



PUBLIC NOTICE

Availability of Notice of Preparation of Environmental Impact Report

Date: September 23, 2020
Comment Deadline: October 23, 2020
Case No.: **2018-013597ENV**
Project Title: **Portsmouth Square Improvement Project**
Zoning: P (Public) Use District
OS (Open Space) Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: Assessor's Block 0209/Lot 017
Lot Size: 1.5 acres (approximately 65,000 square feet)
Neighborhood: Chinatown
Cross Streets: Washington Street, Kearny Street, Clay Street, and Walter U Lum Place
Project Sponsor: Michael Degregorio, San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, 628.652.6649,
michael.degregorio@sfgov.org
Staff Contact: Rachel Schuett, 628.652.7546, rachel.schuett@sfgov.org

Purpose of Notice

The San Francisco Planning Department has prepared a notice of preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) in connection with this project. The notice of preparation is available for public review and can be accessed on the Planning Department's website at: <http://sf-planning.org/environmental-impact-reports-negative-declarations>. Referenced materials are available on the following website <https://sfplanning.org/resource/permits-my-neighborhood>. Individual files related to environmental review can be accessed by entering the project address into the search box, clicking on the blue dot on the project site, and then clicking on the "Documents" button under the ENV application number on the right side of the screen. Project application materials can be viewed by clicking on the "Documents" button under the PRJ case number. The "Filters" function can be used to search by case number.

You may participate in the public process concerning the project's environmental effects by contacting Rachel Schuett via rachel.schuett@sfgov.org, 628.652.7546, or by mail at 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400, San Francisco, CA 94103. You may also request a CD or paper copy by contacting Rachel Schuett. Please also refer to the Project Description and Purpose of Notice sections below for more information.

Project Description

The San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department proposes to implement the Portsmouth Square Improvement Project (proposed project), which would replace the existing park features with a redesigned public park that would include new playgrounds, exercise equipment, shade structures, wayfinding, signage, sidewalks, planters, terraces, ramps,

and a new 7,500-square-foot community clubhouse facility. The project would also waterproof the roof of the parking garage located underneath the park and remove portions of the pedestrian bridge spanning Kearny Street that connects a 27-story hotel building (currently managed as a Hilton Hotel) with Portsmouth Square.

Except for the upper level restrooms and elevator facilities, all of the existing park features would be demolished, including the existing approximately 1,600-square-foot clubhouse, the approximately 4,000-square-foot plaza, the approximately 5,500 square feet of combined playground space, the approximately 1,600-square-foot shade structure, and all benches, walkways, and stairs. In addition, all planting areas and 69 trees on the project site would be removed.

The renovated park would feature the following primary components on a two-level redesigned park: a 7,500-square-foot clubhouse spanning both the lower and upper levels; a 8,500-square-foot plaza and event space on the upper level; a 1,200-square-foot elevated stage terrace on the upper level; a 3,500-square-foot shade structure on the upper level; a 6,500-square-foot playground and fitness area on the lower level, and new planting areas. The conceptual landscaping plan provides for contiguous perimeter raised planting areas. These planting areas would include large trees for shading, smaller ornamental trees, and perennials.

The pedestrian bridge has been determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources due to its association with significant events and for its architectural significance. The bridge is associated with an important moment in the growing political influence of San Francisco's Chinese community during the postwar era. Specifically, the bridge was constructed at a time when Chinese activists successfully asserted their political power with the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency to negotiate the sale of land and construction of a hotel (now the Hilton Hotel) to include the Chinese Cultural Center and the pedestrian bridge. Moreover, the bridge is a significant example of Brutalist architecture in San Francisco due to its extensive use of exposed concrete and geometric detailing.

Purpose of Notice

The Planning Department has determined that an EIR must be prepared for the proposed project prior to any final decision regarding whether to approve the project. The purpose of the EIR is to provide information about potential significant physical environmental effects of the proposed project, to identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and to describe and analyze possible alternatives to the proposed project. Preparation of an NOP or EIR does not indicate a decision by the City to approve or to disapprove the project. However, prior to making any such decision, the decision makers must review and consider the information contained in the EIR.

The department welcomes your comments concerning the potential environmental effects of this project. Your comments should focus on significant environmental issues regarding this project, information that would help the environmental analysis, or factors to consider in the environmental analysis.

If you work for an agency that is a Responsible or a Trustee Agency, we need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR when considering a permit or other approval for this project. We will also need the name of the contact person for your agency.

If you have questions or comments concerning this notice, please contact Rachel Schuett, rachel.schuett@sfgov.org, 628.652.7546, by October, 23, 2020.

Members of the public are not required to provide personal identifying information when they communicate with the department. However, the department may make all written or oral communications available, including submitted personal contact information, for inspection and copying upon request from the public. These communications may also be posted on the department's website or in other public documents.