

# SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS TIMES

## Will Twitter's San Francisco headquarters fly off to Texas with Elon Musk?



*Twitter's headquarters on Market Street could see big changes if Elon Musk takes over the company.*  
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By Mark Calvey – Senior Reporter, San Francisco Business Times - Apr 14, 2022

If Elon Musk succeeds in his pursuit of Twitter, one of the first casualties could be the social media company's San Francisco headquarters.

Musk, who has just offered to buy Twitter (NYSE: TWTR) for \$54.20 per share, has already moved himself, his foundation and Tesla's headquarters to Austin. So why not take Twitter's HQ to Texas, too?

“It would actually be more surprising if he bought Twitter and kept the headquarters in California,” said site selection consultant John Boyd, principal of The Boyd Co. “Austin would not be a difficult sell.”

The Texas capital could take advantage of efficiencies with Musk’s other companies there. Plus, the availability of tech talent and no personal income tax in Texas are other draws for Austin.

“Moving Twitter’s headquarters out of San Francisco would be consistent with transforming Twitter,” Boyd said. “Texas is consistent with the idea of being less woke.”

“Musk thinks a lot about ‘location branding,’” Boyd said. “He’s carried out some of the most high-profile corporate site selection searches in modern history.”

Twitter established its San Francisco headquarters at 1355 Market St. in 2012 with much fanfare. The city’s then-Mayor Ed Lee granted the tech company and others a tax break to spur economic development in the city’s Mid-Market area.

In January, Twitter said it had moved into additional space that was previously occupied by Thumbtack, which laid off 250 employees during the pandemic. Twitter also renewed its existing lease in the building partly owned by Shorenstein Properties, taking an additional 80,000 square feet.

Twitter also signed a lease for 66,000 square feet in Oakland, primarily to serve East Bay employees. It was one of our Real Estate Deals of the Year for 2021.

Twitter ranks as the eighth-largest tech employer in San Francisco, with an estimated 2,000 workers in the city out of a total workforce of 6,600, according to San Francisco Business Times research.

Musk is eager to address perceptions that Twitter is an echo chamber for the political left and is in favor of operating the company as more of a town square where divergent perspectives can be heard. A headquarters move could help Musk realize that vision. He might embrace the spirit of an argument former Investor’s Business Daily publisher William O’Neil once made for New York’s major stock brokerages to move their headquarters to California.

“Half the staff would quit and the smart ones would make the move,” O’Neil once told the staff of the Los Angeles-based newspaper.

Along those lines, another site selection consultant thinks Musk would have employees volunteering to move with the headquarters out of California.

“I’m sure there are people at Twitter who are sick and tired of walking out the front door of the office and having to sidestep human feces,” said Joseph Vranich, president of Spectrum Location

Solutions. Still, Musk may want some employees to head for the exit as he tries to reshape Twitter in line with his vision.

“A headquarters relocation is a beautiful time to clean house,” Vranich said. “In this case, it would be a beautiful opportunity for him to get rid of the totalitarian lovers who are on the payroll.”

So who is he calling totalitarian?

“I put communists, socialists and dictators all in the totalitarian camp,” Vranich said. “What do they all have in common? One thing is they hate free speech.”

If Musk does pull Twitter’s HQ out of California, Vranich said he’d advise Musk to not take it to Austin.

“I would recommend him not to move Twitter to Austin, Texas, because that city has become the San Francisco of Texas,” Vranich said, citing Austin’s growing homelessness, feces on the street, lax law enforcement and a city council that cut the budget for the police force. “So Mr. Musk, whatever you select, please avoid Austin for your own good.”