings with historic or neighborhood-character buildings (California Historic Resources Status Codes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6L) where frontages are under 200 feet in length (Section 249.78).

Note that the Plan also proposes amendments to Article 10 and 11 of the Planning Code designating new landmarks and buildings of significance in Central SoMa. These amendments are proposed for initiation by the Historic Preservation Committee.

## **(III) 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, and bulk districts.

## **(IV) Implementation Program**

The Implementation Program contains several pieces, each intended to facilitate the Plan's implementation:

- 1) An "Implementation Matrix" document conveying how each of the Plan's policies would be implemented, including implementation measures, mechanism, timelines, and lead agencies.
- 2) A "Public Benefits Program" document containing the Plan's proposed public benefits package, including a description of the range of infrastructure and services that will serve new growth anticipated under the Plan, a summary of how those benefits will be funded, and a description of how this program will be administered and monitored.
- 3) A "Guide to Urban Design" document containing design guidance that is specific to Central SoMa in a way that complements and supplements the requirements of the Planning Code and pending citywide Urban Design Guidelines.

- 4) A “Key Development Sites Guidelines” document that includes greater direction than available in the Planning Code to the development of the Plan Area’s large, underutilized development opportunity sites, in an effort to maximize public benefits and design quality.
- 5) A “Key Streets Guidelines” document that includes greater policy direction for each of the major streets in the Plan Area.

Specific to cultural preservation, the Public Benefits Package includes \$70M in “TBD” money. A substantial amount of this money may be allocated to cultural preservation strategies, such as the ongoing funding of the City’s SoMa Stabilization Fund, whose funding is otherwise expected to run out within the next couple of years.

#### **(V) Supplemental Information**

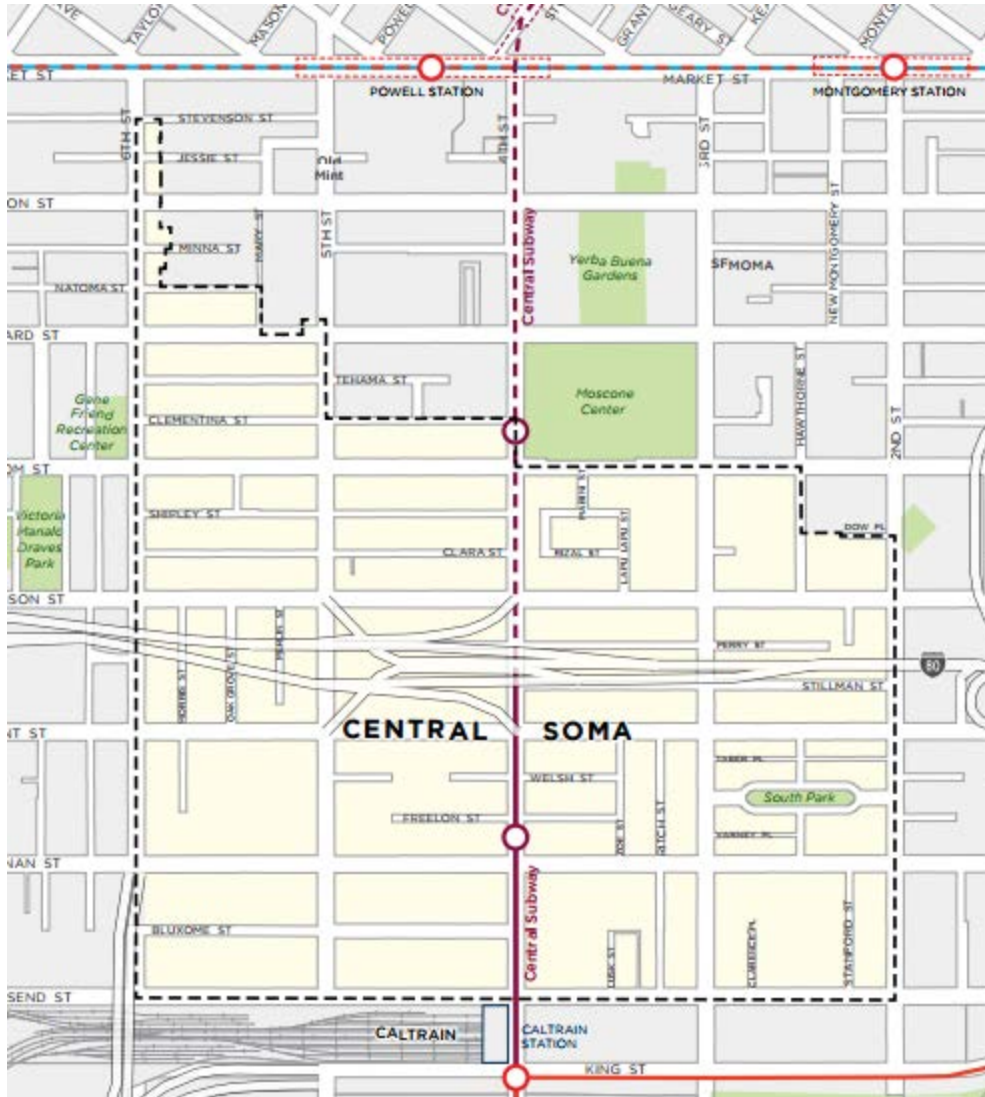
This section includes eight documents, each of which is comprised of documents intended to explain proposed changes to City law and/or changes proposed since the release of the Draft Plan in August 2016:

- 1) Summary of Revisions – Central SoMa Plan: This document conveys proposed revisions to the Central SoMa Plan between the version published in the August 2016 Draft Plan and the version included in this packet.
- 2) Summary of Revisions – East SoMa Plan: This document conveys revisions to the adopted East SoMa Plan proposed as part of the Central SoMa Plan legislative package.
- 3) Summary of Revisions – Western SoMa Plan: This document conveys revisions to the adopted Western SoMa Plan proposed as part of the Central SoMa Plan legislative package.
- 4) Summary of Revisions – Planning Code and Administrative Code: This document conveys revisions to the adopted Planning Code and Administrative Code proposed as part of the Central SoMa Plan legislative package.
- 5) Summary of Revisions – Zoning Map: This document conveys proposed revisions to the Zoning Map between the version published in the August 2016 Draft Plan and the version included in this packet.
- 6) Summary of Revisions – Implementation Matrix: This document conveys proposed revisions to the Zoning Map between the version published in the August 2016 Draft Plan and the version included in this packet.
- 7) Summary of Revisions – Public Benefits Program: This document conveys proposed revisions to the Public Benefits Program between the version published in the August 2016 Draft Plan (including Part II.B and II.C) and the version included in this packet.
- 8) Summary of Revisions – Key Development Sites Guidelines: This document conveys proposed revisions to the Key Development Sites Guidelines between the version published in the August 2016 Draft Plan and the version included in this packet.

#### **PLAN AREA**

The Central SoMa Plan Area runs from 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Market Street to Townsend Street, exclusive of those areas that are part of the Downtown Plan or in the C-3 zoning districts. It is an “Eastern Neighborhoods Plan” comprised entirely of areas formerly part of the East SoMa Plan

Area and Western SoMa Plan Area, whose boundaries will be adjusted accordingly. The Central SoMa Plan Area boundaries were created to include areas within easy walking distance (i.e., two blocks) of the Central Subway's 4<sup>th</sup> Street alignment.



## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Department published the Draft Environmental Impact Report in December 2016. The Planning Commission will consider certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report on the Central SoMa Plan and adoption of CEQA findings at a hearing on or after March 22, 2018 prior to considering action on related General Plan, Planning Code and Zoning Map Amendments and other Plan items.



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution No. XXXXX

HEARING DATE MARCH 21, 2018

*Project Name:* Central SoMa Plan  
*Date:* March 14, 2018  
*Record No.:* **2011.1356MTZU [Board File. No 170961]**  
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### ADOPTING A RESOLUTION SUBMITTING A REPORT OF COMMENTS ON THE CENTRAL SOMA PLAN TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

WHEREAS, Section 4.105 of the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco mandates that the Planning Commission shall periodically recommend to the Board of Supervisors for approval or rejection proposed amendments to the General Plan in response to changing physical, social, economic, environmental or legislative conditions; and

WHEREAS, Section 4.135 of the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco mandates the referral of such matters, prior to passage by the Board of Supervisors, be submitted for written report by the Historic Preservation Commission regarding effects upon historic or cultural resources: ordinances and resolutions concerning historic preservation issues and historic resources; redevelopment project plans; waterfront land use and project plans; and such other matters as may be prescribed by ordinance. If the Planning Commission is required to take action on the matter, the Historic Preservation Commission shall submit any report to the Planning Commission as well as to the Board of Supervisors; otherwise, the Historic Preservation Commission shall submit any report to the Board of Supervisors; and

WHEREAS, The desire for a Central SoMa Plan began during the Eastern Neighborhoods planning process. In 2008 the City adopted the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan, including new land use controls and proposed community improvements for the eastern part of the South of Market neighborhood (SoMa), as well as the Central Waterfront, Mission, and Showplace Square/Potrero Hill neighborhoods. At that time, the City determined that the development potential of the industrially zoned part of East SoMa, coupled with the improved transit to be provided by the Central Subway, necessitated a subsequent, focused planning process that took into account the city's growth needs and City and regional environmental goals. The Central SoMa Plan is the result of that subsequent process; and



WHEREAS, Similarly, the Western SoMa Area Plan, adopted in 2013, explicitly recognized the need to increase development capacity near transit in Objective 1.5, which states that the City should “Support continued evaluation of land uses near major transit infrastructure in recognition of citywide and regional sustainable growth needs.” The explanatory text in Objective 1.5 concludes that “The City must continue evaluating how it can best meet citywide and regional objectives to direct growth to transit-oriented locations and whether current controls are meeting identified needs.” The Objective’s implementing Policy 1.5.1 states that the City should “Continue to explore and re-examine land use controls east of 6th Street, including as part of any future evaluation along the 4th Street corridor.” The Central SoMa Plan is intended to fulfill the Western SoMa Plan’s Objective 1.5 and Policy 1.5.1; and

