



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

DATE: March 9, 2016  
TO: David Silverman  
FROM: Lisa Gibson, Planning Department  
RE: PPA Case No. 2015-015129PPA for 1523 Franklin Street

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
**415.558.6378**

Fax:  
**415.558.6409**

Planning  
Information:  
**415.558.6377**

Please find the attached Preliminary Project Assessment (PPA) for the address listed above. You may contact the staff contact, Elizabeth Purl, at (415) 575-9028 or [elizabeth.purl@sfgov.org](mailto:elizabeth.purl@sfgov.org), to answer any questions you may have, or to schedule a follow-up meeting.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa Gibson", written over a horizontal line.

Lisa Gibson, Assistant Director of Environmental Planning



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Preliminary Project Assessment

*Date:* March 9, 2016  
*Case No.:* 2015-015129PPA  
*Project Address:* 1523 Franklin Street  
*Block/Lot:* 0665/005  
*Zoning:* NC-3 (Neighborhood Commercial, Moderate Scale) District  
130-E Height and Bulk District  
*Area Plan:* None  
*Project Sponsor:* David Silverman, Reuben Junius & Rose  
415-567-9000  
*Staff Contact:* Elizabeth Purl – 415-575-9028  
[elizabeth.purl@sfgov.org](mailto:elizabeth.purl@sfgov.org)

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### DISCLAIMERS:

This Preliminary Project Assessment (PPA) letter provides feedback to the project sponsor from the Planning Department regarding the proposed project described in the PPA application submitted on December 10, 2015, as summarized below. This PPA letter identifies Planning Department review requirements for the proposed project, including those related to environmental review, approvals, neighborhood notification and public outreach, the Planning Code, project design, and other general issues of concern for the project. Please be advised that the PPA application does not constitute an application for development with the Planning Department. The PPA letter also does not represent a complete review of the proposed project, does not grant a project approval of any kind, and does not in any way supersede any required Planning Department approvals listed below.

The Planning Department may provide additional comments regarding the proposed project once the required applications listed below are submitted. While some approvals are granted by the Planning Department, some are at the discretion of other bodies, such as the Planning Commission or Historic Preservation Commission. Additionally, it is likely that the project will require approvals from other City agencies such as the Department of Building Inspection, Public Works, the Municipal Transportation Agency, Department of Public Health, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, and others. The information included herein is based on the PPA application and plans, the Planning Code, General Plan, Planning Department policies, and local/state/federal regulations as of the date of this document, all of which are subject to change.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project site is located at the southwest corner of Franklin and Austin streets in the Western Addition neighborhood. The proposed project would demolish the existing approximately 6,300-square-foot (sf), two-story-over-basement commercial building and construct an 8-story, 80-foot-tall mixed-use building. The existing building on the 4,200-sf subject lot was constructed in 1928. The proposed new building would include seven dwelling units, approximately 3,461 sf of common and private open space through a

combination of a second story rear yard, a roof deck, and balconies, and 650 sf of commercial space along Franklin and Austin streets. A new 12-foot-wide curb cut on Austin Street would provide access to a ground-floor garage with seven vehicle parking spaces provided by stacker lifts and eight Class 1 bicycle spaces. Construction would require minor excavation for parking stackers and import of approximately 200 cubic feet of fill material to fill the existing basement.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the environmental review process must be completed before any project approval may be granted. This review may be done in conjunction with the required approvals listed below. In order to begin formal environmental review, please submit an **Environmental Evaluation Application (EEA)** for the full scope of the project. EEAs are available in the Planning Department lobby at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, at the Planning Information Center at 1660 Mission Street, and online at [www.sfplanning.org](http://www.sfplanning.org) under the "Publications" tab. See "Environmental Applications" on page 2 of the current Fee Schedule for calculation of environmental application fees.<sup>1</sup> **Note that until an entitlement application is submitted to the Current Planning Division, only the proposed Project Description will be reviewed by the assigned Environmental Coordinator.**

If the additional analysis outlined below indicates that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment, the project could be eligible for a Class 32 infill development categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332. If a Class 32 exemption is appropriate, Environmental Planning staff will prepare a certificate of exemption.

