INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Commissioners

FROM: Fred Blackwell, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Response to Commissioners’ comments on the proposed San Francisco Police Department substation; South of Market Redevelopment Project Area

PURPOSE

At the April 6, 2010, Commission meeting, during the workshop on the Agency’s Fiscal Year 2010-11 budget, Commissioner Breed expressed concerns about the proposed San Francisco Police Department (“SFPD”) substation, to be located at 72 Sixth Street in the South of Market Redevelopment Project Area (“Project Area”). Commissioner Breed asked for assurances that the public area in front of the police substation would be adequately monitored to prevent criminal activities or other quality of life issues from becoming a problem. The purpose of this memorandum is to respond to those concerns and provide additional background information on the proposed substation.

BACKGROUND

Goal C8 of the Redevelopment Plan for the Project Area is: “Work with police and the criminal justice system to reduce area crime, including the installation of a satellite police office on Sixth Street.” For many years, crime and quality of life issues have been a major problem on Sixth Street. The situation has improved since 2003 as a result of the Agency’s revitalization program, which has resulted in the opening of more than 20 new businesses and has funded sidewalk cleaning, graffiti removal and two community guides who provide social service outreach along the corridor. However, crime is still a major concern of the South of Market Project Area Committee (“PAC”) and the community.

Agency staff has worked cooperatively with SFPD for years on issues in the Project Area. Recently, SFPD staff signaled their willingness to open a substation on Sixth Street. Consistent with our approach to other Sixth Street revitalization projects, Agency staff is proposing to fund the cost of the façade and tenant improvements for the new substation, including design costs. With the Agency’s help, SFPD has identified a location for the substation and has signed a letter of intent to lease the space, for which the City will pay full market rent.

Agency staff has had several meetings with SFPD officers and staff from the City’s Real Estate Division (“RED”). SFPD and RED share the Agency’s goals of improving the quality of life on Sixth Street for residents, businesses and visitors and are excited about the possibility of opening the new substation on Sixth Street. In support of these goals, SFPD has agreed to Agency staff’s design requirements for the space, which are described below, and SFPD has committed to vigorously monitor the public area in front of the new police substation to prevent any unwanted activities.
SUBSTATION DESIGN

Agency and SFPD staff have been working with Asian Neighborhood Design (“AND”), which is under contract with the Agency to provide architectural services to current and prospective tenants and owners in the Project Area as part of the Sixth Street Economic Revitalization Program. The site of the proposed new SFPD substation at 72 Sixth Street is approximately 1,900 square feet. It is intended to provide locker rooms and meeting space for approximately 40 police officers, including a lieutenant, and will accommodate a small number of administrative staff. AND has developed a preliminary concept design, which is attached to this memorandum.

From the beginning of the process, SFPD has agreed to meet Agency staff’s design requirements for the space. These requirements include having transparent glass along the façade, a public lobby area, and a reception desk to be staffed by SFPD personnel. Creating transparency between the interior of the station and the sidewalk is important to ensuring that the public area in front of the substation is adequately monitored. Including a public lobby and reception desk will also help to create a pedestrian-friendly environment in and around the station that will discourage unwanted activity in the public area in front of the substation.

The designs are still preliminary, but the final design will include all of the elements described above and will be reviewed by the Commission, as well as the PAC, before it is completed. At least one PAC member has raised similar concerns to those expressed by Commissioner Breed. SFPD staff is aware of these concerns and, in addition to agreeing to the design requirements described above, has committed to vigorously monitor the public area in front of the new substation when it opens.

NEXT STEPS

The City has signed a letter of intent to lease the space at 72 Sixth Street and will pay full market rent. The space has been vacant for several years. The City’s RED is currently working on a lease with the owner of 72 Sixth Street. If the budget for the SFPD substation is approved by the Commission and the Board of Supervisors, Agency staff will work with SFPD staff and AND to complete the designs for the substation and prepare a request for bids for a contractor to build out the façade and tenant improvements. AND will subcontract with all required subconsultants, including electrical and mechanical engineers, as well as a security consultant acceptable to SFPD. Agency staff will present the final design and request the Commission’s authorization for a construction contract for the façade and tenant improvement work in late 2010. Agency staff estimates that the new substation will open in 2011.

(Originated by Michael J. Grisso, Senior Project Manager)

Fred Blackwell
Executive Director

Attachment 1: Concept Design for SFPD Sixth Street Substation