



April 20, 2026

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk  
Honorable Supervisor Dorsey  
Board of Supervisors  
City and County of San Francisco  
City Hall, Room 244  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: **Transmittal of Planning Department Case Number 2026-000957PCA:**  
Updating Requirements for Institutional Master Plans  
Board File No. 260239

**Planning Commission Action:** Adopted a Recommendation for Approval with Anticipated Amendments

Dear Ms. Calvillo and Supervisor Dosey,

On April 16, 2026, the Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance, introduced by Supervisor Dorsey. The proposed Ordinance would amend the Planning Code to exempt Post-Secondary Educational Institutions located outside of a residential district from the requirements for Institutional Master Plans; require Post-Secondary Educational Institutions located within a residential district to file Institutional Master Plans with a development application; require updates to such plans only when the institution will increase by 10,000 square feet or by 25% of its total square footage (whichever is less); exclude student housing from the definition of Post-Secondary Educational Institution; and remove the three-month hold on hearing Conditional Use applications after an Institutional Master Plan has been accepted. At the hearing the Planning Commission adopted a recommendation for approval with anticipated amendments.

The anticipated amendments were as follows:

1. Amend the definition of “School” with the proposed PSEI amendments related to WASC-equivalent accreditation, including institutions that are in the process of applying for such accreditation. This last aspect regarding those institutions applying for accreditation will also be incorporated into the definition of PSEI for consistency.
2. Update the Art & Design Educational Special Use District (Section 249.67) to reflect this proposed Ordinance.

The proposed amendments are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2) and 15378 because they do not result in a physical change in the environment.

Supervisor, please advise the City Attorney at your earliest convenience if you wish to incorporate the changes recommended by the Commission.

Please find attached documents relating to the actions of the Commission. If you have any questions or require further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Veronica Flores  
*Acting Manager of Legislative Affairs*

cc: Kathy Shin, Deputy City Attorney  
Madison Tam, Aide to Supervisor Dorsey  
John Carroll, Office of the Clerk of the Board

**ATTACHMENTS :**

Planning Commission Resolution  
Planning Department Executive Summary



# PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 21910

**HEARING DATE: April 16, 2026**

*Project Name:* Updating Requirements for Institutional Master Plans  
*Case Number:* 2026-000957PCA [Board File No. 260239]  
*Initiated by:* Supervisor Dorsey / Introduced March 10, 2026  
*Staff Contact:* Veronica Flores Legislative Affairs  
veronica.flores@sfgov.org, 628-652-7525  
*Reviewed by:* Audrey Merlone, Acting Manager of Legislative Affairs  
audrey.merlone@sfgov.org, 628-652-7534

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL WITH ANTICIPATED AMENDMENTS OF A PROPOSED ORDINANCE THAT WOULD AMEND THE PLANNING CODE TO EXEMPT POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS LOCATED OUTSIDE OF A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT FROM THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLANS; REQUIRE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS LOCATED WITHIN A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT TO FILE INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLANS WITH A DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION; REQUIRE UPDATES TO SUCH PLANS ONLY WHEN THE INSTITUTION WILL INCREASE BY 10,000 SQUARE FEET OR BY 25% OF ITS TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE (WHICHEVER IS LESS); EXCLUDE STUDENT HOUSING FROM THE DEFINITION OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION; AND REMOVE THE THREE-MONTH HOLD ON HEARING CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATIONS AFTER AN INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN HAS BEEN ACCEPTED; AFFIRMING THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT'S DETERMINATION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT; MAKING FINDINGS OF CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN, AND THE EIGHT PRIORITY POLICIES OF PLANNING CODE, SECTION 101.1; AND MAKING FINDINGS OF PUBLIC NECESSITY, CONVENIENCE, AND WELFARE PURSUANT TO PLANNING CODE, SECTION 302.**

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2026 Supervisor Dorsey introduced a proposed Ordinance under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter "Board") File Number 260239, which would amend the Planning Code to exempt Post-Secondary Educational Institutions located outside of a residential district from the requirements for Institutional Master Plans; require Post-Secondary Educational Institutions located within a residential district to file Institutional Master Plans with a development application; require updates to such plans only when the institution will increase by 10,000 square feet or by 25% of its total square footage (whichever is less); exclude student housing from the definition of Post-Secondary Educational Institution; and remove the three-month hold on hearing Conditional Use applications after an Institutional Master Plan has been accepted;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance on April 16, 2026; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Ordinance has been determined to be categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Section 15378 and 15060(c)(2); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of Department staff and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, all pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the Custodian of Records, at 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400, San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has reviewed the proposed Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds from the facts presented that the public necessity, convenience, and general welfare require the proposed amendment; and

MOVED, that the Planning Commission hereby adopts a **recommendation for approval with anticipated amendments** of the proposed ordinance. The anticipated amendments are as follows:

1. Amend the definition of “School” with the proposed PSEI amendments related to WASC-equivalent accreditation, including institutions that are in the process of applying for such accreditation. This last aspect regarding those institutions applying for accreditation will also be incorporated into the definition of PSEI for consistency.
2. Update the Art & Design Educational Special Use District (Section 249.67) to reflect this proposed Ordinance.

## Findings

Having reviewed the materials identified in the preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

The proposed Ordinance will update the Institutional Master Plan Program requirements to better support Post-Secondary Educational Institutions. The proposed Ordinance would also facilitate underutilized sites in the greater Downtown

## General Plan Compliance

The proposed Ordinance and the anticipated amendments are consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

### COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ELEMENT

#### OBJECTIVE 8

ASSURE THAT PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES ARE DISTRIBUTED AND LOCATED IN A MANNER THAT WILL ENHANCE THEIR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE USE.

## OBJECTIVE 9

ASSURE THAT INSTITUTIONAL USES ARE LOCATED IN A MANNER THAT WILL ENHANCE THEIR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE USE.

*The proposed Ordinance advances the Community Facilities Element of the General Plan, which promotes equitable access to essential public services. Specifically, while Objective 8 is directed toward the distribution and effective use of public K–12 school facilities, the Ordinance supports the broader intent of this objective by improving how post-secondary facilities can locate and operate within the city. By reducing unnecessary Institutional Master Plan requirements for Post-Secondary Educational Institutions outside of Residential Districts, the Ordinance allows these institutions to make more efficient use of existing buildings and better align their facilities with areas that can support them. This improves overall distribution and supports the effective functioning of educational uses at the citywide scale.*

*Additionally, the Ordinance supports Objective 9, which ensures that institutional uses are located in ways that maximize efficiency and effectiveness. By reviewing comprehensive plans for relevant projects, the City can strategically assess the distribution, accessibility, and long-term viability of these resources, ensuring they meet community needs and operate sustainably.*

## Planning Code Section 101 Findings

The proposed amendments to the Planning Code are consistent with the eight Priority Policies set forth in Section 101.1(b) of the Planning Code in that:

1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced;

*The proposed Ordinance would not have a negative effect on neighborhood serving retail uses and will not have a negative effect on opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of neighborhood-serving retail.*

2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods;

*The proposed Ordinance would not have a negative effect on housing or neighborhood character.*

3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced;

*The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on the City's supply of affordable housing.*

4. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking;

*The proposed Ordinance would not result in commuter traffic impeding MUNI transit service or overburdening the streets or neighborhood parking.*

5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced;

*The proposed Ordinance would not cause displacement of the industrial or service sectors due to office development, and future opportunities for resident employment or ownership in these sectors would not be impaired.*

6. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake;

*The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on City's preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.*

7. That the landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;

*The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on the City's Landmarks and historic buildings.*

8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development;

*The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on the City's parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas.*

### Planning Code Section 302 Findings.

The Planning Commission finds from the facts presented that the public necessity, convenience and general welfare require the proposed amendments to the Planning Code as set forth in Section 302.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission hereby ADOPTS A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL WITH ANTICIPATED AMENDMENTS of the proposed Ordinance as described in this Resolution.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on April 16, 2026.



Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

Jonas P Ionin

Digitally signed by Jonas P Ionin  
Date: 2026.04.17 11:28:10 -07'00'

AYES: McGarry, So, Braun, Campbell  
NOES: Williams, Imperial, Moore  
ABSENT: None  
ADOPTED: April 16, 2026



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PLANNING CODE TEXT & AMENDMENT

**HEARING DATE: April 16, 2026**

**90-Day Deadline:** June 23, 2026

*Project Name:* Updating Requirements for Institutional Master Plans  
*Case Number:* 2026-000957PCA [Board File No. 260239]  
*Initiated by:* Supervisor Dorsey / Introduced March 10, 2026  
*Staff Contact:* Veronica Flores, Legislative Affairs  
veronica.flores@sfgov.org, 628-652-7525  
*Reviewed by:* Audrey Merlone, Legislative Affairs  
audrey.merlone@sfgov.org, 628-652-7534  
*Environmental Review:* Not a Project Under CEQA

**RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a Recommendation for Approval with Anticipated Amendments**

### Planning Code Amendment

The proposed Ordinance would amend the Planning Code to exempt Post-Secondary Educational Institutions located outside of a residential district from the requirements for Institutional Master Plans; require Post-Secondary Educational Institutions located within a residential district to file Institutional Master Plans with a development application; require updates to such plans only when the institution will increase by 10,000 square feet or by 25% of its total square footage (whichever is less); exclude student housing from the definition of Post-Secondary Educational Institution; and remove the three-month hold on hearing Conditional Use applications after an Institutional Master Plan has been accepted.

The Way It Is Now	The Way It Would Be
The definition of Post-Secondary Educational Institutions (PSEIs) requires that these institutions be certified by the Western Association of Schools	This definition of PSEIs would be expanded to include a WASC equivalent certification body as determined by the Planning Director. Student

<p>and Colleges (WASC). Additionally, the definition captures student housing.</p>	<p>housing would be exempt from the definition of Post-Secondary Educational Institution.</p>
<p><b>What is Required:</b></p>	
<p>Hospitals and PSEIs must maintain a current Institutional Master Plan (IMP) on file with the Department. A new IMP must be submitted every 10 years, or sooner if the Zoning Administrator determines that significant changes to the existing IMP require an update. Institutions that occupy less than 50,000 square feet, or less than 100,000 square feet in the C-3 district, may submit an Abbreviated IMP.</p>	<p>Hospitals would only need to file a new IMP if there are significant developments as described in Section 304.5.</p> <p>PSEIs, including any developments/expansions of a PSEI located outside of a Residential District per Section 201 would be exempt from the IMP requirement.</p>
<p><b>How IMPs are Submitted:</b></p>	
<p>Full IMPs, or revisions to IMPs when required, are presented to the Planning Commission for acceptance. The Commission may not approve any CUs or other entitlements until three months after the IMP has been accepted.</p>	<p>The three-month hold for CU applications would be eliminated. Hospitals would continue to submit IMP applications to be presented at Planning Commission for acceptance.</p> <p>PSEIs proposed outside of Residential Districts would be exempt from the IMP requirements. PSEIs proposed within Residential Districts would be required to submit an IMP, or Update as appropriate, as part of any application for an entitlement that requires Department or Commission approval.</p>
<p><b>When Updates are Required:</b></p>	
<p>All institutions must submit updates to the IMP every two years, or sooner in cases of significant development changes as described in Section 304.5.</p>	<p>Hospitals would continue to submit IMP Updates every two years. Additionally, upon review of any significant development changes, the Zoning Administrator may determine if a new IMP or an Update would be required.</p> <p>If a PSEI already has an accepted IMP on file with the Department, the institution shall submit an Update with any subsequent application for an entitlement that requires Department or Planning Commission approval if the application proposes to increase the institution’s presence in a Residential District by 10,000 square feet or by 25% of the institution’s total square footage (whichever is less).</p>

## Anticipated Amendments

Supervisor Dorsey also intends to align the definition of ‘School’ with the proposed PSEI amendments related to WASC-equivalent accreditation, including institutions that are in the process of applying for such accreditation. In addition, the Supervisor plans to include a technical modification to update the Art & Design Educational Special Use District (Section 249.67) so that it is consistent with this proposed Ordinance.

## Background

The Institutional Master Plan (IMP) Program was established in response to significant institutional expansion occurring in San Francisco during the 1960s and 1970s. At that time, many Hospitals and other large institutions were located in primarily residential areas, and neighbors expressed concerns about the scale of growth, associated impacts, and the lack of meaningful outreach from institutions. The IMP Program was created to provide a more transparent and predictable process for long-range institutional planning and community engagement.

The Program was last updated in 2007, and the proposed Ordinance represents an additional update to ensure the IMP framework remains practical, focused, and aligned with current land-use conditions. Supervisor Dorsey introduced the proposed Ordinance to support broader efforts around downtown revitalization and to provide clearer, more appropriate requirements for Post-Secondary Educational Institutions.

