

September 30, 2025

Chair Harrington and Task Force Members,

We ask that the Task Force retain as independent bodies the SoMa Community Stabilization Fund Community Advisory Committee and the South of Market Community Planning Advisory Committee. Both of these bodies serve extremely important community and public functions and must be retained independently (not eliminated or combined). We also have concerns regarding proposed changes to the Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission.

The SoMa Community Stabilization Fund Community Advisory Committee

The SoMa Community Stabilization Fund Community Advisory Committee (SOMA CAC) is unique in its ability to truly serve the SOMA community and provides community based guidance on anti-displacement and stabilization strategies.

The information in the Commission Streamlining Task Force memo (9/19/25) regarding vacancies for the SOMA CAC is incorrect. The memo states that there are 2 vacant seats (out of 7). However, from information provided by the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, there is currently only 1 vacancy, and there are two applicants awaiting appointment that have not been processed. So effectively, if the pending applicants are moved forward, there would be zero vacancies on the SOMA CAC.

The memo also contains incorrect information regarding future funding allocations. The memo states that “allocations are expected to be limited, with one final round anticipated unless new revenues are identified.” The memo fails to identify the future funding allocations that are expected from the Central SOMA Plan “Central SoMa Community Facilities District special tax” (CFD). As outlined in Planning Code Section 418.7, a portion of the CFD funds are meant to be deposited into the Stabilization Fund to be used “to address the impacts of destabilization on residents and businesses in SOMA.” This is further elaborated on in the Admin Code Section XXVII where it states the SOMA CAC shall advise the City on the “Prioritization of funding for social services related to cultural preservation that are funded by proceeds of the Central SoMa Community Facilities District special tax.” The CFD special tax applies to both residential and commercial development, and a portion of these funds were specifically earmarked to go to the Stabilization Fund to support community stabilization efforts. Removing or combining the SOMA CAC would undermine the City’s own policies regarding future funding allocations.

The SOMA CAC should not be combined with the South of Market Community Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC). As noted in the memo, the SOMA CAC and the CPAC serve distinct purposes, with the SOMA CAC overseeing funds specifically for preventing displacement, preserving cultural assets, supporting affordable housing, and supporting workforce stability. There additionally should be no sunset date for the body, as funds will continue to come in and other future funding sources can be allocated.

South of Market Community Planning Advisory Committee

The South of Market Community Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) plays a very important role in providing input, guidance, and advice related to the implementation of the area plans in SOMA including the Central SOMA Plan. The CAC also critically provides monitoring of plan implementation, and serves as a source of public information and transparency.

The information in the Commission Streamlining Task Force memo regarding vacancies for the CPAC is incomplete. There is 1 applicant awaiting appointment for the CPAC, meaning there are 8 members out of 11 willing to serve on the body, which is a significant number of dedicated individuals for this important body.

The CPAC should NOT be combined with the SoMa Community Stabilization Fund Community Advisory Committee. Again, the memo notes how these two bodies serve distinct purposes, with the CPAC focusing on long-term land use and development issues. The CPAC was created to provide guidance on the implementation of enormous plans such as the Central SOMA Plan, in order to have a continued public process surrounding the carrying out of the plans. Removing or combining this body would undermine years of community process that created this oversight body as part of an agreement between the community and the City.

The Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission

The Planning Commission should remain independent and should not be combined with the Historic Preservation Commission. Appointment of seats should remain as is, there should not be mayoral authority to appoint all seats. There should not be “at will” removal of commissioners, and any removal should be “for cause.” The practice of “at will” removal directly politicizes all commission appointments. Additionally, term limits should not be instituted in order to allow continued institutional knowledge to remain on the Planning Commission which oversees an extremely complex planning code and complex city policies.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) should not be combined with the Planning Commission. The HPC serves a specific function that is independent of the Planning Commission, and it would greatly undermine the aims and goals of the HPC to combine it with another commission. Similarly, any removal of commissioners for the HPC should be “for cause” and not “at will.”

Thank you,

Ajai Duncan
Community Advocate, TODCO