

## LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

### [Zoning – Street Frontages]

Ordinance amending the San Francisco Planning Code by amending Sections 145.1, 201, 243, 253, 261.1, and 270.2 to create a comprehensive and consistent set of street frontage controls for most use districts that allow a mix of uses; adopting findings, including environmental findings, Section 302 findings, and findings of consistency with the General Plan and the Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1

### Existing Law

Planning Code Section 145.1 establishes controls that are intended to "preserve, enhance and promote attractive, clearly defined street frontages that are pedestrian-oriented, fine-grained, and which are appropriate and compatible with the buildings and uses in Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Downtown Residential (DTR), and Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed use Districts.

Section 201 sets forth the classes of use districts into which the City is divided. Section 243 establishes the Van Ness Special Use District. Section 253 requires Planning Commission review for proposed buildings and structures in any Residential (R) district, except for Residential Transit-Oriented Neighborhood (RTO) districts. Section 261.1 establishes additional height limits for narrow streets and alleys in RTO, Neighborhood Commercial Transit (NCT) districts, and Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts. Section 270.2 establishes special bulk and open space requirements for mid-block alleys in large lot development in the Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use and DTR districts.

### Amendments to Current Law

This legislation amends Section 145.1 to require parking to be set back from building frontages, require active street fronting uses, require minimum ground-floor floor to ceiling heights, require transparent ground-floor windows and doors, and require that gates, railing, and grillwork be mostly open to view in all C, NC, and RC zoning districts.

Section 201 is amended to distinguish R from RC zoning districts. It also removes the Hayes-Gough NCD from the list of Individual Area Districts because Hayes-Gough has been rezoned to an NCT.

Section 243 is amended so that ground-floor street frontages and parking setbacks in the Van Ness Special Use District to establish a minimum ground-floor floor to ceiling floor height for non-residential uses and to conform to the proposed amendments to Section 145.1. Section

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253 is amended to eliminate the requirement for conditional use for housing over 40 feet in height in RC zoning districts.

Section 261 is amended to apply additional alleyway height controls in all RC and NC zoning districts. Section 270.2 is amended to require mid-block alleyways on certain large-lot developments in Downtown Commercial (C-3) zoning districts, and to allow the non-vehicular portions of such alleyways to meet the open space requirements of Section 138 of the Code in C-3 districts so long as the alleyways meet the requirements of both Sections 138 and 270.2.

### Background Information

Most of San Francisco developed before the widespread use of the automobile, and before the existence of Planning Codes that geographically segregated land uses. San Francisco's first Planning Code was created in the 1940s and the first parking requirements were imposed in 1956. As a result, many San Francisco neighborhoods still have a dense, walkable character, with a mix of primary uses – housing, shops, offices, and light production, distribution and repair (PDR) businesses.

The San Francisco Planning Code includes a number of use districts that allow a mix of uses, and these use districts have changed and multiplied over time. A mix of residential and non-residential uses is permitted in Commercial, Residential-Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, South of Market Mixed Use, Chinatown Mixed Use, Residential Transit-Oriented, Downtown Residential, and Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use districts.

The General Plan, in its Urban Design and Transportation elements, strongly emphasizes the importance of active, human-scaled, and pedestrian-oriented building fronts, and of maintaining neighborhood character. Over the past few decades, street frontage controls have been introduced into a number of zoning districts. These controls are elements of "form-based" codes, which pay greater attention to physical form and character of new buildings, emphasize walkable, mixed-use and compact neighborhoods, and include a number of prescriptive controls such as built-to lines and required building features rather than just proscriptive ones. Form-based codes are in increasing use in the United States.

The San Francisco Planning Code has developed into a hybrid, with strong form-based controls in some districts and virtually none in others. The goal of this legislation is to create a comprehensive and consistent set of street frontage controls for most districts that allow a mix of uses. It will provide more consistency in the Planning Code by extending controls across use districts of a similar type, and will simplify the Code by consolidating and harmonizing varying Code requirements governing certain building features.