## Issues and Considerations

### Institutional Master Plan Background

Planning Code Section 304.5 requires all Post-Secondary Educational Institutions and Hospitals in San Francisco to maintain an Institutional Master Plan (IMP) on file with the Planning Department. The IMP is a long-range planning document that describes the institution’s existing facilities and anticipated development, including:

- Physical footprint and infrastructure locations, including traffic circulation and parking in and around the institution
- Employment characteristics and service population
- Services provided
- Properties owned or leased citywide
- Parking availability and traffic circulation
- Development plans for the next 10 years and their relationship to the General Plan and any neighborhood plans

The purpose of the IMP is to provide this information to the Planning Commission and the public, enabling early and meaningful involvement before an institution invests in detailed planning or seeks entitlements. The Commission holds a public hearing on the IMP, allowing institutions to respond to comments and adjust their plans. While the IMP itself does not grant development approvals, no building permit or Conditional

Use authorization may be approved for an institution that does not have a current IMP on file. IMPs are posted on the Department's website for public review.

Institutions must keep their IMP current. Following Commission acceptance, updates are required every two years or whenever plans significantly diverge from the approved IMP. A new Full IMP is typically required every ten years. Institutions may submit either a full IMP or an abbreviated IMP, depending on size:

- Abbreviated IMP: Institutions occupying less than 50,000 sq ft outside C-3 or less than 100,000 sq ft within C-3
- Full IMP: All others

Full IMPs are reviewed at a public hearing, while abbreviated IMPs are reported to the Commission, which may choose to hold a hearing. The proposed Ordinance would eliminate the three-month hold between an IMP's acceptance and the processing of any associated CU or entitlement applications. The proposed Ordinance would exempt also Post-Secondary Educational Institutions from the IMP requirements if they are located outside of R-districts.

#### Proposition Q

Proposition Q, approved by voters in November 1988, requires private hospitals to provide public notice before closing a facility, reducing or eliminating services, or leasing, selling, or transferring management of hospital operations. Upon receiving such notice, Proposition Q requires the Health Commission to hold a public hearing where the hospital may present information regarding its proposed action and respond to public comments. After the hearing, the Commission must issue findings on whether the proposal would have a detrimental impact on health-care services in San Francisco. Proposition Q does not give the Health Commission authority to approve or deny the proposed action.

#### Institutional Master Plan Program Amendments

In 2007, the Board of Supervisors adopted [Ordinance No. 279-07](#)<sup>1</sup>, which made several clarifications and updates to Planning Code Section 304.5. These changes included requiring certain institutions to submit IMP materials to the Department of Public Health for review of long-term health care needs, clarifying the distinctions and submission requirements for Full and Abbreviated IMPs, and shifting the threshold for a Full IMP from land area to building area. The update also authorized the Zoning Administrator to require a new, Full IMP prior to the standard 10-year cycle if an institution's plans changed substantially, shortened the validity period for Planning Commission-approved IMPs, and introduced digital submission requirements to improve public access.

In 2015, Planning Code Section 304.5 was further updated through [Ordinance No. 22-15](#)<sup>2</sup> as part of the broader Article 2 reorganization. These changes modernized terminology by replacing the term "medical institution" with "Hospital" and included additional cleanup amendments adopted under [Ordinance No. 188-15](#)<sup>3</sup>, which refined definitions and clarified application procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sfgov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=2592782&GUID=2AC49608-61EB-4113-893D-35623F063DCC>

<sup>2</sup> Ordinance No. 279-07: [sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/ordinances15/o0022-15.pdf](https://sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/ordinances15/o0022-15.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Ordinance No. 22-15: [sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/ordinances15/o0188-15.pdf](https://sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/ordinances15/o0188-15.pdf)

### Institutional Master Plan Updates

In between the 10-year Full or Abbreviated IMPs, IMP updates are required every two years or if there are significant revisions from the last IMP. This occurs through an institution submitting its proposed revisions to the Department, after which the Zoning Administrator determines whether the changes are substantially different from the prior IMP on file. If there are no updates, the institution is required to submit a letter stating as such.

The proposed Ordinance would modify the two-year update requirement so that PSEIs within a Residential District would only need to submit an update if they expand their presence within a Residential District by 10,000 square feet or by 25% of the institution's total square footage, whichever is less. This creates a more objective threshold when requiring PSEIs to submit comprehensive updates.