WHEREAS, The process of creating the Central SoMa Plan began in 2011. Since that time, the Planning Department released a draft Plan and commenced the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process in April 2013, released an Initial Study in February of 2014, released a revised Draft Plan and Implementation Strategy in August of 2016, and released the Draft Environmental Impact Report in December of 2016; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the process, the Central SoMa Plan has been developed based on robust public input, including ten public open houses; ten public hearings at the Planning Commission; two public hearings at the Board of Supervisor’s Land Use & Transportation Committee; additional hearings at the Historic Preservation Commission, Arts Commission, and Youth Commission; a “technical advisory committee” consisting of multiple City and regional agencies; a “storefront charrette” (during which the Planning Department set up shop in a retail space in the neighborhood to solicit community input on the formulation of the plan); two walking tours, led by community members; two community surveys; an online discussion board; meetings with over 30 of the neighborhoods groups and other community stakeholders; and thousands of individual meetings, phone calls, and emails with stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, The Central SoMa Plan Area runs from 2nd Street to 6th Street, Market Street to Townsend Street, exclusive of those areas that are part of the Downtown Plan that comprise much of the area north of Folsom Street. 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. The Plan’s philosophy is to keep what is already successful about the neighborhood, and improve what is not. Utilizing the Plan’s philosophy to achieve the Plan’s vision will require implementing the following three strategies:

- Accommodate growth;
- Provide public benefits; and
- Respect and enhance neighborhood character;

and

WHEREAS, Implementing the Plan’s strategies will require addressing all the facets of a sustainable neighborhood. To do so, the Plan seeks to achieve eight Goals:

1. Accommodate a Substantial Amount of Jobs and Housing
2. Maintain the Diversity of Residents
3. Facilitate an Economically Diversified and Lively Jobs Center
4. Provide Safe and Convenient Transportation that Prioritizes Walking, Bicycling, and Transit
5. Offer an Abundance of Parks and Recreational Opportunities
6. Create an Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient Neighborhood
7. Preserve and Celebrate the Neighborhood's Cultural Heritage
8. Ensure that New Buildings Enhance the Character of the Neighborhood and the City;

and

WHEREAS, The Plan would implement its vision, philosophy, and goals by:

- Accommodating development capacity for up to 40,000 jobs and 7,000 housing units by removing much of the area's industrially-protective zoning and increasing height limits on many of the area's parcels;
- Maintaining the diversity of residents by requiring that over 33% of new housing units are affordable to low- and moderate-income households and requiring that these new units are built in SoMa;
- Facilitating an economically diversified and lively jobs center by requiring most large sites to be jobs-oriented, by requiring production, distribution, and repair uses in many projects, and by allowing retail, hotels, and entertainment uses in much of the Plan Area;
- Providing safe and convenient transportation by funding capital projects that would improve conditions for people walking, bicycling, and taking transit;
- Offering an abundance of parks and recreational opportunities by funding the rehabilitation and construction of parks and recreation centers in the area and requiring large non-residential projects to provide publicly-accessible open space;
- Creating an environmentally sustainable and resilient neighborhood by requiring green roofs and use of non-greenhouse gas energy sources, while funding projects to improve air quality, provide biodiversity, and help manage stormwater;
- Preserving and celebrating the neighborhood's cultural heritage by helping fund the rehabilitation and maintenance of historic buildings and funding social programs for the neighborhood's existing residents and organizations; and
- Ensuring that new buildings enhance the character of the neighborhood and the city by implementing design controls that would generally help protect the neighborhood's mid-rise character and street fabric, create a strong street wall, and facilitate innovative yet contextual architecture.

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Planning Department is seeking to adopt and implement the Central SoMa Plan. The core policies and supporting discussion in the Plan have been incorporated into an Area Plan proposed to be added to the General Plan. The General Plan, Planning Code, Zoning Map Amendments, and Implementation Document provide a comprehensive set of policies and implementation programming to realize the vision of the Plan. The Implementation Document describes how the Plan's policies will be implemented, outlines

public improvements, funding mechanisms and interagency coordination that the City must pursue to implement the Plan, as well as controls for key development sites and key streets, and design guidance for new development; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Farrell and Supervisor Kim introduced the Central SoMa Plan's proposed Planning Code and Administrative Amendments and Zoning Map Amendments on February 27, 2018; and

WHEREAS, The Planning Commission voted to Initiate the Central SoMa Plan's proposed General Plan amendments at a duly noticed hearing on March 1, 2018; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the Draft Central SoMa Area Plan and other pertinent materials related to Case File No. XXXXX, and this Commission has provided the following comments:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Recording Secretary to transmit this Resolution, and other pertinent materials in the Case File No. XXXXXXXX to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on March 21, 2018.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: