

## 170 Otis Street, San Francisco

170 Otis Street (CA 94103, USA)

The site is located at the very southern end of the City's Downtown office core and Civic Center concentration of City offices, and is surrounded by an eclectic mix of commercial and residential uses. The building located at 170 Otis Street is an approximately 171,000 square foot seven-story office building with an underground parking garage that was built in 1975. The site is adjacent to the Central Freeway and is tucked into the block and accessible to the street by a narrow sliver, and is otherwise obstructed from Otis Street by a separate parcel with a 10-story building. The property backs up onto a narrow street with low to mid-rise residential buildings. The site is zoned partly for public uses and partly for commercial/residential mixed-use development. Most of the area is designated for buildings up

to 85 feet in height, with one portion zoned for up to 125 feet. Rezoning may be necessary to accommodate future development. The site was included in a recent areawide planning effort that cleared the site for a substantial increase in residential capacity, pending rezoning with city support. The City seeks to redevelop the site into to high-density residential or residential mixed-use building to advance the City's state-mandated target of adding over 80,000 new residential units by 2031, and support the City's post-pandemic economic recovery by repositioning the City workforce's office footprint to make use of historic office vacancies in the Civic Center and downtown areas, all while continuing to demonstrate San Francisco's commitment to sustainable development and a zero-carbon future.



### **Plot Area:**

The site is made up of four separate City-owned parcels, totaling just under 45,000 square feet.

### **Expected Land Use:**

It is the City's expectation that the highest and best use for the site will be for housing. Specifically, the City envisions transforming this site into a mid-rise tower, integrating material recovery of the existing building, zero-emission technologies and urban greening solutions. The site may also include the potential addition of sustainable mixed-use services, active ground floors and ground-level public space. The development should be in line with the site's transitional location between low-rise residential and high-rise residential and office buildings proceeding northward. Residential units may be either for-sale condominium units or

rental units. See planning rules and regulations section below for applicable affordability and other code requirements.

### **Site Ownership:**

The site is entirely owned by the City and County of San Francisco.

### **Type of Property transfer intended:**

The City's intent is to sell the site outright to use the proceeds for relocation costs of City workforce and other public purposes. A joint development model may be considered if proposed by the project team. Further information will be provided in Phase 2 of the competition.

**Deadline for the submission of the Expression of Interest:** Thursday 5th September 2024, 11am PST

## Presentation of the site and development expectations

The site is located in a transition area between the City's Downtown office core and Civic Center, the western end of the SOMA neighborhood characterized by a mix of low- to mid-density light industrial, residential, and mixed-use buildings, and the Mission District, south of the Central Freeway from the site. Civic Center is known as the seat of City government and as one of the city's key arts districts, home to the San Francisco Opera, Ballet, and Symphony, the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Western SOMA is a former warehouse industrial district that has evolved into a mixed-use neighborhood that still retains a number of light industrial uses as well as many of the city's nightlife entertainment venues, and is a center of City's Filipino and LGBTQ communities. The Mission District is one of the city's oldest neighborhoods and is home to San Francisco's Latino population and the Calle 24 Cultural District, and is also known as a popular residential neighborhood and destination for retail, dining, nightlife, and entertainment.

The site is well served by public transit, sitting on the major crosstown 49 and 14 bus routes, one block from Market Street featuring several bus lines and the historic streetcar F line, and a ½-mile (15 minute walk) from both the Civic Center and 16th Street Mission BART stations.



**Figure 2:** Aerial map of the proposed site, 170 Otis Street

The City and County of San Francisco owns and manages approximately 5 million square feet of office space and other facilities across over 70 buildings throughout the city for its nearly 40,000 person City workforce. The building comprises 108,000 net rentable square feet of space that currently holds office space for approximately 650 City employees in the Human Services Agency (HSA), a ground level public social services center open to the public, a small drop-in childcare center for HSA clients and staff, and the Ronald H Born Auditorium that is used for the Human Services Commission and other City purposes. The building is arranged around a ground level courtyard featuring a large-scale mosaic on the side of a neighboring property.

The building is nearly 50 years old and has not undergone a full remodel since its construction. The building has been identified as posing a significant seismic hazard (Seismic Hazard Rating 4) and is on the City's priority list to be vacated and replaced according to the City's 10-year Capital Plan. Due to costs associated with seismic retrofit