If it is determined that the project could result in a significant impact, an initial study would be prepared. The initial study may be prepared either by an environmental consultant from the Department's environmental consultant pool or by Department staff. Should you choose to have the initial study prepared by an environmental consultant from the consultant pool, contact Devyani Jain at (415) 575-9051 for a list of three eligible consultants ([http://www.sfplanning.org/ftp/files/MEA/Environmental\\_consultant\\_pool.pdf](http://www.sfplanning.org/ftp/files/MEA/Environmental_consultant_pool.pdf)). If the initial study finds that the project would have a significant impact that could be reduced to a less-than-significant level by mitigation measures agreed to by the project sponsor, then the Department would issue a preliminary mitigated negative declaration (PMND). The PMND would be circulated for public review, during which time concerned parties may comment on and/or appeal the determination. If no appeal is filed, the Planning Department would issue a final mitigated negative declaration (FMND). Additional information regarding the environmental review process can be found at: <http://www.sf-planning.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=8631>.

If the initial study indicates that the project would result in a significant impact that cannot be mitigated to below a significant level, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be required. An EIR must be prepared by an environmental consultant from the Planning Department's environmental consultant pool. The Planning Department will provide more detail to the project sponsor regarding the EIR process should this level of environmental review be required.

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<sup>1</sup> San Francisco Planning Department. *Schedule for Application Fees*. Available online at: <http://www.sf-planning.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=513>

Below is a list of topic areas addressed through the environmental review process. Some of these would require additional study based on the preliminary review of the project as it is proposed in the PPA application.

- 1. Historic Resources.** The project site contains one or more buildings or structures considered to be a potential historic resource (constructed 45 or more years ago); therefore, the proposed project is subject to review by the Department's Historic Preservation staff. To assist in this review, the project sponsor must hire a qualified professional to prepare a Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) report. The professional must be selected from the Planning Department's Historic Resource Consultant Pool. Please contact Tina Tam, Senior Preservation Planner, via email ([tina.tam@sfgov.org](mailto:tina.tam@sfgov.org)) for a list of three consultants from which to choose. Please contact the HRE scoping team at [HRE@sfgov.org](mailto:HRE@sfgov.org) to arrange the HRE scoping. Following an approved scope, the historic resource consultant should submit the draft HRE report for review to Environmental Planning after the project sponsor has filed the EEA and updated it as necessary to reflect feedback received in the PPA letter. The HRE should be submitted directly to the Department and copied to the project sponsor. Project sponsors should not receive and/or review advance drafts of consultant reports per the Environmental Review Guidelines. Historic Preservation staff will not begin reviewing your project until a complete draft HRE is received subsequent to filing of the EEA.
- 2. Archeological Resources.** The proposed project will require Preliminary Archeological Review (PAR) by a Planning Department archeologist. To aid this review, the Department archeologist may request a Preliminary Archeological Sensitivity Assessment (PASS) by a Department Qualified Archeological Consultant, subject to review and approval by the Department archeologist. The Department archeologist will provide three names from the Qualified Archeological Consultant list if the PASS is required. The PAR will assess the archeological sensitivity of the project site based on in-house source material and will consider the potential for archeological impacts resulting from proposed soils disturbance. Please provide detailed information, including sections, proposed soils-disturbing activities, such as grading, excavation, installation of foundations, soils improvement, and site remediation in the EEA, and submit any available geotechnical/soils or phase II hazardous materials reports prepared for the project to assist in this review. If the Department archeologist determines that the project has a potential to adversely affect archeological resources, the PAR will identify additional measures needed to address the potential effect. These measures may include preparation of an archeological research design and treatment plan, implementation of one of the Planning Department's three standard archeological mitigation measures (archeological testing, monitoring, or accidental discovery), or other appropriate measures.
- 3. Tribal Cultural Resources.** Tribal cultural resources (TCRs) are a class of resource established under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in 2015. TCRs are defined as a site, feature, place, cultural landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, that is either included on or eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources or a local historic register, or is a resource that the lead agency, at its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, determines is a TCR. Planning Department staff will review the proposed project to determine if it may cause an adverse effect to a TCR; this will occur in tandem with preliminary archeological review. No additional information is needed from the project sponsor at

this time. Consultation with California Native American tribes regarding TCRs may be required at the request of the tribes. If staff determines that the proposed project may have a potential significant adverse impact on a TCR, mitigation measures will be identified and required. Mitigation measures may include avoidance, protection, or preservation of the TCR and development of interpretation and public education and artistic programs.

4. **Transportation.** Based on the PPA submittal, a transportation impact study is not anticipated to be required; an official determination will be made subsequent to submittal of the EEA. However, the project site is located on a high-injury corridor as mapped by Vision Zero.<sup>2</sup> Planning staff have reviewed the proposed site plans and offer the following recommendations:

- Please show sidewalk widths and curb cuts with dimensions on both existing and proposed site plans.

5. **Noise.** Based on the General Plan's Background Noise Levels map, the project site is located along a segment of Franklin Street with noise levels above 75 dBA Ldn (a day-night averaged sound level). Therefore, an acoustical analysis is required for the proposed new mixed-use development. The acoustical analysis must demonstrate with reasonable certainty that the California Noise Insulation Standards in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations can be met. Should such concerns be present, the department may require the completion of a detailed noise assessment by person(s) qualified in acoustical analysis and/or engineering prior to the first project approval action, in order to demonstrate that acceptable interior noise levels consistent with those in the Title 24 standards can be attained.

Additionally, the Planning Department requires that residential open space required under the Planning Code be protected, to the maximum feasible extent, from existing ambient noise levels that could prove annoying or disruptive to users of the open space. Measures to protect required open space from noise include site design that uses the building itself to shield on-site open space from the greatest noise sources, construction of noise barriers between noise sources and open space, and appropriate use of both common and private open space in multi-family dwellings.

Construction noise would be subject to the San Francisco Noise Ordinance (Article 29 of the San Francisco Police Code), which includes restrictions on noise levels of construction equipment and hours of construction. If pile driving is to be used during the construction, measures to reduce construction noise may be required as part of the proposed project. The EEA should indicate whether pile driving or other particularly noisy construction methods are required.

6. **Air Quality.** The proposed project's 28 dwelling units and 1,955 gross square feet of commercial space would not exceed the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) construction and operational screening levels for criteria air pollutants.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, an analysis of the project's criteria air pollutant emissions is not likely to be required. However, please provide detailed information related to construction equipment and volume of excavation as part of the EEA.

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<sup>2</sup> This document is available at: <http://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/projects/2015/vision-zero-san-francisco.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> BAAQMD, *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines*, May 2011, Chapter 3.

Project-related demolition, excavation, grading and other construction activities may cause wind-blown dust that could contribute particulate matter into the local atmosphere. To reduce construction dust impacts, the proposed project will be required to adhere to the dust control requirements set forth in the Construction Dust Ordinance contained in San Francisco Health Code Article 22B and San Francisco Building Code Section 106.A.3.2.6.

The project site is not located within an Air Pollutant Exposure Zone, as mapped and defined by Health Code, Article 38. The Air Pollutant Exposure Zone identifies areas with poor air quality based on modeling of air pollution, exposures, and health vulnerability from mobile, stationary, and area source emissions within San Francisco. Given that the project site is not within an Air Pollutant Exposure Zone, additional measures or analysis related to local health risks are not likely to be required. However, if the project would include new sources of toxic air contaminants including, but not limited to, emissions from diesel generators or boilers, or any other stationary sources, the project would result in toxic air contaminants that may affect both on-site and off-site sensitive receptors. Detailed information related to any proposed stationary sources must be provided with the EEA.

