



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

**DATE:** August 7, 2008  
**TO:** Members of the Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Ken Rich, Eastern Neighborhoods Project Manager  
**RE:** Final Set of Potential Changes and Concerns Raised by Commissioners

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At the July 31, 2008 hearing, after adopting a Motion of Intent to Approve, Commissioners raised a final series of questions and directed staff to respond at the August 7 hearing. These issues and the staff response are set forth below.

1. **Small Enterprise Workspaces (SEW) in the UMU District:** At the July 31 hearing, there was discussion among Commissioners as to whether to permit Small Enterprise Workspace projects in the UMU district. *After consultation with the Mayor's Office of Housing, staff proposes that SEW projects not be permitted in the UMU districts because of the need to preserve larger development sites for residential projects with increased affordability.*
2. **There are several reasons for employing upper-story setbacks in a district:**
  - 1) to reinforce or create an urban streetwall;
  - 2) to provide solar access to rights-of-way;
  - 3) to reduce building bulk on the skyline;
  - 4) to separate buildings on adjacent lots.

The first two of these may apply to the new height classification proposed for Mission Street. An examination of existing building frontages on most blocks, north & south sides, from 14th Street to Cesar Chavez Blvd, shows a rich mixture of buildings of differing uses, ages, heights and widths. The ages and original uses of these buildings are reflected in their highly varied story heights, fenestration and trim patterns, and architectural styles.

Many prevailing building heights, though varied, are in the two- to four-story range, approximately from 25' to 45'. These heights are too low to establish as a street wall on a boulevard that is 82.5 feet wide and has 85-foot height limits. A more graceful proportion would provide setbacks above the 75% height. Given Building Code provisions, a 65' high street wall with two stories set back above could work well at establishing a new street wall elevation.

Further, new buildings and vertical additions to existing structures should respond and relate to the context of their blocks and to these variables. Appropriate floor-to-floor heights, window sill and head heights, and the elevations of running trim on facades should harmonize with the regulating lines of adjacent buildings, to reinforce the prevailing street wall and building fabric. Where new structures rise above neighboring street facades, setbacks, cornice lines, or other articulation may be imposed to ensure that the urban context is enhanced, while still allowing the intended residential density and commercial activity in appropriately sized buildings.

Regarding solar access, because Mission Street in this neighborhood has a north-south orientation, overall sunlight access to the street is good. By providing upper-story setbacks on the east side of mission, late autumn, winter, and early spring morning light will be enhanced on the west-side sidewalks. Similar setbacks on the west side will enable more afternoon sun in those seasons to reach the eastern sidewalks. The amount of light is a function of the depth of the setback.

- 3. Pipeline:** As part of the Eastern Neighborhoods approvals, the Commission is approving both pipeline legislation and pipeline policies. The legislation is sent to the Board for final approval and governs pipeline projects that seek approval after the Board adopts the Eastern Neighborhoods zoning. The policies generally mirror the legislation, but will be used by the Commission to govern projects that seek approval before the Board acts on the Eastern Neighborhoods zoning.

In its decision of August 30, 2007, the Commission set springing fees of \$3 per square foot for all residential projects and no fee for non-residential projects which entered the pipeline between April, 2007 and August 2007. In addition, the Commission set a fee of \$10 per square foot for all residential projects and \$4 per square foot for non-residential projects which entered the pipeline after August 2007 .

If the Commission accepts the staff proposal, it would supersede the August 30, 2007 resolution and levy impact fees of \$10 per square foot for all residential projects and \$6 per square foot for non residential projects which entered the pipeline after January 19, 2007.

The table below, which was first distributed to the Commission on July 8, 2008, provides information on how many projects and how many units would be required to pay fees based on various alternative “grandfather” dates.

Date	Event	Before Date (i.e. "grandfathered")		After Date (i.e. not grandfathered)		Impact On Total Public Benefits Fee Revenues
		Projects	Units	Projects	Units	
2/12/04	Res. 17627	5	14	102	2,159	- \$129,000
2/14/06	2660 Harrison	54	979	54	1,194	- \$9.1 million
1/19/07 <sup>1</sup>	EN Res.	66	1,208	42	965	- \$11.2 million
8/30/07	Comm. Springing Conditions decision	79	1,637	29	536	- \$15.1 million

4. **Height Limit at 17<sup>th</sup> and Texas Streets:** The Commission asked staff to look into appropriate height limits for 17<sup>th</sup> Street around Texas Street, in light of a project sponsor who would like a higher height limit. Though staff has no problem with the project in question, it believes 45 feet is the correct height along this corridor.
5. **Height Limit for 888 Brannan:** The Commission asked staff to look into the appropriate height limit for the northern portion of the block bounded by Brannan, Bryant, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets. The proposed height limit in this area is proposed at 45 feet. Staff believes that is the appropriate height limit considering proximity to the elevated freeway immediately adjacent.
6. **45-foot height limits in UMU Districts:** The April 17 initiation package included proposed 58 and 68-foot height limits in PDR and UMU districts. The reason for these odd numbers is that in these districts the proposed Eastern Neighborhoods controls require 15-foot clear ground floor heights. In order to make these work, 5-story height districts require 58 feet and 6-story height districts require 68 feet.

There are a limited number of blocks in the Showplace Square area with 45-foot height limits. In order to allow 4 story buildings with 15-foot clear ground floors, these height limits would need to be raised to 48 feet. Staff recommends raising these height limits to 48 feet.

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<sup>1</sup> Staff proposal

7. **Open Space “Bubble” in Showplace Square:** The open space concept map in the Area Plans indicates areas where development of new open space is particularly needed. In Showplace Square staff recommends expanding the size of this area to include a larger area for further study.