Commission on
Community Investment and Infrastructure

Variation to Rooftop Mechanical Screening Development Control for Transbay Block 2W

Transbay Redevelopment Project Area

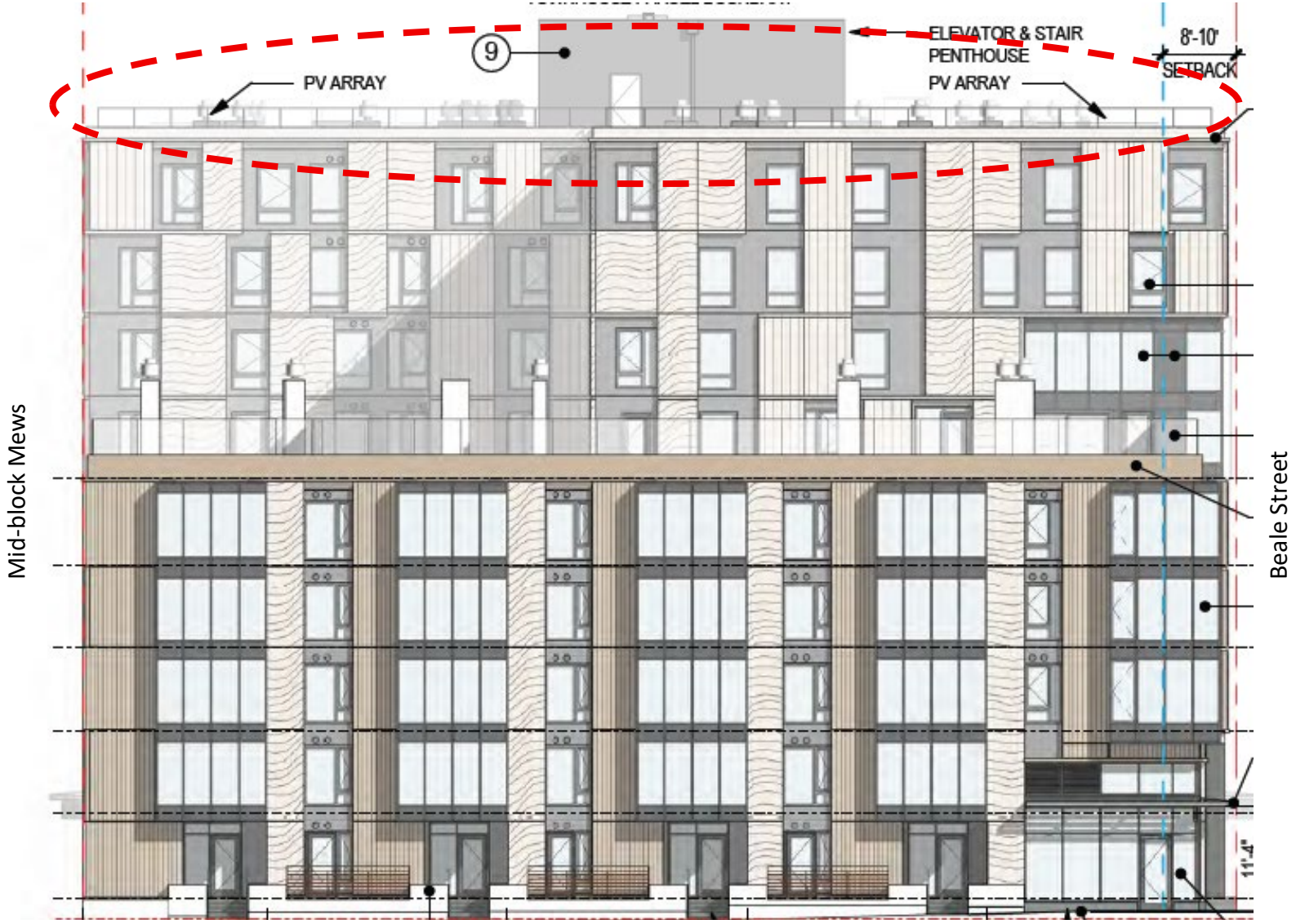
July 21, 2026

OCII

Requested Commission Action

Approving a Variation for the Transbay Block 2 West project of the Rooftop Mechanical Screening Development Control required by the Transbay Development Controls and Design Guidelines; Transbay Redevelopment Project Area

Commission Approved Schematic Design (SD)



East Clementina Street Elevation (from future Transbay Block 3, Park) showing rooftop mechanical equipment.

