



San Francisco
Planning

Showplace Square Open Space Plan

2021 UPDATE



San Francisco Planning

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	D
Introduction	6
Related Plans	8
Existing Policy Framework	13
Public Input from SNACS	15
Showplace Square Open Space Plan: Project Status	17
Showplace Square Open Space Plan: 2020 Updates	18
Next Steps	24
Appendices	27
Appendix A: Public Workshops Summary	28

Figures and Tables

Figure 1. 2010 Showplace Square Open Space Plan	8
Figure 2. Community meeting for 2010 Showplace Square Open Space Plan	8
Figure 3. Map of Existing Open Space	9
Figure 5. Pennsylvania Avenue Rail Alignment, 2018 RAB Study	10
Figure 5. Central SoMa Area Plan	11
Figure 6. Southern Bayfront Strategy Map	12
Figure 7. Map of SNACS Study Area	16
Table 1. Opportunity Sites Identified in Showplace Square O.S. Plan (2010)	17
Figure 8. SNACS Community Meeting #2	16
Figure 9. Map of Showplace Square Opportunity Sites	19
Figure 10. Rail Right-of-Way, Near Mission Creek	20
Figure 11. Draft Open Space Concept for 900 7th Street	21
Figure 12. Seating at 1 Henry Adams	22
Table 2. Showplace Square Recommendations	25
Table 3. SoMa Recommendations	25

Executive Summary

In 2009, the Eastern Neighborhoods Plans created two types of zoning districts out of areas that were historically a mix of industrial, commercial and residential uses: Production, Distribution and Repair (PDR) districts and Urban Mixed Use (UMU) districts. As many of these transitioning industrial neighborhoods lacked open space, safe streets and waterfront access, the Planning Department initiated a community engagement process that culminated in the Showplace Square Open Space Plan (2010).

This update memorandum affirms the original Showplace Square Open Space Plan and makes additional recommendations to meet needs that have emerged since 2010. Several plans and community processes are guiding growth and increasing housing in the area, including in Central SoMa, Western SoMa and Mission Bay. Infrastructure planning for the Downtown Rail Extension, Pennsylvania Avenue Extension, and the 4th/King Railyards are also positioning the area for significant change. The memo focuses on recommendations in Showplace Square to serve these planned changes. It also acknowledges the need to address the legacy of concentration and displacement of communities of color to SoMa, which has far less open space per person than the rest of San Francisco.

The memorandum begins with an overview of related Plans, projects and policies. It then summarizes related public input gathered from conversations with Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs), neighborhood stakeholders, and two public workshops for the SNACS process in 2019-2020. A status update on the 2010 Open Space Plan follows. The document then recommends specific open space projects and policy updates in the Showplace Square/Potrero Hill and Western SoMa plan areas. Further community dialogue and input are needed before pursuing any of the recommended next steps. The final summary table can be used as a reference for the status updates and recommendations in the memorandum.

Introduction

In 2008, the City adopted the Eastern Neighborhoods Plans after years of community input and stakeholder participation. Consisting of Area Plans for the Central Waterfront, the Mission District, Showplace Square/Potrero Hill, and East SoMa, the plans address the need to (1) ensure a stable future for Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR) businesses in the city and (2) provide a significant amount of new housing affordable to low, moderate and middle income households, along with the transportation, open space and community facilities needed to serve new households.

To achieve these goals, the Eastern Neighborhoods Plans created two types of zoning districts out of areas that were historically a mix of industrial, commercial and residential uses: PDR districts sought to preserve PDR businesses from displacement by higher-paying, competing uses; while mixed-use zoning districts such as Urban Mixed Use (UMU), helped other areas transition by allowing for more housing and amenities to serve new residents. As industrial areas for over a century, many of these neighborhoods lacked the open space, safe streets and waterfront access that would be needed to serve new residents and workers. To better understand open space and recreation needs, opportunities, and concepts in Showplace Square, the Planning Department initiated a community engagement process in 2009. This work culminated in the Showplace Square Open Space Plan (2010). For 10 years this Plan has helped implement Area Plan objectives around open space and streets.

Since 2010, several plans and community processes have continued to guide growth and increase housing in the area. In partnership with the City of San Francisco, a Citizens Planning Task Force created the Western SoMa Area Plan, which was incorporated into the Eastern Neighborhoods framework in 2013. Adopted in 2018, the Central SoMa Plan is expected to deliver nearly 16 million square feet for new housing and jobs and over \$2B in public benefits, including affordable housing, transit funding, and open spaces in SoMa between

2nd and 6th Streets. Mission Rock, Mission Bay and several large projects approved along the eastern waterfront will address increased demand for housing, office, production and biotech in the area. Potential development projects, such as at 900 7th Street, could also add to the stock of production and distribution space in the area.

Infrastructure projects are also positioning the area for significant change. The Downtown Rail Extension (DTX), the proposed Pennsylvania Avenue Extension, and (pending further analysis) the potential relocation of storage and maintenance functions at the 4th/King railyard, could all increase transportation access and the potential for development in the area. They also hold significant potential for adding parks, direct waterfront access, and a more contiguous street network.

On one hand, after more than a decade of significant growth and ongoing planning, this memorandum affirms the concepts in the original Showplace Square Open Space Plan. The City or private developers have built or are currently designing many of the original recommendations. This memorandum acknowledges these completed projects and reasons why designs may have changed.

On the other hand, the city and neighborhood have evolved in the past 10 years. The Open Space Plan should evolve accordingly. This is all the more pressing given the need to address the legacy of structural racism built into planning practices. SoMa is a prime example. When urban renewal policies from the 1950s to the 1970s displaced thousands of people of color, significant numbers of Filipinos and others moved to SoMa. Yet, as an industrial area for most of the 20th century, these communities did not have the benefits of parks and open space like the rest of the city. San Francisco has nearly 6.7 acres of open space for every 1,000 people.¹ By comparison, the study area, including two planned projects in Central SoMa, would have approximately 0.2 acres of open space for every 1,000 people. And while denser neighborhoods tend to have

¹ Includes federal, state, and city-owned spaces within city limits. Figures taken from SF General Plan, Recreation and Open Space Element. 2014. http://generalplan.sfplanning.org/Recreation_OpenSpace_Element_ADOPTED.pdf

less open space per capita than other areas of the city, SoMa's open space figures are lower than other dense neighborhoods. The lack of parks and basic neighborhood needs was clear, but not acknowledged. San Francisco has nearly 6.7 acres of open space for every 1000 people. The Planning Department seeks to affirmatively address racial and social inequities like this. As set forth in a 2020 Resolution adopted by the Planning Commission, the Department also seeks to promote environmental justice and redress the consequences of government-sanctioned racial harm with meaningful community-led processes. Up to date open space planning is one step towards redress and providing access for longtime residents and families.

