

# San Francisco Chronicle

*Proposed SoMa tower could be tallest building on West Coast*

By John King

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If you've ever wanted to look down on the Transamerica Pyramid, stick around San Francisco for a few years and you might get your chance: City planners say it's time to make room for a new tower of at least 1,000 feet that could be the West Coast's tallest building.

The proposal was presented this morning to the Transbay Joint Powers Authority, a city agency that seeks to build a new transit terminal south of Market Street. Planners want to raise heights near the terminal site to allow two towers as tall as the 853-foot Transamerica Pyramid -- and a third that would rise at least another 150 feet.

The high-rises would also generate money for the transit terminal, with revenue from land sales and property taxes being steered to the transit terminal.

City planners say that with new residential towers being built between Mission Street and the Bay Bridge, there's a new spot for a few extra-tall towers to finish the picture and create a distinctive peak on the skyline.

"We're looking at a trio of towers around the Transbay center that would mark a new center of downtown," said David Alumbaugh, a senior urban planner at the San Francisco Planning Department.

Officials stressed that today's presentation is only a starting point for discussion. A formal planning study and a full environmental impact report would be needed before any zoning changes could occur.

"We want to start the discussion of changing the rules," city Planning Director Dean Macris told the Transbay board. "We want to stretch and raise the imagination of the public."

At present, the tallest building on the West Coast is the U.S. Bank Tower in Los Angeles, at 1,018 feet.