7. **Greenhouse Gases.** *The City and County of San Francisco's Strategies to Address Greenhouse Gas Emissions* presents a comprehensive assessment of policies, programs, and ordinances that represents San Francisco's Qualified Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Strategy. Projects that are consistent with San Francisco's Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy would result in less-than-significant impacts from GHG emissions. In order to facilitate a determination of compliance with San Francisco's Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy, the Planning Department has prepared a Greenhouse Gas Analysis Compliance Checklist.<sup>4</sup> The project sponsor may be required to submit the completed table regarding project compliance with the identified regulations and provide project-level details in the discussion column. This information will be reviewed by the environmental planner during the environmental review process to determine if the project would comply with San Francisco's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy. Projects that do not comply with an ordinance or regulation may be determined to be inconsistent with the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy.
8. **Shadow.** The proposed project would result in construction of a building greater than 40 feet in height. A preliminary shadow fan analysis prepared by Planning Department staff indicates that the project would not cast new shadow on recreational resources. Therefore, no shadow study is required.
9. **Geology.** Because of the amount of fill that would be needed for the building foundation, a geotechnical study, prepared for this project by a qualified consultant, should be submitted with the EEA. The study should address whether the site is subject to geologic hazards and provide recommendations for any geotechnical concerns identified in the study. In general, compliance with the building codes would avoid the potential for significant impacts related to structural damage, ground subsidence, liquefaction, landslides, and surface settlement. To assist Department staff in determining whether the project would result in environmental impacts related to geological hazards, it is recommended that boring logs for the project site accompany the geotechnical report

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to <http://sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=1886> for latest "Greenhouse Gas Compliance Checklist for Private Development Projects."

submitted for the project. This study will also help inform the Planning Department Archeologist of the project site's subsurface geological conditions.

10. **Hazardous Materials.** The existing building was constructed prior to 1980, and therefore asbestos-containing materials, such as floor and wall coverings, may be found in the building. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) is responsible for regulating airborne pollutants including asbestos. Please contact BAAQMD for the requirements related to demolition of buildings with asbestos-containing materials. In addition, because of its age (constructed prior to 1978), lead paint may be found in the existing building. Please contact the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection (DBI) for requirements related to the demolition of buildings that may contain lead paint.
11. **Trees.** No trees are present on the project site. Please see the comments below under "Street Trees" for applicable requirements.
12. **Disclosure Report for Developers of Major City Projects.** The San Francisco Ethics Commission S.F. Camp. & Govt. Conduct Code § 3.520 et seq. requires developers to provide the public with information about donations that developers make to nonprofit organizations that may communicate with the City and County regarding major development projects. This report must be completed and filed by the developer of any "major project." A major project is a real estate development project located in the City and County of San Francisco with estimated construction costs exceeding \$1,000,000 where either: (1) The Planning Commission or any other local lead agency certifies an EIR for the project; or (2) The project relies on a program EIR and the Planning Department, Planning Commission, or any other local lead agency adopts any final environmental determination under CEQA. A final environmental determination includes: the issuance of a Community Plan Exemption (CPE); certification of a CPE/EIR; adoption of a CPE/Final Mitigated Negative Declaration; or a project approval by the Planning Commission that adopts CEQA Findings. (In instances where more than one of the preceding determinations occurs, the filing requirement shall be triggered by the earliest such determination.) A major project does not include a residential development project with four or fewer dwelling units. The first (or initial) report must be filed within 30 days of the date the Planning Commission (or any other local lead agency) certifies the EIR for that project or, for a major project relying on a program EIR, within 30 days of the date that the Planning Department, Planning Commission, or any other local lead agency adopts a final environmental determination under CEQA. Please submit a Disclosure Report for Developers of Major City Projects to the San Francisco Ethics Commission. This form can be found at the Planning Department or online at <http://www.sfethics.org>.