Given the changes to the neighborhood and recent public input on neighborhood need, this memorandum supplements and updates the Showplace Square Open Space Plan. The memo begins with a summary of related Plans, projects and policies, to provide the context for how the area has evolved and is planning to change. The following section summarizes public input specific to open space, streets and the public realm in the Showplace/ SoMa areas, gathered from conversations with Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs), neighborhood stakeholders, and two public workshops through the SNACS process in 2019-2020. Based on this public input, the body of the document provides specific recommendations for open space projects and policy in the Showplace Square/Potrero Hill and Western SoMa plan areas. Further community dialogue and input are needed before pursuing any of the recommended next steps. The final summary table is an updated reference for policy makers, capital planners, and private developers to use in prioritizing public spaces in fulfillment of the Showplace Square Open Space plan.

Related Plans

The Showplace Square Open Space Plan Update builds on over a decade of community planning efforts that continue to guide growth today. As part of these efforts, the Planning Department has conducted significant community engagement efforts to identify and implement community priorities. Most of these plans include public realm policies which form the basis for specific projects, such as parks and streetscapes. This section summarizes the key elements of these efforts related to parks, open space and streets in Showplace Square and SoMa.

Showplace Square/Potrero Hill Area Plan (2008)

The Showplace Square/Potrero Hill Plan was developed as rapid growth of residential and office uses began to replace a hub of San Francisco's PDR sector, particularly furniture production businesses. To plan for the needs of new residents and office workers, the Showplace Square/Potrero Hill Plan aims to improve and increase public spaces in the area, while still meeting the needs of PDR businesses. The Plan includes policies that support acquiring new open space, building parks with new development, redesigning streets with more public space, and increasing the ecological functions of open spaces.

Showplace Square Open Space Plan (2010)

The Planning Department produced the Showplace Square Open Space Plan in 2010 to implement the public realm policies of the Showplace Square/Potrero Hill Area Plan. The Plan identifies several potential open space and street improvement opportunities within the urban design framework of the Area Plan. The Plan prioritizes eight of these opportunity sites, and provides conceptual plans, cost estimates and steps to implement them.

Figure 1. 2010 Showplace Square Open Space Plan

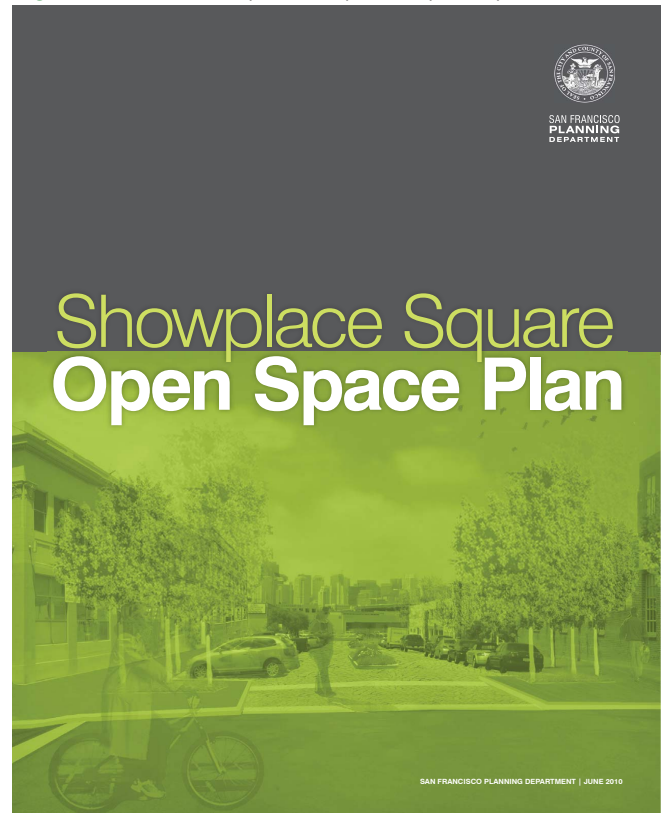


Figure 2. Community Meeting for 2010 SSOSP



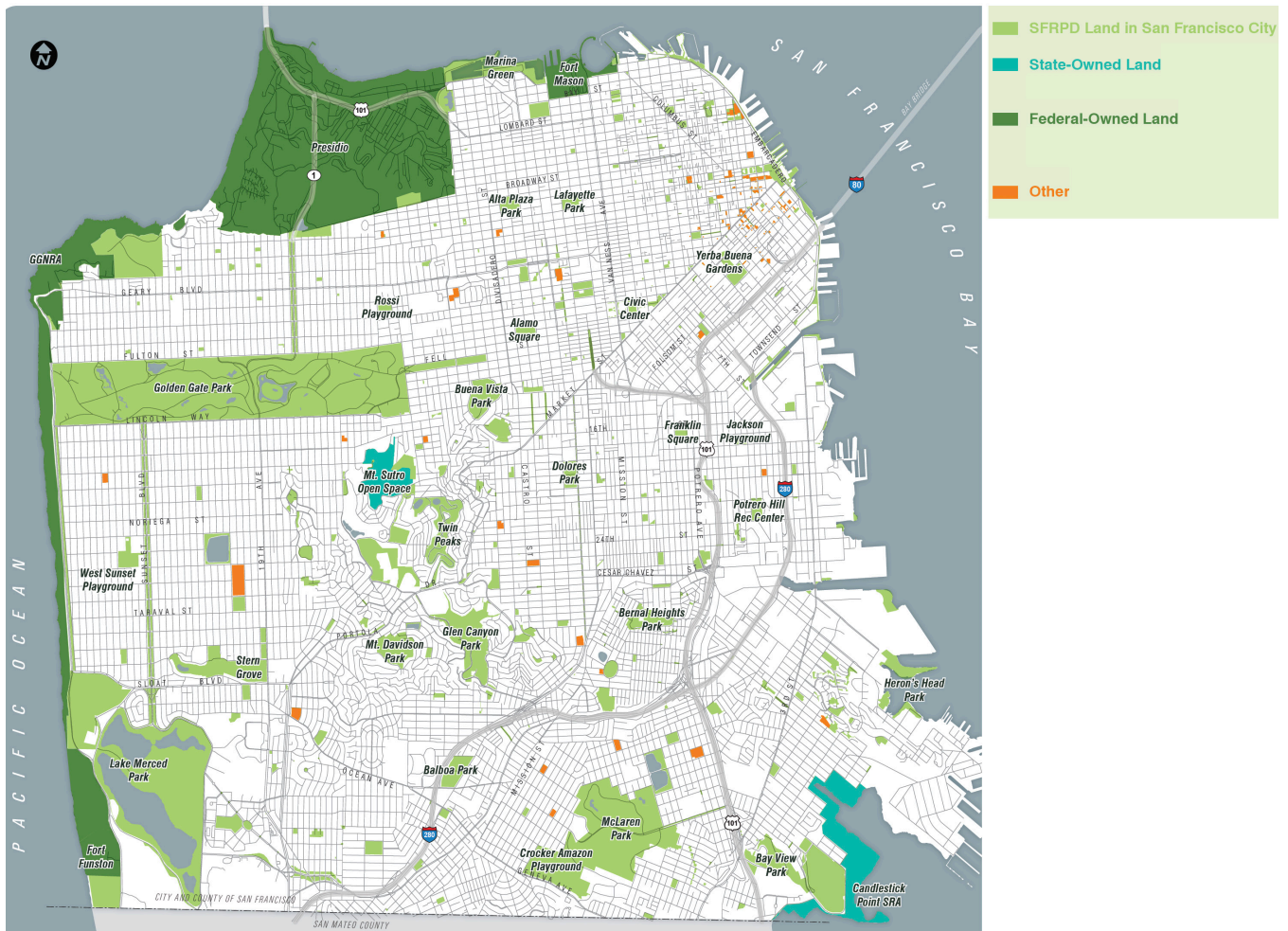
Better Streets Plan (2010)

The Better Streets Plan creates a unified set of standards, guidelines, and implementation strategies to govern how the City designs, builds, and maintains its pedestrian environment. The Plan seeks to balance the needs of all street users, with a particular focus on the pedestrians and how streets can be used as public space. The Plan is guided by the understanding that streets are about much more than transportation – they serve a multitude of social, recreational and ecological functions. Among other elements, the Plan includes guidance for pedestrian infrastructure, public spaces, street-scapes, and stormwater management tools. The Final Better Streets Plan was adopted by the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors in December 2010.

Western SoMa Community Plan (2013)

With support from the San Francisco Planning Department and other public agencies, the Western SoMa Citizens Planning Task Force drafted the Western SoMa Community Plan, which establishes both overarching principles and specific goals for the area. The Plan emphasizes the importance of stabilizing existing residents and businesses, while retaining neighborhood scale, character, and heritage. It articulates the need for new parks, a diversity of recreational sites and a safer, better connected pedestrian network.

Figure 3. Map of Existing Open Space, 2014 San Francisco General Plan Recreation and Open Space Element.



San Francisco General Plan, Recreation and Open Space Element (2014)

The Recreation and Open Space Element (ROSE) of the San Francisco General Plan, updated comprehensively in 2014, underscores the importance of a diverse, distributed and accessible network of parks and open spaces to support current and future residents. Policies in the ROSE call for a wide range of programming in, ongoing stewardship of, improved access to and enhanced ecological integrity of San Francisco’s open spaces. The Element identifies specific goals – such as the restoration and protection of creeks and riparian habitats, and the utilization of green streets and pedestrian infrastructure to improve connectivity – that closely align with the community feedback and vision articulated in the Showplace Square Open Space Update. Maps 01 and 02 from the ROSE illustrate the general lack of open space and recreation facilities in the SNACS study area and SoMa in general.

Railyard Alignment and Benefits Studies

In 2014, the City and County of San Francisco recognized the existing projects to bring train service into the Salesforce Transit Center were missing opportunities to increase access and travel choices for the eastern neighborhoods – which had some of the fastest growth rates in the Bay Area. Four years later, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors adopted the Rail Alignment and Benefits (RAB) Study’s recommendation to extend the Downtown Extension’s underground rail line further south under Pennsylvania Avenue. This became known as the Pennsylvania Avenue Extension, or PAX. By undergrounding the rail tracks, the PAX would increase access and mobility into Mission Bay for transit, vehicles, pedestrians and emergency services. It would also replace a significant barrier to accessing Mission Creek with the potential for more public spaces and street connections near Showplace Square. Since the end of 2018, staff from San Francisco and regional agencies have been working closely together to address this recommendation.

Figure 4. Pennsylvania Avenue Rail Alignment, 2018 Railyard Alignment and Benefits Study

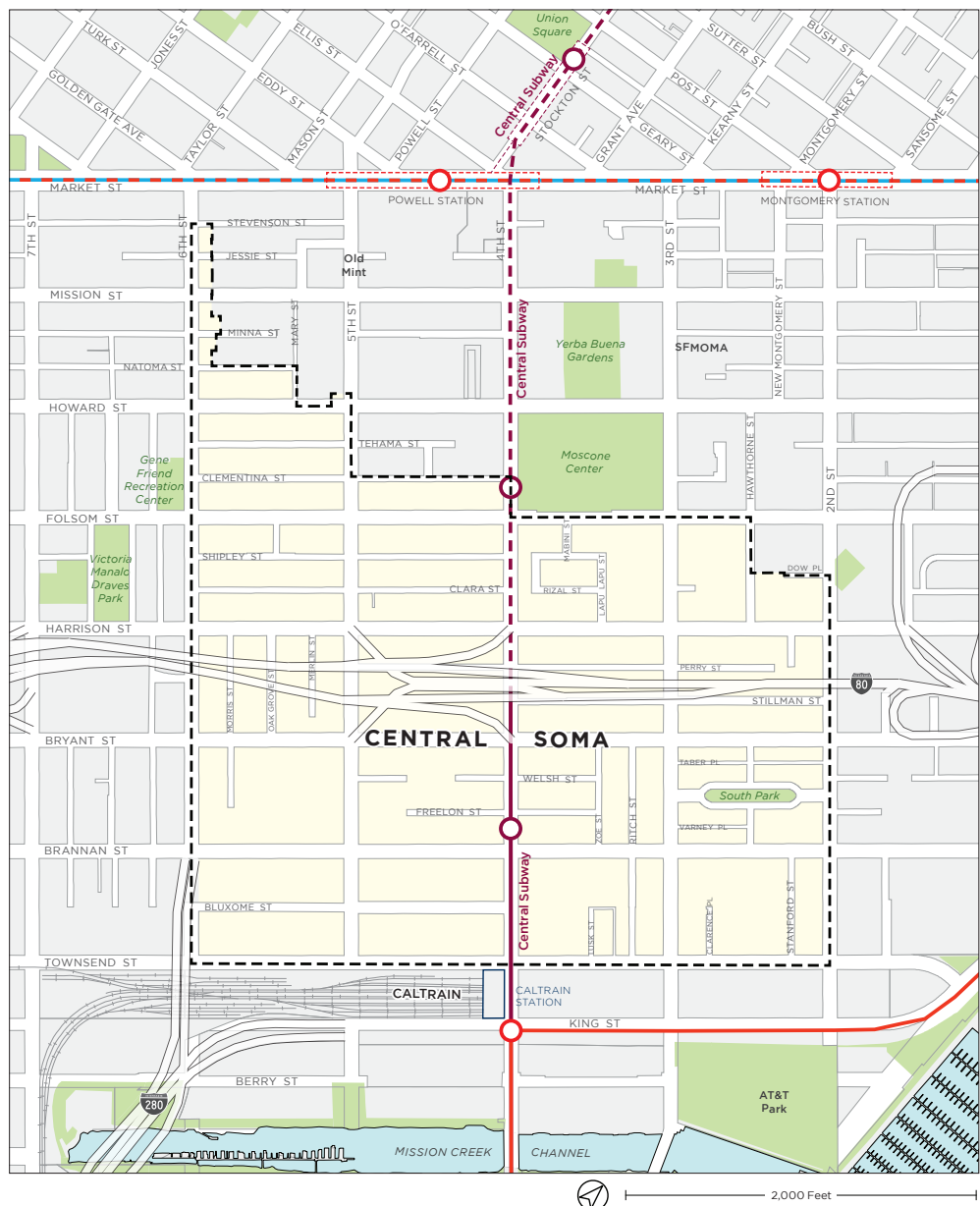


Central SoMa Plan (2018)

Substantial demand for residential and non-residential space has led to unaffordable rents in San Francisco, specifically in SoMa. Central SoMa is an excellent location to address this demand, given its accessible location, abundance of transit, and supply of developable land. The Central SoMa Plan accommodates this demand by allowing nearly 16 million square feet of space for housing and jobs, while yielding over two billion dollars in public

benefits. The Plan emphasizes the goals of creating a complete neighborhood and honoring the area's rich cultural history and importance to the Filipino and LGBTQ communities. The Plan creates new public spaces, parks and recreational opportunities, especially at six large, key development sites. The Plan supplements these public spaces with requirements for privately-owned public open spaces (POPOS) and street improvements for increased pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Figure 5.
Central SoMa Plan Area



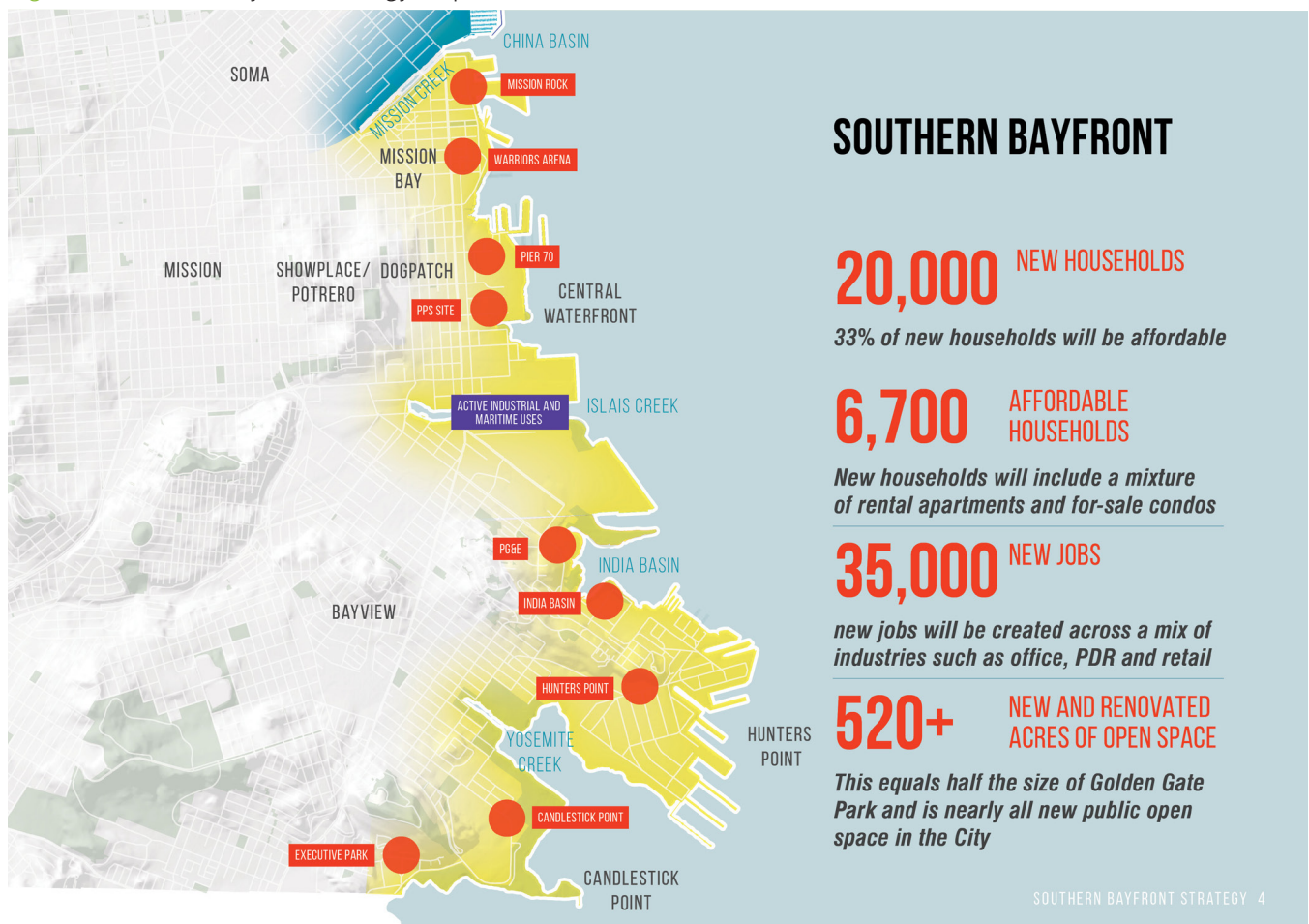
Southeast Framework (ongoing)

San Francisco's southeastern neighborhoods account for nearly 75% of the city's projected population growth over the next 20 years (see Figure 7). In the Southeast Framework study, the Planning Department is analyzing the community facilities needed to serve this rapidly growing population. The analyzed community facilities include recreation centers, libraries, fire stations, police stations, public health centers, public schools, and childcare facilities. Initial findings from the Framework show that all types of new community facilities are needed in the Southeast, but City agencies have limited plans or means to provide them. The Framework recommends developing a citywide process to identify and prioritize new community facilities. A full report is expected in late 2020.

SoMa Community Facility Needs Assessment (expected mid-2021)

The Planning Department is in the early stages of the SoMa Community Facilities Needs Assessment, which aims to identify the capital needs of the various community facilities and neighborhood elements in the greater SoMa area, including SoMa, Market Octavia, and Mission Bay. An analysis of existing facilities in these neighborhoods is necessary to understand current use and to develop a plan to accommodate projected needs. The Assessment will identify community priorities for community facilities, identify opportunities to locate and fund facilities, and help create a framework to prioritize impact fees for these facilities. The Needs Assessment can incorporate the feedback within this memorandum. But the Assessment will address a greater geographic area and more facilities than included in this memorandum.

Figure 6. Southern Bayfront Strategy Map



Showplace Square Open Space: Policy Framework

GENERAL PLAN, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 2

Increase recreation & open space to meet the long-term needs of the city & region

- Policy 2.1 – Prioritize acquisition of open space in high needs areas.
- Policy 2.2 – Provide and promote a balanced recreation system which offers a variety of high-quality recreational opportunities for all San Franciscans.

OBJECTIVE 3

Improve access and connectivity to open space

- Policy 3.1 - Creatively develop existing publicly-owned rights-of-way and streets into open space.

OBJECTIVE 5

Engage communities in the stewardship of recreation programs & open spaces

- Policy 5.3 - Facilitate the development of community-initiated or supported open spaces.