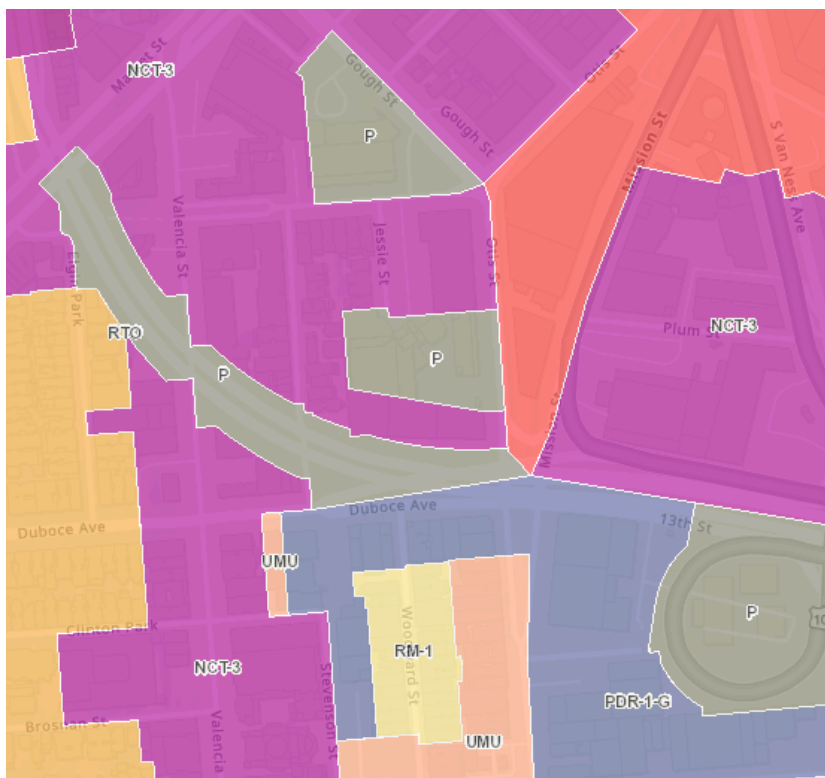
needs, the City expects the most feasible project will include demolition and new construction.

It is the City's expectation that the highest and best use for the site will be for housing. The City sees this competition as an opportunity to revitalize San Francisco's Downtown and transform the site of the existing office building, 170 Otis Street, into a mid-rise tower, integrating material recovery, zero-emission technologies and urban greening solutions. The site may also include the potential addition of sustainable mixed-use services, active ground floors and ground-level public space.

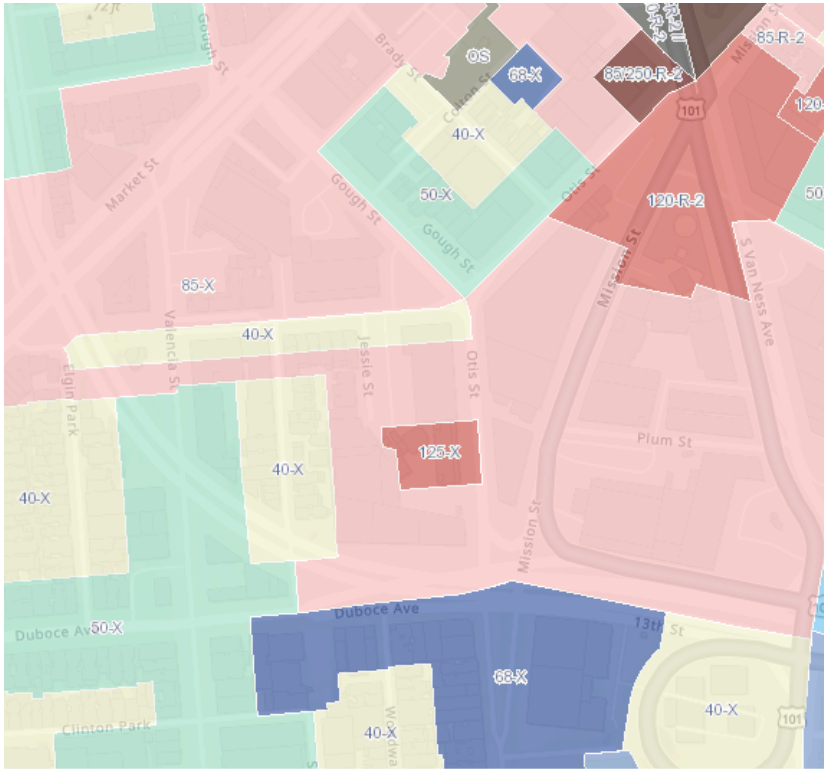
## Specific planning rules and regulations

The property was included in the Market and Octavia Area Plan Amendment (the Hub), a community planning process that took place 2015-2020. While some of the height and zoning recommendations in the plan were not adopted, additional height and greater density were studied in the [EIR](#) which was certified July 2020.

The property at 170 Otis is currently zoned P-Public and the existing height-bulk district is 125-X. The parcels were analyzed in the EIR to be rezoned to C-3-G zoning district and the Market and Van Ness Special Use District. This zoning district allows for a wide variety of land uses including residential and commercial uses and doesn't place any limits on density. If 170 Otis were to remain zoned P the only type of housing that would be permitted is 100% affordable housing and educator housing projects, as defined in Section [206.9](#). The property was analyzed for additional height and height-bulk district which vary by parcel including 45-X, 85-X, 125R-2 and 150R-2. See [map](#) on page 2 for exact heights that were analyzed for each parcel.



