

April 30, 2020

San Francisco Planning Commission
1650 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

RE: SPUR Endorsement of 98 Franklin Street

Dear Planning Commissioners:

Related California presented the 98 Franklin Street project to SPUR's Project Review Advisory Board at our October 17, 2019 meeting for review and consideration. **The SPUR Project Review Advisory Board finds this development proposal to be an appropriate set of uses for this location and endorses the development of 98 Franklin by a partnership between Related California and the French American International High School.**

SPUR is generally focused on policies, plans and codes rather than on individual projects. In order to make infill development easier, we prefer to help set good rules around zoning, fees, housing affordability, sustainability, etc. However, on occasion, our Project Review Advisory Board will review and endorse development proposals of citywide or regional importance, evaluating their potential to enhance the vitality of the city and region according to the policy priorities and principles of good placemaking supported by SPUR.

98 Franklin is a significant mixed-use, mixed-income development project planned for this infill site located at 57 Oak Street and 1576 Market Street in the Market Street Hub portion of the Market Octavia Plan. Currently an L-shaped vehicular parking lot, the proposed project will transform the site into a 31-story residential tower over a 5-story podium building housing the French American International High School (FAIS). As proposed, the project will include up to 345 apartment units (25 percent of which will be affordable), school classrooms, offices and facilities, and 3,100 square feet of ground floor retail. The project represents an innovative approach to vertically integrate a mix of uses that will further enhance this important neighborhood at the intersection of Civic Center and Hayes Valley, and it enables a much-needed expansion of FAIS's urban campus.

SPUR affirms that 98 Franklin:

- ✓ **Is located at an appropriate location for development**, near transit and infrastructure and not on a greenfield site. This site is located near the critical junction of Van Ness and Market Street, at

the center of San Francisco, a block from a Muni station and future Van Ness BRT. It is located within the Market Octavia Plan, one of the city's most successfully implemented area plans.

- ✓ **Provides an appropriate mix of land uses** of residential and retail, contributing to a diverse stock of housing, fostering economic development and providing amenities and services to the surrounding community. This complex project makes good use of the half-acre site, serving a 400-student school in addition to creating 345 apartment units.
- ✓ **Provides sufficient density at the site** with a residential density of 632 units per acre, supporting adjacent transit and preventing underutilization of land, serving the future needs of Bay Area residents. It revitalizes an underutilized site currently used for car parking.
- ✓ **Creates a good place for people and contributes to a walkable environment** with active ground floor uses – building entries and a planned café – on the Oak Street and Franklin Street frontages. In addition, new street trees are planned as part of the project's wind mitigation efforts. We appreciate the limited parking that is being provided, the elimination of a curb cut and the location of loading, trash collection and bike storage below ground, reducing interference with pedestrian and vehicular activity.

The SPUR Project Review Advisory Board finds this development proposal to be an appropriate set of uses for this location and endorses the 98 Franklin project. Overall, we are impressed with the building tower design and the close attention to ground floor activity at the Oak and Franklin Street frontages. We are interested to see how the sliver of Market Street façade develops and would encourage the sponsor to use that opportunity to showcase public art or highlight the school's identity on Market Street. Even if Market Street is not the front of the building and will not have an entry there, we think there is potential for that façade. Lastly, we have some concerns about street safety for youth crossing the intersection at Oak and Franklin since the new school facilities are diagonal from the main school campus at 150 Oak Street. We encourage the city to facilitate whatever changes (infrastructure, technology, light-timing, etc.) might be needed to ensure the safety of people traveling through the neighborhood, particularly students.

Please do not hesitate to contact us or Kristy Wang, SPUR's Community Planning Policy Director, with any questions or clarifications.

Sincerely,

Charmaine Curtis
Co-Chairs, SPUR Project Review Advisory Board

Diane Filippi

cc: SPUR Board of Directors