SHOWPLACE SQUARE/POTRERO HILL AREA PLAN

OBJECTIVE 5.1

Provide public parks and open spaces that meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors

- Policy 5.1.1 – Identify opportunities to create new public parks and open spaces and provide at least one new public park or open space serving the Showplace / Potrero.
- Policy 5.1.2 – Require new residential development and commercial development to provide or contribute to the creation of publicly accessible open space.

OBJECTIVE 5.3

Create a network of green streets that connects open spaces and improves the walkability, aesthetics and ecological sustainability of the neighborhood.

- Policy 5.3.1 - Redesign underutilized portions of streets as public open spaces, including widened sidewalks or medians, curb bulb-outs, “living streets” or green connector streets.
- Policy 5.3.5 - Significant above grade infrastructure, such as freeways, should be retrofitted with architectural lighting to foster pedestrian connections beneath.
- Policy 5.3.6 - Where possible, transform unused freeway and rail rights-of-way into landscaped features that provide a pleasant and comforting route for pedestrians.

OBJECTIVE 5.4

The open space system should both beautify the neighborhood and strengthen the environment

- Policy 5.4.1 - Increase the environmental sustainability of Showplace Square/Potrero Hill system of public and private open spaces by improving the ecological functioning of all open space.
- Policy 5.4.2 - Explore ways to retrofit existing parking and paved areas to minimize negative impacts on microclimate and allow for storm water infiltration.
- Policy 5.4.3 - Encourage public art in existing and proposed open spaces.

WESTERN SOMA AREA PLAN

OBJECTIVE 7.1

Identify new park site opportunities.

- Policy 7.1 - Identify Opportunities to create new public parks, recreation facilities and open spaces and provide at least one new public park or open space serving Western SoMa.
- Policy 7.1.3 - Strongly encourage Western SoMa developments on sites of half- acre or more to provide new areas for recreation, parks and open spaces.
- Policy 7.1.6 - Development projects on large development sites of one half- acre or more should provide publicly accessible community spaces or provide publicly accessible open spaces.

OBJECTIVE 7.2

Work in coordination with other public agencies to ensure that local park, open space, and recreation needs in western soma are met by new development.

- Policy 7.2.1 - Integrate open space policies with all other planning efforts.
- Policy 7.2.5 - Require development projects to contribute to parks and open space directly by creating publicly accessible open space on the site of a project, or by contributing funding for parks and open space such that Western SoMa achieve a standard of 10 acres of open space per 1,000 residents in the Western SoMa SUD.
- Policy 7.2.6 - Protect and enhance recreational opportunities in Western SoMa.

Public Input from SNACS

After 10 years of change and new transportation initiatives, in 2019 the Planning Department sought additional public input in re-assessing these community needs and the changing landscape for Showplace Square, as well as for adjacent parts of Western and Central SoMa, Mission Bay and the Railyards neighborhood. Known as the Showplace/SoMa Neighborhood Assessment and Coordination Study (SNACS), this process sought to coordinate the urban design where these planning areas meet, while evaluating opportunities for increasing housing, PDR businesses, open space, and other public benefits. While development potential for the Railyards can only be analyzed after regional agencies have determined the transit needs for the site, the process sought community input on potential public realm improvements in areas that currently provide rail infrastructure given the long-term possibility of change at 4th and King, as well as the planned downtown rail extension (DTX) and the potential underground “Pennsylvania Avenue Extension.”

San Francisco Planning conducted two public meetings for the SNACS effort. The first took place on November 19, 2019 and focused on land use and urban design; the second took place on February 12, 2020 and focused on the public realm. The two events attracted approximately 120 total participants. Surveys and questionnaires were also made available online for community input for three weeks after each workshop. Further public engagement was paused in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with respect to the public realm, several themes emerged among community members that provide a basis for this update to the Showplace Square Open Space plan. The following paragraphs summarize four major public realm themes among feedback from community meetings and online. The input is largely consistent with the original Open Space Plan, but better reflects current conditions. More detailed summaries can be found in the Appendix.

Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces

Existing parks and open spaces received the most positive feedback of any content area, with many participants sharing positive experiences at Mission Creek Park, Jackson Park and smaller spaces unique to their neighborhoods. Community members called for upgrades to existing parks, such as Jackson Playground; addition of new parks to meet significant current and future needs, especially in SoMa; and the creation of smaller green spaces, for informal gathering, more “wild” areas, and dog play.

Cultural Spaces and Public Amenities

Community members consistently requested more activation and amenities – such as performances, farmers markets, public toilets, wayfinding, and pop-up retail – to improve quality of life throughout the neighborhood. Workshop participants strongly supported new community facilities such as libraries, performance spaces, and landmarks or gateways to honor Filipino heritage.

Connectivity

Better connections, particularly to and from Mission Bay, were the most commonly identified needs at the meeting. Train tracks and freeway overpasses were consistently identified as obstacles and barriers – both the literal barriers they are to connectivity for long distances, as well as due to their unpleasant or unsafe physical environment even where they are cross-able, due to neglect, darkness or lack of infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. Participants requested protected bike lanes, additional sidewalks, and improved accessibility across Mission Creek – in particular the planned 5th Street bridge included in the Mission Bay Redevelopment Plan. There was also community concern about conflicts around 4th and King between people using different modes of travel, such as commuter buses, vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