**Figure 3:** Zoning map of the proposed site, 170 Otis Street



**Figure 4:** Allowable heights map of the proposed site, 170 Otis Street

All projects that include 10 or more dwelling units must participate in the City's Inclusionary Affordable Housing Program contained in Planning Code Sections 415 and 419. Every project subject to the requirements of Planning Code Section 415 or 419 is required to pay the Affordable Housing Fee. A project may be eligible for an Alternative to the Affordable Housing Fee and must provide necessary documentation to the Planning Department and Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development. For more information about the current inclusionary rates can be found [here](#).

In addition to meeting the City's inclusionary requirements, most development projects are subject to impact fees. For more information about specific impact fees and current rates see the [fee register](#).

If the property were to be rezoned to the C-3-G zoning district and the Market and Van Ness Special Use as studied in the EIR it would mean the project would also be subject to area plan specific impact fees. This includes the following area plan fees.

- Market and Octavia Community Improvements Impact Fee (Planning Code Section 421)
- Market and Octavia Area Plan and Upper Market NCT Affordable Housing Fee (Planning Code Section 418)
- Van Ness Special Use District Affordable Housing In-Lieu Fee (Planning Code Section 243)
- Van Ness & Market Affordable Housing Fee (Planning Code Section 424)

In September 2023 legislation was adopted that changes the way that the city sets, imposes, and collects impact fees. These changes include paying impact fees (other than inclusionary) at certificate of occupancy, the impact fee rate (other than inclusionary) is locked in the time of project approval, and the rate increases annually by a flat 2%. In addition, any project approved before November 2026 is eligible to receive a 33% reduction on required development impact fees. To remain eligible for the discount,

projects must obtain their First Construction Document within 30 months of final approval. See Planning Code Section 403 for more information.

## State Housing Legislation

Some projects that require Planning Department approval may qualify for a ministerial, non-discretionary review. Please see [Planning Director Bulletin 5](#) and [Planning Director Bulletin 9](#) for more information.

Some projects which are code compliant may apply the State Density Bonus as defined in Planning Code Section 206.6(b). This program allows a project to receive up to 35% bonus, and receive certain incentives and waivers from the Planning Code. The amount of density bonus and number of incentives depends on the amount and level of affordability the project provides. Projects must comply with the City's Inclusionary Affordable Housing but may seek a bonus at a single income level. Please see [Planning Director Bulletin 6](#). Under the current zoning, the project would not be eligible for the State Density Bonus Program. A rezoning would be needed to apply the State Density Bonus and the City could work with the project team to develop a base height and zoning to maximize the desired development program for the site.

## City climate priorities and environmental challenges

In addition to the competition's ten climate challenges, San Francisco will use the Reinventing Cities competition to leverage the strategies and actions in its [2021 Climate Action Plan](#) to develop a cutting-edge, sustainable building site that integrates various innovative technologies, materials, and design strategies, along with engagement and public awareness to build greater racial and social equity, increase community resilience, and foster a more just economy through affordable housing and green workforce development.

San Francisco will address all seven sectors in its Climate Action Plan (CAP) in the Reinventing Cities competition (energy, building operation, housing, transportation and land use, responsible production and consumption, healthy ecosystems, and water supply). Through twenty different CAP actions, San Francisco will not only push the envelope on sustainable design but also create a safe environment for residents and neighbors while fostering a deeper connection with the natural environment and showcasing how urban infill housing can reduce GHG pollution more effectively than any other option.

Other Specific cutting-edge innovative solutions include:

**Adaptive Reuse:** Repurposing parts of an existing building, or adaptive reuse, is the best way to reduce embodied carbon emissions compared to using virgin materials. This project will consider ways to pilot thoughtful deconstruction and use salvaged materials. Planning, such as whole-building life cycle assessment, can help sites rethink design, reduce materials, and avoid focusing solely on recycling or downcycling. Designing with layout flexibility and circular principles in mind can enhance longevity and adaptability of the building and reduce costly renovations or rebuilds.

**Biodiverse Design:** Major site renovations offer opportunities to create wildlife habitats and nature connections for city residents and workers. Design strategies include living roofs and walls, sidewalk gardens, and native pollinator-serving street trees. This project can incorporate many biodiverse elements, such as local plants in various vegetative structures, bird-nesting boxes, bird-friendly windows, and nature play spaces. These features also promote well-being, improve air quality, mitigate urban heat island effects, and provide diverse recreational and educational opportunities for occupants and adjacent communities.

# Reinventing Cities

**Zero-emission technologies:** Through adoption of San Francisco's current and proposed building regulations, this site will reduce climate pollution, increase building resiliency, and improve indoor air quality. The project will replace gas equipment with efficient all-electric equipment and add battery storage and potentially photovoltaics. The building will also include a tailored demand response system to support energy load shifting. Leveraging smart and clean energy solutions through building decarbonization will save money, protect health, and result in a zero-emission building.