DCDG Standard & SD Conditions of Approval

Development Controls and Design Guidelines, Control on Pg. 44

Podium and Mid-Rise Buildings

Development Controls

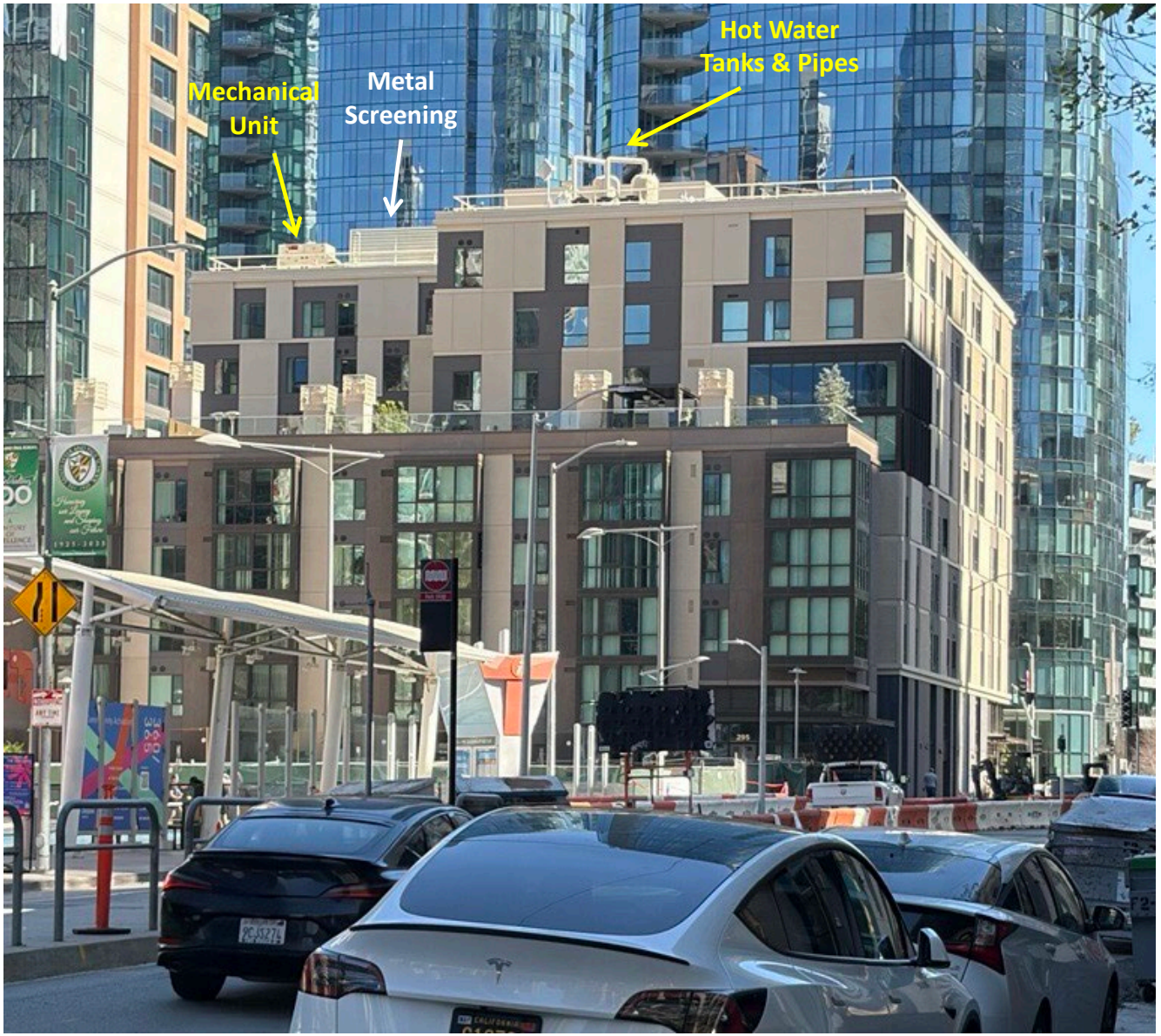
5. Mechanical equipment located on top of buildings must be screened from public view and from neighboring buildings with enclosures, parapets, setbacks, landscaping, or other means. Any enclosure or screening used must be designed as a logical extension of the building, using similar materials and detailing as the rest of the building's surfaces and, further, comply with Section 141 of the Planning Code.

Approved Schematic Design Conditions of Approval

#14 Roofscape

b. Further develop any rooftop mechanical equipment screening. Rooftop mechanical equipment, with the exception of solar PV infrastructure, shall be screened from view from the public realm. Mechanical screens shall form part of the building top composition and consist of materials consistent with the overall building color and material palette.

View from Beale Street with two visible equipment



Process for Granting DCDG Variation

Variation Requirements:

Granting a variation from design standards, development controls or the Planning Code requires the Developer to justify:

Practical difficulties for development
Creating undue hardship for property, and
Unreasonable limitation beyond intent of the Redevelopment Plan

Requirements in Written Application for Variation:

Chinatown Community Development Center submitted an Application on May 22, 2026.

1. Grounds of Application:

- Narrative of how the deviation from the DCDG Control occurred. Approved screens were included in construction contract.
- After construction start and during Mechanical-Electrical-Plumbing design-build and modeling coordination, the orientation and design of water tanks and piping was finalized. Developer was not aware that the final design would be visually unacceptable.

2. Pertinent Facts:

- Overall assessment of impacts to project costs (over $300,000) and schedule delay, if the screening were to be enforced.
- Require substantial redesign, penetration to existing roof slab, waterproofing and structural rework and remobilization of multiple subcontractors.

Staff Analysis and Findings

OCII has reviewed the Application for Variation, supporting materials and has the below findings:

- Practical Difficulty/Undue Hardship:

  Enforcing requirement will necessitate substantial redesign, construction rework, delay and multiple subcontractor re-mobilizations.

- Unique Physical Constraints/Extraordinary Circumstances:

  Roof area demonstrates regulatory clearance constraints for building maintenance, pathways and green roof coverages.

- No Material Detriment to Public Welfare or Neighboring Properties or Improvements in the Vicinity:

  Water tanks and pipes are set further back from the railing to draw minimal attention. Focus remains on the design of the low-rise massing facing the public realm. Regular box-shape of mechanical unit does not detract from overall façade. Both equipment are shielded from adjacent Lumina Development.

Transbay Citizens Advisory Committee

OCII staff presented the Variation to the Transbay Citizens Advisory Committee at its regular meeting on July 9th, 2026. The Committee members asked questions to understand the background of the Variation request and subsequently expressed no objections to the staff advancing it to the Commission.

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Questions / Comments