Policy Requiring Secure Bicycle Parking in Rehabilitation and Adaptive Re-Use Projects Funded by the Mayor's Office of Housing and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency

Background

Since the 1950s, the City of San Francisco and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency have financed the development of thousands of units of privately owned affordable housing for low-income people in hundreds of projects across the city. These projects vary in size and age. Some were existing buildings that were acquired and rehabilitated, while others were constructed new. A large majority of them were developed before the San Francisco Planning Code required bicycle parking to be included in newly constructed residential buildings.¹

Some buildings that were constructed prior to the code change may nonetheless have bicycle parking because the developer elected to include it as a way to garner more points on competitive financing applications or because they support bicycle transportation in general and a lender was willing to finance such an amenity. In some cases, developers, at the request of tenants and/or staff, may have chosen to install bike parking after project development, using excess project income, reserves or a grant or additional loan. However, affordable housing developments, especially those that do not have rental or operating subsidies, often operate at a narrow margin and must conserve cash flow and reserves for unanticipated operating expenses and long-term, scheduled capital replacements and improvements. Therefore, it is likely that most projects constructed prior to 2005 do not have bicycle parking.

With the high cost of owning a private vehicle and recent increases in the cost of public transit, biking is one of the most affordable forms of transportation in the city. However, a significant disincentive to owning a bicycle and using it for transportation is often a lack of secure bicycle storage, especially long-term parking at home. The installation of bicycle parking in affordable housing would encourage bicycle transportation among the residents and thus promote economic self-sufficiency by helping them to reduce their transportation costs. Residents of affordable housing who nonetheless own bikes often store them in cramped units or in common areas, where they may damage interior finishes or impede the path of travel and egress. Providing bicycle parking in their buildings would increase their quality of life and the overall safety of the residents.

Policy

The City's <u>Transit First Policy</u> calls on all officers, boards, commissions and departments to, among other things, promote bicycling by "encouraging safe streets for riding, convenient access to transit, bicycle lanes and secure bicycle parking." In accordance with this policy, the Mayor's Office of Housing and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency seek to promote the creation of secure bicycle parking in new and existing affordable rental housing developments that will be or have been financed by either agency. This goal is achieved in new construction projects through the San Francisco Planning Code, which requires bicycle parking in newly constructed residential buildings. For affordable housing projects that are being developed through the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing residential buildings or through the adaptive reuse of nonresidential buildings, MOH and SFRA require the inclusion of bicycle parking in the design of such projects as a condition of our financing. In addition, we require bicycle parking to be

¹ The code was amended in 2005 and 2006 to require that new buildings with at least 4 and up to 50 units include bicycle parking at a ratio of one parking space for every 2 units. Buildings with more than 50 units are required to have 25 spaces plus one space for every 4 dwelling units above 50.

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included in the plans to rehabilitate existing affordable housing projects where no such parking currently exists.

Secure bicycle parking facilities must be included in rehabilitation or adaptive reuse projects of 4 units or more, to be financed by MOH or SFRA, to the maximum extent feasible within the existing building envelope. As much as possible, such facilities shall meet the definition of "Class 1 Bicycle Parking Space" in Section 155.1 of the Planning Code and must conform to the space requirements at 155.1(d)(1-4, 7-9). This policy applies to projects with estimated construction costs of \$50,000 per unit or greater. Applicants for MOH or SFRA financing must describe how the requirement will be met and must include the facilities in the schematic designs of their projects. If meeting the requirement is infeasible or incompatible with the goals of the development program of a proposed project, the applicant must justify to the satisfaction of MOH or SFRA the exclusion of bicycle parking from the project plans.