Figure 7. Map of SNACS Study Area

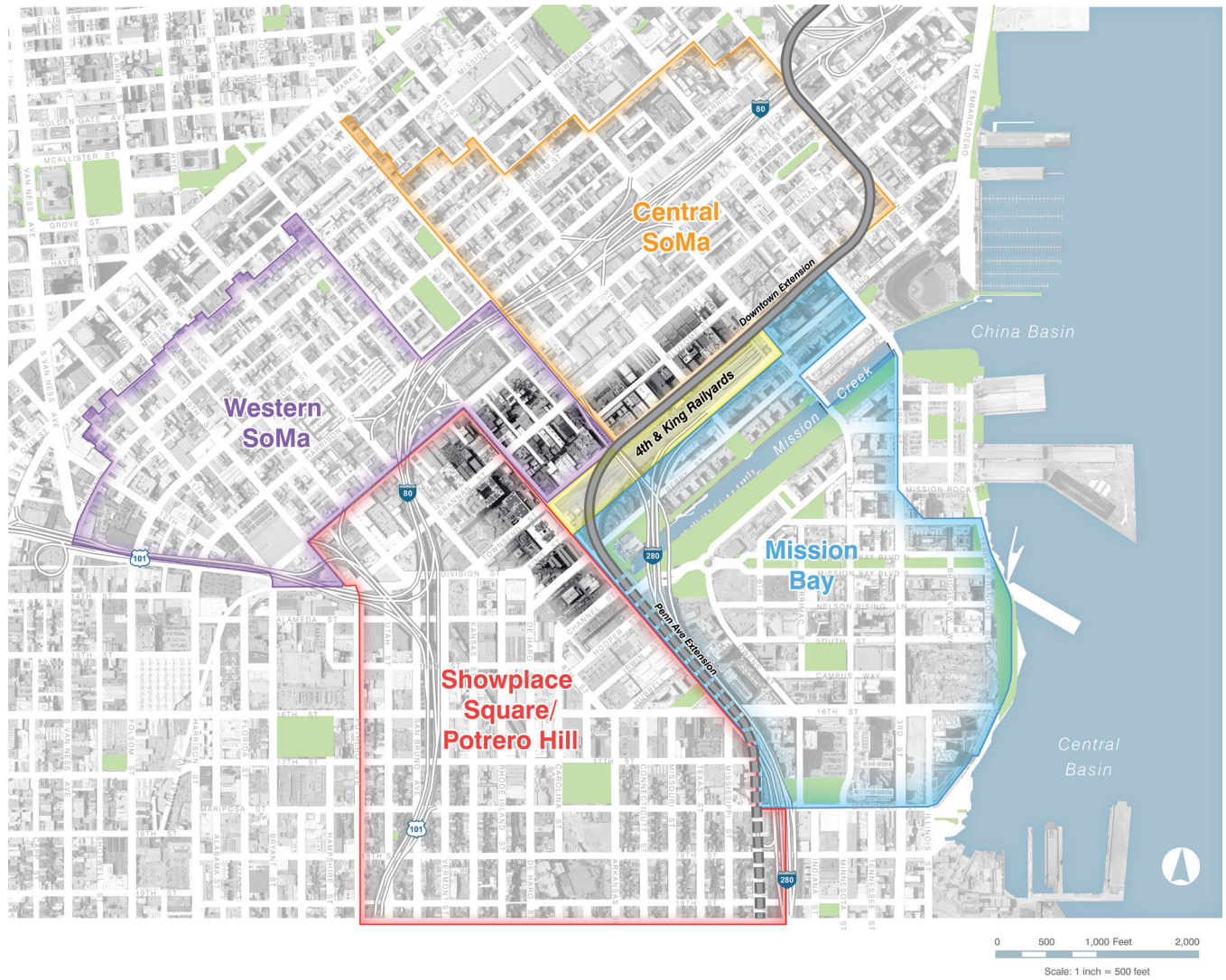


Figure 8. SNACS Community Meeting #2



Showplace Square Open Space Plan: Project Status

The Showplace Square Open Space Plan was the product of an extensive community planning process in 2009, in which the Planning Department worked with the Showplace Square community, nearby residents, staff from other City departments, the office of District 10 Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, and other stakeholders. That process set out to:

- Understand the need for additional open space that would be created by new development
- Identify the best locations for new open space improvements

- Prepare conceptual designs for each of these open space opportunity sites
- Develop order-of-magnitude cost estimates to build these open spaces.

Since 2010, the Showplace Square Open Space Plan has guided the construction of open spaces serving the new development in the Showplace Square/Potrero Hill Plan Area. The Open Space Plan recommendations were made to serve approximately 20 years (2010-2030) of anticipated growth. The following section assesses the status of the recommendations made in the 2010 plan.

Table 1. Opportunity Sites Identified in Showplace Square Open Space Plan (2010)

Opportunity Site	Recommendation	Goal	Status
Arkansas Street Right-of-way Carolina Street Right-of-way	Add bulb outs; decrease ROW and roadway	Increase size of Jackson Playground; add park programming; improve stormwater management; improve pedestrian access	Jackson Playground planning underway, includes additional programming, bulb outs on all four corner of the park, expansion of the sidewalk into Carolina St to reduce excess roadway & stormwater improvements; partially funded
Hooper Street right-of-way	"Living street" with reduced roadway & landscaped public open space	Improve pedestrian comfort and safety; provide public amenity; improve landscape & stormwater management	Concept no longer fits context, since completion of 100 Hooper, CCA housing & campus plan; 100 Hooper improved sidewalk and added linear open space; Conceptual design for 900 7th Street provides similar features
Daggett Street right-of-way	New open space and plaza	Improve pedestrian comfort and safety; Provide public open space; Provide park programming; Provide drop off space; support ground-floor commercial uses	Completed in 2016 as part of 1010 Potrero development
Norcal Triangle Site	New park, trees, landscaping	Improve pedestrian comfort and safety; Provide public open space; create noise barrier;	Proposed as part of 900 7th Street conceptual design
Townsend Circle right-of-way	Neckdowns and bulbouts around traffic circle; public amenity and art in traffic circle	Improve pedestrian comfort and safety; Shorten crossing distances; increase public space; create visual landmark	Neckdowns added; Bulbout, sidewalk and trees added on Henry Adams and Division Streets;
Wolfe's Café Site (8th Street right-of-way)	Provide a "green street"; decrease excess roadway; add landscape and public amenities	Improve pedestrian comfort and safety; Provide public open space	'Pavement to Parks' pilot improvements made in 2010; Removed in 2013; Bulbout added with 16th Street improvement project

Showplace Square Open Space Plan: 2020 Updates

The following updates to the Showplace Square Open Space Plan address recent public input and the changed conditions in Showplace Square since the original Plan was produced in 2010. The policies below encompass many of the themes heard from community members in the SNACS public process. Multiple stakeholders also identified more specific, actionable opportunities, which inform the Opportunity Site Updates in the following section. The table at the end of this memorandum summarizes the opportunity sites for ease of reference.

Policy Updates

Based on changes in land use patterns, new transportation plans, climate change, and a recognition of historic and ongoing inequities in city planning processes, this memorandum proposes adding some or all of the following policies to the General Plan. While the waterfront in the study area is already built or designed, the policies can still inform future design changes or programming to open spaces in the area.

- Address systemic racial and social inequities and environmental justice by allocating resources to increase equity for communities of color, in part by expanding access to open space, reducing exposure to environmental pollution, and supporting other measures to improve community health.
- Expand public participation of communities of color in the planning, designing, programming, and stewardship of the public realm to ensure the open space and street system addresses the needs of a diversity of residents, employees and visitors.
- Maximize access to open space by reducing barriers to walking, biking and riding transit to and from Mission Creek.
- Prioritize unused rail land for new parks and safe connections for pedestrians and cyclists, in concert with any potential development.
- Maximize access to open space and waterfront by planning connections to the waterfront and new parks where rail infrastructure may be undergrounded in the future.
- Recognize and reflect the industrial legacy of the waterfront in the design of adjacent and nearby open spaces.
- Honor the historic importance of Mission Creek to the American Indian communities of San Francisco.
- Update land use definitions and impact fees periodically, to ensure the Planning Code addresses modern land uses and that fees equal the unit cost of open space needed to serve new development.

Opportunity Sites Updates

This section recommends specific projects, programming and future planning efforts throughout and adjacent to Showplace Square. Provisional recommendations are also included for SoMa and Mission Bay, many of which are consistent with or reaffirm existing plans. Recommendations in SoMa should be further developed with community input to SoMa development projects, the SoMa Community Facilities Assessment, and the SoMa CAC.

Ongoing input to Mission Bay park designs in will continue through the Mission Bay CAC. Recommendations for the Railyards can be further developed only after analyses identify regional transit needs on the site. These studies include the Downtown Rail Extension Project, Pennsylvania Avenue Extension, and ongoing Caltrain service planning. Tables 2 and 3 summarize the recommendations at the end of the chapter.

