

July 6, 2018

Land Use & Transportation Committee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: July 9, 2018 Agenda Items Nos. 6, 7 & 8
**Central SoMa Plan Amendments to the General Plan, Planning Code and Zoning Maps
(Board File Nos. 180490, 180185, 180453)**

Dear Supervisors Tang, Kim and Safaí:

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in with SPUR's support for the Central SoMa Plan. SPUR is very pleased to see that the approval of the Central SoMa Plan and its implementing actions are finally before you. We urge you to approve this ambitious plan as quickly as possible. The city has been working with the community for several years to get this Plan completed, and it is time to get it across the finish line.

Why should the Central SoMa Plan be approved? What do we see are its merits?

1. **Central SoMa is the right location for jobs:** Central SoMa is an area that is key to San Francisco and to the region. It lies adjacent to the Financial District, an existing dense jobs center, and it holds the most links to regional transportation infrastructure. Downtown San Francisco is the area in the region with the lowest rate of driving to work and one of the few places within the region where people can and do commute by public transportation.

This is therefore the right place — from an environmental standpoint, a jobs agglomeration standpoint and others — for accommodating a significant amount of growth for both jobs and housing, but particularly for the 40,000 jobs this Plan contemplates.

2. **The Central SoMa Plan helps to address the housing shortage and the affordability crisis:** With recent amendments, this plan now accommodates 8,300 homes, which is an increase from what was originally planned. Additionally, the housing sustainability district, which uses David Chiu's AB 73 from last year, will help expedite the production of these units which have already been considered through this planning process.

We would also support future efforts to add housing in the Central SoMa Plan and elsewhere in San Francisco and the region without coming at the expense of jobs in regional-transit locations.

- 3. The Central SoMa Plan provides for unprecedented public benefits:** The growth accommodated by this Plan is expected to one day fund up to \$2 billion in public benefits towards affordable housing, transportation, open space, sustainability and many other needs for the city and this neighborhood. These benefits will be transformative...once the Plan is approved and once that development moves forward. But we have been waiting for the plan's completion for long enough. In the meantime, the economy has been shifting, construction costs have been rising and the feasibility of development moving forward is now shakier than it was a few years ago.

In that spirit, now is better than later. Displacement of both residents and businesses from San Francisco is happening in part because there is more competition for homes and office space. Quote unquote "normal" office jobs for nonprofits, engineering and architecture firms and other businesses are being shifted to downtown Oakland in the best case, but also to more suburban locations or other regions, because of the increased cost to lease office space in San Francisco.

The Central SoMa Plan is a thoughtful and ambitious plan to improve the neighborhood for residents, workers and visitors. It will increase housing opportunities, provide significant affordability, expand green space, transform the experience of being on the street, maintain a vital mix of uses, allow a diverse mix of businesses to remain in San Francisco and more. SPUR urges you to support this Plan as quickly as possible in order to set in motion the processes that will bring these benefits to Central SoMa, San Francisco and the region.

Thank you for your consideration. Let me know if you have any questions.

Best,


Kristy Wang
Community Planning Policy Director

cc: SPUR Board of Directors
Mayor Mark Farrell and staff
ore Supervisor London Breed and staff
John Rahaim, Lisa Chen / Planning Department