### Current Status

All current IMPs are available on the Department's website: [Institutional Master Plans | SF Planning](#)<sup>4</sup>. To date, 42 IMPs have been filed with Department (see Exhibit C for full list). In addition, six institutions are exempt because they are either State or Federal entities. Of these six, one institution (UC Law San Francisco, formerly UC Hastings) has voluntarily filed an IMP.

## **Post-Secondary Educational Institutions Versus Hospitals**

IMPs are required for both Hospitals and Post-Secondary Educational Institutions.

### Post-Secondary Educational Institutions

Post-secondary institutions are typically more integrated into neighborhoods and often contribute to street-level activity through student housing, cultural programming, and retail synergy. The proposed Ordinance would exempt Post-Secondary Educational Institutions outside of Residential (R) districts from the IMP requirement, recognizing that the greater Downtown area is more developed and does not experience the same localized impacts as smaller neighborhoods.

A Post-Secondary Educational Institution is defined as:

*An Institutional Education Use, public or private, that is certified by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), provides educational services such as a college or university, and has met the applicable provisions of Section 304.5 of this Code concerning institutional master plans. Such institution may include employee or student dormitories and other housing operated by and affiliated with the institution. Such institution shall not have industrial arts as its primary course of study.*

The proposed Ordinance would expand the definition to include institutions with WASC-equivalent certification, rather than limiting to WASC and the Western region. It would also remove Student Housing from this definition to better support the development of student-serving residential uses. This change

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<sup>4</sup> Ordinance No. 188-15: <https://sfplanning.org/resource/institutional-master-plans>

would make it easier to build or expand Student Housing without triggering the IMP requirements or associated review processes.

### Hospitals

Hospitals typically have more intense operational impacts than Post-Secondary Educational Institutions. They operate continuously, generate emergency and urgent-care traffic patterns, and require specialized infrastructure. Ancillary medical uses also tend to have limited public-realm activation compared to a university or college campus. For these reasons, Hospitals would continue to be subject to IMP requirements under the proposed Ordinance. The Planning Department also continues to forward IMP updates submitted by hospitals to the Department of Public Health for review and comment.

### **Reactivating Downtown**

The Controller's Office of Economic Analysis released a report<sup>5</sup> in November of 2024 on the status of the City's economy. Among the key findings was the fact that new business formation (tracked by business registration certificates filed) remained far below pre-pandemic rates, especially in the retail trades and restaurant/bar categories. The report also found that although tourism and office vacancies are slowly improving, they are still below pre-pandemic levels. Many businesses continue to recover from the pandemic amid a period of slow economic growth both locally and nationally.

The proposed Ordinance supports ongoing efforts to stabilize and reactivate Downtown by making it easier for Post-Secondary Educational Institutions to occupy space in the area. By reducing barriers to establishing or expanding these uses, the City can help facilitate the reuse of long-vacant buildings and bring a consistent population of students, faculty, and staff. These institutions contribute to daytime activity, support nearby services, and help diversify the mix of uses in the urban core. Increasing flexibility for educational uses aligns with broader goals to restore regular foot traffic and community-serving activity in Downtown.

### **Impacted Projects**

Vanderbilt University (hereinafter "Vanderbilt") recently announced plans to acquire the former California College of the Arts (CCA) campus in the San Francisco's Design District in the South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood.<sup>6</sup> They chose this campus for its existing student housing and proximity to Mission Bay. Under today's Planning Code, Vanderbilt would be required to submit a Full IMP even if there are no planned changes to the CCA campus. The proposed Ordinance would exempt Vanderbilt from the IMP requirements since the campus is located outside of the Residential Districts and it is not expanding the institution's footprint.

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<sup>5</sup> Status of the San Francisco Economy: [www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/Status%20of%20the%20San%20Francisco%20Economy%20November%202024.pdf](http://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/Status%20of%20the%20San%20Francisco%20Economy%20November%202024.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> KQED, California College of the Arts Will Close in 2027: <https://www.kqed.org/arts/13985359/california-college-of-the-arts-closing-vanderbilt-university>

## General Plan Compliance

The proposed Ordinance advances the Community Facilities Element of the General Plan, which promotes equitable access to essential public services. Specifically, while Objective 8 is directed toward the distribution and effective use of public K–12 school facilities, the Ordinance supports the broader intent of this objective by improving how post-secondary facilities can locate and operate within the city. By reducing unnecessary Institutional Master Plan requirements for Post-Secondary Educational Institutions outside of Residential Districts, the Ordinance allows these institutions to make more efficient use of existing buildings and better align their facilities with areas that can support them. This improves overall distribution and supports the effective functioning of educational uses at the citywide scale.