Figure 9. Map of Showplace Square Opportunity Sites



SHOWPLACE / POTRERO HILL PLAN AREA

Pennsylvania Avenue Extension / Mission Creek / Rail Corridor Under I-280

Rail tracks and properties separate Mission Creek and Mission Bay parks from the neighborhoods around them. While the Downtown Rail Extension (DTX) project will extend rail tracks underground north of 4th and King, City and regional agencies are also studying the undergrounding rail tracks south of 4th and King, in what is known as the Pennsylvania Avenue Extension (PAX). The PAX could potentially open up eight acres for reuse as open space, buffers for sea level rise, and pedestrian and bicycle connections to Mission Creek and Mission Bay parks. Combined with the potential future relocation or undergrounding of the 4th and King Railyards, this project could complete a ring of open space around the entirety of Mission Creek with a substantial new open space at the head of the creek.

Removing the tracks at the head of the creek and connecting Mission Bay to its surroundings would break down one of San Francisco's most significant physical barriers to open space. It would increase access for Showplace Square, Potrero Hill, and western SoMa, which include some of the neighborhoods with the least open space in the city. The

Figure 10. Rail Right-of-Way, Near Mission Creek



ongoing transportation analysis of the Pennsylvania Avenue Extension should also take into account the specific land use benefits of converting rail lands to the public realm, including pedestrian safety, increased access and mobility, and economic benefits.

“Showplace Triangle” at 16th, 8th, and Irwin (aka Wolfe’s Cafe Site)

The community continues to support creating public space along the 8th Street right-of-way, at its intersections with 16th and Irwin Streets. Based on the trial pavement to parks project beginning in 2009, the site holds opportunity for an active plaza. By 2013, the trial was difficult to maintain without active ground floor uses surrounding the space; at the same time 1001 Potrero/Daggett Park was in construction a short walk down 16th Street. Given the increased community interest, employment, and student activity since then, as well as the transportation improvements along 16th Street, it is recommended to pursue a plaza in coordination with future adjacent development projects.

Jackson Playground Improvements

Community feedback strongly supported the planned improvements to Jackson Playground. The [Friends of Jackson Park](#) and the Recreation and Park Department are currently designing improvements to the park that will reconfigure the park, in order to add additional recreational programming and relocate, enlarge, and renovate the historic clubhouse on the site. The project will also create bulbouts on all four corners of the park. The project is partially funded.

Additional Open Space on 900 7th Street site

The positioning of the 900 7th Street property at the junction of two street grids creates opportunities for public spaces and additional connections for pedestrians and bikes near Carolina, Channel, De Haro and Alameda streets. An SFPUC easement prohibits construction on the northeast corner of the site as well. Creating new open spaces and through connections could help reconcile the street grid while serving neighborhood needs for parks, dog play areas, bike facilities, and pedestrian connection. In past public processes, community members supported the idea of open space on the site. While the property owner has a preliminary proposal for a last-mile logistics facility, they should continue to refine the design and programming of the open spaces with input from community members.

Figure 11. Previous Open Space Concept for 900 7th St



Source: SOM

Potrero Gateway Park

The Potrero Gateway Park is a proposal to transform the Caltrans right-of-way between 17th and Mariposa, San Bruno and Vermont, into a safe, active public space and gateway to Potrero Hill. The design includes bulbouts and safer sidewalks, an upgraded bike lane on 17th, under-freeway art, a native habitat demonstration garden, and a living wall to replace the chain link fence. The streetscape

improvements (Phase 1) are funded and expected to be constructed by SF Public Works in late 2021. However, improvements on Caltrans property (Phase 2) and public art (Phase 3) remain unfunded. It is recommended to continue the implementation of the park, in partnership with the non-profit Potrero Gateway committee, Caltrans and nearby development projects. These partnerships can serve as a model for larger under-freeway spaces in Showplace Square.

Public Lands under U.S. 101/I-80 interchange

The spaces under the U.S. 101/I-80 junction present over 9.8 acres of opportunities to connect Showplace Square, SoMa and the Mission District. Safety improvements along Division Street, including the 9th Street intersection, have significantly improved pedestrian and cyclist mobility in the area. However, the area under the elevated freeways consists mainly of long-term parking lots, auto-oriented street lighting, and chain-link fences. The lots are used by clients and employees of businesses in Showplace Square, but they can feel unsafe and are of limited use to anyone not driving to the area. Under a program established by California Assembly Bill (AB) 857, San Francisco has the opportunity to lease these properties from Caltrans at a discount and use them for public open space. Streetscape improvements, stormwater gardens, better lighting, and open space amenities in these areas would stitch together neighborhoods that otherwise feel divided. Since these sites are significantly larger and the freeways are significantly higher than most under-freeway spaces, they are particularly unique opportunities for recreation and open space. First, the partnerships that are planning the Potrero Gateway and Central Soma Freeway Corridor Transformation under AB 857 should be tracked and considered as potential precedents. If community interest remains in reimagining the land under this interchange, more specific feedback should be gathered from PDR and design business owners, local residents and transportation planners.

Townsend Circle (8th and Townsend Roundabout)

The roundabout at 8th and Townsend is an iconic junction and an important marker of Showplace Square. Community members remain interested in incorporating a landmark or gateway feature at the junction, consistent with the original Showplace Square Open Space Plan. Recent painted safety zones have increased the safety for pedestrians in the roundabout. It is recommended to pursue public art in the landscape portion of the roundabout, as per the Mission Bay Plan. However, given the increased vehicle traffic in the area and associated dangers of crossing the traffic circle, public amenities like seating would be better focused elsewhere. An example can be seen in the additional sidewalk space and seating along 1 Henry Adams.

Figure 12. Seating at 1 Henry Adams



Mission Bay Parks - Parcels P7/P9

Park plans for Mission Bay Plan include a potential sport field and skate park on Parcels 7 and 9, on Mission Bay Drive near the rail tracks. Given the significant need for active recreation in SoMa and Showplace areas, as well as the increased need for open space due to COVID-19, it is recommended to pursue designing these parks with ongoing input from City agencies, the Mission Bay CAC, SFUSD, and nearby community members.

SOMA

Filipino heritage landmarks

South of Market was traditionally the first point of arrival for Filipino immigrants, especially after World War II. It also attracted Filipino residents displaced by San Francisco's urban renewal projects. SoMa continues to be a center of the community and where the city's most significant Filipino cultural celebrations take place. Stakeholders identified several potential sites – including Mission and 5th Streets, Mission and 6th Streets, 6th Street under I-80 – as fitting locations for landmarks recognizing the SoMa Pilipinas cultural district and Filipino culture in SoMa. Given the success of cultural events like the Undiscvr'd outdoor night market, funding opportunities projected in the Central SoMa plan, and the possibility of piloting under-freeway space through California AB 857, it is recommended to continue exploring the potential for cultural spaces and landmarks in SoMa with the SoMa CAC and SoMa Pilipinas. City staff and community participants should build on this feedback in projects like the Central Soma Freeway Corridor Transformation and the Central SoMa community facilities assessment.

Slow Streets

Given the economic and health impacts of COVID-19, the SFMTA introduced the [Slow Streets](#) program to limit through traffic on certain residential streets and allow them to be used as a shared space for people traveling by foot and by bicycle. The goal of the Slow Streets program is to provide more space for socially distant essential travel and exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of this writing, Lapu Lapu/Rizal/Tandang Sora/Bonafacio/Mabini Streets from Folsom and Harrison streets have been approved as the first slow streets in SoMa. In order to support further reopening of the economy and expand the communities who can benefit, additional slow streets should be considered throughout SoMa.

Additional dog play areas

Residents in the study area generally agreed that more and larger dog play areas are needed. Several dog play areas have been created or designed lately, such as Daggett, Mission Creek, and Esprit Parks. But residents shared that Daggett’s dog play area is small and Mission Creek Park is difficult to access because of the railyard tracks. Other dog parks were requested in parts of SoMa beyond the study area (e.g. Harrison between 3rd and 4th; Bryant and 7th Streets). Accessible dog play areas should be included in future open spaces in Showplace and SoMa, where appropriate.

Park and 5th Street connection in future planning of the 4th/King Railyards site

If future analysis determines that all or part of the 4th/King Railyards site is not needed for transit operations, plans to repurpose the railyard site should prioritize open space and waterfront access in concert with any potential development. A public park should be included in any potential redesigns of the site. Also, in order for the 5th Street bike route to access the future 5th Street pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Mission Creek, site designs should connect 5th Street between Townsend and King Streets. Future planning should explore the connections of other streets and routes through the site when the time comes.

Community Programming at Bluxome

The 88 Bluxome (“Tennis Club”) project includes the Bluxome linear park and “Gene Friend Pool Annex,” to be managed by the Recreation and Parks Department. The project will include outdoor exercise, a culture & art wall, dog run, and tables/chairs. Similar to the community event space the Tennis Club developer created at 63 Bluxome, they should identify community partnerships and strategies to program events in the site’s public spaces and adjacent streets.

Monitor conflicts and safety at 5th / Townsend

There is growing concern in the area around bicycle and pedestrian safety, vehicle congestion, and the traffic-calming. In particular, conflicts between private commuter buses, public transportation, private vehicles and bicycles have increased at 5th and Townsend, adjacent to the Caltrain Station. The Townsend Street Improvement Project has addressed many of these conflicts, with additional bulbouts, bike lanes, pedestrian infrastructure and reconfigured shuttle and bus parking. The DTX project (see above) creates a more permanent opportunity to re-design additional segments of Townsend. These long-term designs should improve upon the existing street based on ongoing monitoring and transit operations.

5th Street Bridge across Mission Creek

With only two, narrow crossings at the eastern end of the creek, Mission Creek is a significant barrier between SoMa and Mission Bay. The Mission Bay Redevelopment Plan requires the master developer to build a pedestrian and bike bridge at 5th Street to address this need for safe walking and bike access. However, there are significant financial, engineering and design challenges for a bridge on Mission Creek. The Mission Bay Development Group, in coordination with the City, should identify design alternatives and cost estimates for a 5th Street pedestrian and bicycle bridge, per the Mission Bay Redevelopment Plan.

Next Steps

This memorandum updates the Showplace Square Open Space Plan, based on public input and changes in neighborhood needs since 2010. The memo also includes recommendations for additional consideration in SoMa and Mission Bay.

To move from the planning process to implementation, several next steps will be necessary. First, these staff recommendations are based on initial input and need further vetting from members of the community and Community Advisory Committees. The recommended updates to the Showplace Square Open Space plan should be integrated into the City's Capital Planning Program. Implementing these projects would require prioritizing the sites, developing schematic drawings, completing environmental review, and identifying funding for construction.

Funding is the most significant hurdle to implementing the recommended projects. While the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan includes an impact fee program to support public infrastructure, it is not enough to construct new open spaces in Showplace Square. Implementation will require the City and community members to pursue additional sources of funds, grants, partnerships with development projects, and collaboration with local community benefit districts.

To begin the conversation around potential funding sources and priorities, the table below summarizes the updated recommendations, implementing parties, and next steps.

Table 2. Showplace Square Recommendations

Opportunity Sites	Updated Recommendation	Status/Next Step	Responsible Party
Hooper Street	Redesigned, Complete		
Daggett Park	Complete		
Arkansas/Carolina Streets	Increase pedestrian access, bulbouts, and programming at Jackson Playground	In design	Recreation and Parks Department
Showplace Triangle (8th St ROW)	Create public space; activate with surrounding ground floor uses	Pursue with adjacent development	Future developer and SF Planning
900 7th Street	New park in Carolina ROW; new park on 7th/Berry; Ped/Bike connection	Implement with development of 900 7th St.	Future developer and SF Planning
Wisconsin Street right-of-way*	Add bulb outs and landscaping; reduce excess roadway	Partially built; Pursue with adjacent development	Future developers and SFMTA
Townsend Circle	Gateway or public art in the traffic circle	Pursue with SF Arts Commission and adjacent development	SFAC & SF Planning
Pennsylvania Avenue Extension / Mission Creek / Under I-280	Analyze public realm benefits of new parks and streets over Pennsylvania Avenue Extension	Include in Pre-Environmental Study, expected in 2021	Connect SF, SFCTA
Potrero Gateway	Streetscape improvements, art, gardens, and bike lane	Phase 1 in construction; pursue funding and implementation with Caltrans	SF Public Works; Community partners
Public Realm under U.S. 101/I-80 interchange	Monitor other AB857 projects; assess community needs	Stakeholder engagement to identify needs	EN CAC and SF Planning
Mission Bay Parks-Parcels P7/ P9	Continue community design process	Obtain park programming input from City agencies, SFUSD and Mission Bay CAC	OCII, Mission Bay Development Group, SF Port

Table 3. SoMa Recommendations

Opportunities	Next Step	Responsible Party
Filipino heritage landmarks	Pursue with Central SoMa Freeway Corridor project; Continue public dialogue	SoMa CAC, SF Planning, SoMa Pilipinas
Park and 5th Street connection in future planning of 4th/King Railyards site	If transit analysis demonstrates an opportunity, incorporate into conceptual designs	Caltrain, Prologis, SF Planning
Additional dog play areas	Include dog play areas in future open space designs	Recreation and Parks Department; Future Developers
Community programming at Bluxome	Identify partnerships for future community programming	88 Bluxome Developer, SoMa Pilipinas
Improve conflicts and safety at 5th/Townsend	Monitor transit and traffic operations; Incorporate street improvements into future Townsend Street Design	SFMTA, TJPA
5th Street Bridge across Mission Creek	Identify design alternatives and cost estimates for 5th Street Bridge	OCII, Mission Bay Development Group

Photo courtesy of CMG Architects