#### PLANNING DEPARTMENT APPROVALS:

The project requires the following Planning Department approvals. These approvals may be reviewed in conjunction with the required environmental review, but may not be granted until after the required environmental review is completed.

1. A **Building Permit Application** is required for the demolition of the existing building on the subject property.

2. A **Building Permit Application** is required for the proposed new construction on the subject property.
3. A **Variance** from Planning Code Section 145.1(c)(1) and 145.1(c)(3) (Street Frontages) is required for the proposed parking within the first 25 feet of the building frontage on Austin Street and an active use along Franklin Street that does not comply with the required 25-foot depth. Planning encourages a code-complying project with a reduced parking entrance and code-complying active frontage at both Franklin and Austin Streets.

### NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATIONS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Project sponsors are encouraged, and in some cases required, to conduct public outreach with the surrounding community and neighborhood groups early in the development process. Additionally, many approvals require a public hearing with an associated neighborhood notification. Differing levels of neighborhood notification are mandatory for some or all of the reviews and approvals listed above.

This project is required to conduct a **Pre-Application** meeting with surrounding neighbors and registered neighborhood groups before a development application may be filed with the Planning Department. The Pre-Application packet, which includes instructions and template forms, is available at [www.sfplanning.org](http://www.sfplanning.org) under the "Permits & Zoning" tab. All registered neighborhood group mailing lists are available online at [www.sfplanning.org](http://www.sfplanning.org) under the "Resource Center" tab.

**Notification of a Project Receiving Environmental Review.** Notice may be required to be sent to occupants of the project site and properties adjacent to the project site, as well as to owners and, to the extent feasible, occupants of properties within 300 feet of the project site at the initiation of the environmental review process. Please be prepared to provide mailing addresses on a CD upon request during the environmental review process.

### PRELIMINARY PROJECT COMMENTS:

The following comments address specific Planning Code and other general issues that may substantially impact the proposed project.

1. **Density.** Per Planning Code Section 207(b)(6), the permitted density limits prescribed within the RC-4 (Residential, Commercial – High Density) Zoning District may be employed at this site due to the proximity of the nearby residential district as measured from a point directly across the street. This would permit a density of one unit per 200 sf or 21 units.

It is the Department's priority to give precedence to the development of all new net housing, and to encourage the direct building of more affordable housing and the maximization of permitted density, while maintaining quality of life and adherence to Planning Code standards. The General Plan has the following policies that encourage density in appropriate locations, such as near transit, and that promote the creation of new permanently affordable housing:

#### *Housing Element*

POLICY 4.5 Ensure that new permanently affordable housing is located in all of the City's neighborhoods,

and encourage integrated neighborhoods, with a diversity of unit types provided at a range of income levels.

POLICY 13.1

Support "smart" regional growth that locates new housing close to jobs and transit.

The project proposes to develop 22,050 sf of residential resulting in seven units, just short of the 10 units that trigger Section 415 of the Planning Code, which requires that 12 percent of units be Below Market Rate (BMR) units. The plans demonstrate an unfulfilled capacity to develop more than seven units. While the Department encourages the provision of family-sized units with two and three bedrooms, the proposed project has average unit sizes of over 3,000 sf per unit, which is well above the normal range for multi-family housing, including projects with a greater-than-typical proportion of units with two or more bedrooms. In addition, this site is closely adjacent to transit.

The Department strongly encourages increased density on the site, while maintaining the required bedroom mix and livability of the units. Per Director's Bulletin No. 2, if the project were to maximize density and include 20 percent on-site BMRs, it would qualify for priority processing: <http://www.sf-planning.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=8460>.

