

For Immediate Release
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Planning Commissioners Dissent in 3–4 Vote on City Rezoning *Cite Lack of Affordability, Family-Sized Homes, and Rent Control Protections*

San Francisco – After a 10 hour-long hearing, Planning Commissioners Kathrin Moore, Gilbert Williams, and Theresa Imperial voted against Mayor Lurie’s proposed citywide upzoning after key amendments were dismissed by staff. In their official “Minority Dissent,” the Commissioners argued that the so-called “Family Zoning” plan falls short on affordability, protections for renters, and real housing for families.

“The Mayor’s Plan Misses Critical Mark”

“We devoted years to shaping the city’s Housing Element alongside community partners. This upzoning plan is not what San Francisco adopted. Marketed as a solution to the housing crisis, it instead risks displacement while offering little in the way of true affordability. We cannot support it in its current form.”

Key Concerns

Market-rate supply ≠ affordability. Research shows new construction in high-cost cities like San Francisco is luxury by default. With average police or firefighter salaries around \$110,000 against \$1.3M home prices and \$4,000 rents, the gap is stark. Many cities around the world have experienced deregulation on market-rate development to rely on affordability that does NOT translate to affordability. Here in the United States, Chicago’s 2019 upzoning study confirmed that blanket rezonings often fail to produce housing at all, let alone lower prices. The Planning Department also acknowledges that it will take longer for affordability to materialize. Market-rate development is not an affordability strategy.

Lack of Affordable Housing Plan. Without funding strategies and concrete pathways for dedicated land sites for affordable housing, affordable housing will be an afterthought for this plan. This plan won’t meet housing mandates.

Rent-controlled homes at risk. Replacement is not preservation. Demolitions displace tenants long before projects are rebuilt, and new units are exempt from

rent control under state law. San Francisco has already lost thousands of stabilized units. Preserving rent-controlled housing must be a first priority, not an afterthought.

Small businesses sidelined. Construction impacts shutter legacy and small businesses, while mixed-use projects often favor chain tenants. The plan lacks enforceable protections. In addition, waiving CUAs and impact fees for displaced Legacy Businesses *do not* offer protection for small businesses.

Weak inclusionary requirements. Optional 15–20% affordability requirements target households earning \$125K–\$180K a year — far above the incomes of most residents at risk of displacement. Deep affordability (below 50% AMI) remains underproduced. Turning development over to the private market without stronger mandates guarantees shortfalls.

Families left out. Minimum unit size standards are scrapped, encouraging both micro-units and mega-penthouses. With just 25% of required units at two bedrooms or larger, three-quarters of the plan excludes real family housing.

Violation of Priority Equity Geographies protections. The Mayor's plan includes areas of North Beach, Upper Chinatown, Telegraph Hill, Waterfront, and the Western SOMA Area Plan — that includes the Filipino Cultural Heritage District and LGBTQ Cultural District. This is directly out of compliance with our unanimously-approved Housing Element.

Lack of protections for landmarked buildings and historic districts. The plan proposes to redevelop treasured historic and cultural resources, including landmarked buildings that have shaped San Francisco's iconic global identity and attract lucrative tourism.

State compliance is a false choice. Other cities have negotiated context-sensitive plans that balance growth with equity and infrastructure. San Francisco can — and must — do the same to finance and build the housing promised in the Housing Element.

SB 79 implications. This plan lacks analysis and implication of Senate Bill 79 (Wiener) impact on this plan — and San Francisco as a whole. The Planning Director says it will be studied “when staff have capacity”, despite the sponsor's close collaboration with the City. There is no plan for how to navigate the changing landscape at the state level beyond blanket upzoning — this is failing policy.

A Better Path Forward

The 3 dissenting Commissioners call for amendments that:

- Prioritize preservation of existing rent-controlled housing.
- Deliver deeply affordable homes aligned with real need.
- Develop a financing plan for affordable housing.
- Require workforce housing for essential workers.
- Tie growth to infrastructure investments.
- Protect small businesses with enforceable safeguards.
- Guarantee unit sizes that serve families.
- Create an Affordable Housing Special Use District to reserve public land for affordable homes.
- Protect historic landmarks and historic districts.

Conclusion

The dissenting Commissioners underscored that while San Francisco urgently needs more housing, this “is not an effective or thoughtful plan that balances protection and preservation with production.” Further, the Mayor’s plan “intentionally overrides key commitments not to further harm Priority Equity Geographies — communities that have already absorbed growth and borne the brunt of displacement.”

“San Francisco needs more housing, but it must be the right kind of housing. As written, **the Mayor’s plan fails to deliver affordability or stability**. We urge the Board of Supervisors to adopt the amendments being advanced by Supervisor Connie Chan.”

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