Additionally, the Ordinance supports Objective 9, which ensures that institutional uses are located in ways that maximize efficiency and effectiveness. By reviewing comprehensive plans for relevant projects, the City can strategically assess the distribution, accessibility, and long-term viability of these resources, ensuring they meet community needs and operate sustainably.

## Racial and Social Equity Analysis

Removing barriers for Post-Secondary Educational Institutions will increase opportunities for colleges and training programs to operate effectively in San Francisco. Streamlining zoning requirements, clarifying approvals, and reducing procedural hurdles allows institutions to move more quickly when identifying sites, adapting existing buildings, or expanding programs. These kinds of adjustments will make it easier for institutions to respond to changing workforce needs or student demand, rather than being slowed down by lengthy or uncertain processes. Making the approval path clearer and more predictable also encourages institutions to consider locations they may have previously overlooked, including neighborhoods that currently have fewer educational resources nearby.

## Implementation

The Department has determined that this Ordinance will impact our current implementation procedures; however, the proposed changes can be implemented without increasing permit costs or review time. The Department would need to update the IMP application materials and informational packets to reflect the revised thresholds and procedures for Post-Secondary Educational Institutions. These updates are expected to be minor, as they primarily involve aligning existing documents with the amended triggers and review process.

The proposed Ordinance is also anticipated to reduce the number of IMP hearings required. This would streamline the review process for Post-Secondary Educational Institutions, resulting in time savings for applicants while also reducing administrative workload for the Department.

## Recommendation

The Department recommends that the Commission **adopt a recommendation for approval with anticipated amendments** of the proposed Ordinance and adopt the attached Draft Resolution to that effect. The anticipated amendments are as follows:

1. Amend the definition of “School” with the proposed PSEI amendments related to WASC-equivalent accreditation, including institutions that are in the process of applying for such accreditation.
2. Update the Art & Design Educational Special Use District (Section 249.67) to reflect this proposed Ordinance.

### **Basis for Recommendation**

The Department recommends approval of the proposed Ordinance because it provides a targeted update to the Institutional Master Plan framework that improves clarity and alignment with current land-use conditions. The amendments retain IMP requirements on Hospitals, which continue to have the most significant operational impacts, while removing unnecessary process for Post-Secondary Educational Institutions located outside of Residential Districts. These changes streamline permitting and support the reuse of underutilized sites including in the greater Downtown area. Overall, the proposed Ordinance strengthens the practicality of the IMP Program. Additionally, the Department supports the following anticipated amendments:

**Anticipated Amendment 1: Amend the definition of “School” with the proposed PSEI amendments related to WASC-equivalent accreditation, including institutions that are in the process of applying for such accreditation.** This provides more flexibility for Schools to include institutions with WASC-equivalent certification, rather than limiting to WASC and the Western region. This would also resolve issues for proposed Schools that are still going through the WASC certification.

**Anticipated Amendment 2: Update the Art & Design Educational Special Use District (SUD) (Section 249.67) to reflect this proposed Ordinance.** Based on this proposed Ordinance, a new PSEI taking over a campus within the Arts & Design Educational SUD would not trigger an IMP requirement. The anticipated amendment would update this SUD to reflect and remain consistent with the proposed Ordinance.

### **Required Commission Action**

The proposed Ordinance is before the Commission so that it may adopt a recommendation of approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications.

### **Environmental Review**

The proposed amendments are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2) and 15378 because they do not result in a physical change in the environment.

### **Public Comment**

As of the date of this report, the Planning Department has not received any public comment regarding the proposed Ordinance.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Exhibit A: Draft Planning Commission Resolution
- Exhibit B: Board of Supervisors File No. 260239
- Exhibit C: List of Institutional Master Plans on file with the Planning Department

*Portions of this report were drafted and/or edited with the assistance of Microsoft Copilot, in accordance with the City and County of San Francisco's policy on the use of generative AI tools.*