2. **Affordable Housing Bonus Program.** The City of San Francisco is in the process of developing a program that would offer a local mechanism to implement the State Density Bonus law (Government Code Section No. 65915) and is currently considering additional program options, including a component which offers density and development incentives for provision of middle income housing. This parcel is located within the proposed program study area, and the proposed project could receive density and other development incentives commensurate with provision of on-site affordable housing if consistent with the rules of the proposed program. Please refer to the [Affordable Housing Bonus Program website](http://www.sf-planning.org/AHBP) ([www.sf-planning.org/AHBP](http://www.sf-planning.org/AHBP)) for the latest information on the program, draft legislation, and proposed schedule.
3. **Street Trees.** Planning Code Section 138.1 requires one street tree for every 20 feet of frontage for new construction, for a total of 7 required trees. The Department of Public Works (DPW) is the lead agency for street tree requirements and will oversee the review of street tree applications.
4. **Vision Zero.** As noted in the comments under "Transportation" in the Environmental Review section above, the project is located on a high-injury corridor, identified through the City's [Vision Zero Program](#). The sponsor is encouraged to incorporate pedestrian safety streetscape measures into the project. Please see additional comments under "Living Alleys" in the Preliminary Design Comments section below.
5. **Active Uses and Street Frontage.** With the exception of space allowed for parking and loading access, building egress, and access to mechanical systems, Planning Code Section 145.1(c)(3) requires space for active uses within the first 25 feet of building depth on the ground floor from any facade facing a street at least 30 feet in width, including Austin Street. Please increase the depth of the proposed retail space and reduce the parking entrance to better comply with Planning Code Section 145.1(c) and provide a more enriching pedestrian experience.

6. **Parking.** The Department encourages consideration of pursuing a parking reduction offset by additional bicycle parking to reverse the need for a variance and increase the active use element of the project. Please note that the project is within walking distance of major transit corridors, including the forthcoming Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system.
7. **Curb Cut.** Per Zoning Administrator Bulletin Number 2, the maximum permitted curb cut is 10 feet in width. Please reduce the proposed curb cut width to comply.
8. **First Source Hiring Agreement.** A First Source Hiring Agreement is required for any project proposing to construct 25,000 gross square feet or more. For more information, please contact:

Ken Nim, Workforce Compliance Officer  
CityBuild, Office of Economic and Workforce Development  
City and County of San Francisco  
50 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 581-2303

9. **Stormwater.** If the project results in a ground surface disturbance of 5,000 sf or greater, it is subject to San Francisco's stormwater management requirements as outlined in the Stormwater Management Ordinance and the corresponding San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) Stormwater Design Guidelines (Guidelines). Projects that trigger the stormwater management requirements must prepare a Stormwater Control Plan demonstrating project adherence to the performance measures outlined in the Guidelines including: (a) reduction in *total volume* and *peak flow rate* of stormwater for areas in combined sewer systems OR (b) *stormwater treatment* for areas in separate sewer systems. The SFPUC Wastewater Enterprise, Urban Watershed Management Program is responsible for review and approval of the Stormwater Control Plan. Without SFPUC approval of a Stormwater Control Plan, no site or building permits can be issued. The Guidelines also require a signed maintenance agreement to ensure proper care of the necessary stormwater controls. To view the Stormwater Management Ordinance or the Stormwater Design Guidelines, or to download instructions for the Stormwater Control Plan, go to <http://sfwater.org/sdg>. Applicants may contact [stormwaterreview@sfwater.org](mailto:stormwaterreview@sfwater.org) for assistance.
10. **Shadow Analysis (Section 295).** Section 295 requires that a shadow analysis must be performed to determine whether a project has the potential to cast shadow on properties under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission. Department staff has prepared a shadow fan that indicates that the project would not cast new shadow on any recreational facilities, including those under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Commission. No further analysis is required.
11. **Bicycle Parking.** Planning Code Section 155.5 requires this project to provide at least 2 Class 2 bicycle parking spaces. The proposed plans show no Class 2 bicycle parking, although it is listed in the scope of work.
12. **Impact Fees.** This project will be subject to various impact fees. Please refer to the [Planning Director's Bulletin No. 1](#) for an overview of Development Impact Fees, and to the Department of Building Inspection's [Development Impact Fee webpage](#) for more information about current rates.

Based on an initial review of the proposed project, the Transit Impact Development Fee (TIDF), which is assessed by the Planning Department, will be required.

### PRELIMINARY DESIGN COMMENTS:

The project is in the Western Addition neighborhood and is primarily residential with retail proposed at the ground floor. The area is mixed in height and mixed in façade material types. The following comments address preliminary design issues that may substantially affect the proposed project:

1. **Site Design, Open Space and Massing.** The Planning Department is generally supportive of the site design and overall configuration of the project. The Department is in particular supportive of placing all of the open space in the rear yard next to the adjacent two-story residential building on Austin Street; please clarify the calculations on the 25 percent rear yard requirement.
2. **Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements.** The Planning Department recommends adjusting the commercial space on the ground floor to make the space wider and more feasible to use and reducing the presence of the parking within the first 25 feet along Austin Street to instead provide greater active use.

**Living Alleys.** The main goal of living alleys is to create safe and active public places for people – especially where there are narrow sidewalks or little open space – to add vitality to the street and to the block. Living alleys can also form part of a pedestrian and bicycle network, improving safety by designing streets as places first and roads second. There is an opportunity to transform the property's adjacent Austin Street alley into a living alley. Please refer to the [Living Alleys website](http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/reclaiming-roadway-space/living-alleys/) (<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/reclaiming-roadway-space/living-alleys/>).

The Department encourages you to contact the owner/developer of neighboring 1533-1539 Franklin Street (Planning Department Case Number [2015-015129PRJ](#), an approved project that establishes a 30-room Tourist Hotel [d.b.a Pacific Heights Inn] on the top three floors of a four-story commercial building). We encourage you to consider partnering to share costs and maximize the outcome (safety, aesthetic, social, and environmental) of the Austin Street alley. Additionally, the Department encourages you to review the [Living Alleys Toolkit](#) (e.g. cost estimates on pp. 110-111) and [this Better Streets Plan chapter](#). Should you choose to install a living alley in Austin Alley, the Department could work with you to coordinate with DPW and SFMTA as appropriate and to prepare and submit plans to the Department.

3. **Architecture.** As per the neighborhood pattern, the Planning Department requests more solidity in the façade through solid fin returns or spandrels that reduce reflective materials and glazing. An alternate would be to explore a solid to transparent gradation in concert with the current design concept that feathers solidity into the façade leaving the corner as the most open. The Department supports having a unique and contemporary corner expression that continues the dialogue with the adjacent three corners which each have their own special qualities.

The Planning Department also recommends exploring one mid-height significant rotation (much like the pattern of them along the Austin Street façade) at the mid-section to help define the current scale

of the street more effectively along the project's tall frontage. As overall the structure is likely to be much higher than the surrounding buildings on the block, the design should be exceptional, and the Department supports the inventiveness of the current project.

**PRELIMINARY PROJECT ASSESSMENT EXPIRATION:**

This Preliminary Project Assessment is valid for a period of **18 months**. An Environmental Evaluation or Building Permit Application), as listed above, must be submitted no later than **September 11, 2017**. Otherwise, this determination is considered expired and a new Preliminary Project Assessment is required. Such applications and plans must be generally consistent with those found in this Preliminary Project Assessment.

Attachment: Shadow Fan

- cc: McIlvenna Family Trust, Property Owner  
Alexandra Kirby, Current Planning  
Andrea Nelson, Citywide Planning and Analysis  
Maia Small, Design Review  
Jonas Ionin, Planning Commission Secretary  
Charles Rivasplata, SFMTA  
Jerry Sanguinetti, Public Works  
Pauline Perkins, SFPUC  
Planning Department Webmaster ([planning.webmaster@sfgov.org](mailto:planning.webmaster@sfgov.org))



Title: 1523 Franklin Street - Case No. 2015-015129PPA

Comments: No Impact at proposed height of 80'

Printed: 3 March, 2016



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