

1 [Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code - Permit Prioritization]

2  
3 **Ordinance amending the Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code to create a**  
4 **Permit Prioritization Task Force responsible for developing a recommended Citywide**  
5 **list of prioritized permits and project types and recommending permit prioritization**  
6 **guidelines to the Department of Building Inspection, the Planning Department, and the**  
7 **Department of Public Works, requiring those departments to review and update their**  
8 **permit prioritization guidelines periodically, and requiring the commissions that**  
9 **oversee each department to approve the department’s permit prioritization guidelines;**  
10 **and affirming the Planning Department’s determination under the California**  
11 **Environmental Quality Act.**

12 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.  
13 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.  
14 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.  
15 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.  
16 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.  
17 **Asterisks (\* \* \* \*)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code  
18 subsections or parts of tables.

19 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

20 Section 1. California Environmental Quality Act.

21 The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this  
22 ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources  
23 Code Sections 21000 et seq.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of  
24 Supervisors in File No. 230167 and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board affirms  
25 this determination.

1 Section 2. Findings.

2 (a) Officers and employees of the City must treat all permit applicants in an ethical,  
3 fair, expeditious, and courteous manner. If the Department of Building Inspection, the  
4 Planning Department, and the Department of Public Works determine to prioritize certain  
5 types of permits over others, they should do so in an open and transparent way with the input  
6 of departmental staff, oversight commissions, and the public.

7 (b) Requiring an open and transparent process of determining permit prioritization will  
8 reduce the possibility of favoritism or the appearance of impropriety between City officials and  
9 permit applicants and increase public confidence in the fairness and equity of departmental  
10 policies and procedures.

11 (c) Departmental permit review performance will improve with goal setting, data  
12 analysis, and increased coordination between permit review departments.

13  
14 Section 3. Article III, Chapter 4, of the Campaign and Government Conduct Code is  
15 hereby amended by revising Section 3.400, to read as follows:

16 **SEC. 3.400. PERMIT APPLICATION PROCESSING.**

17 (a) **EQUAL TREATMENT OF PERMIT APPLICANTS.** It shall be the policy  
18 of the Department of Building Inspection, the Planning Department, the Department of Public  
19 Works and the officers and employees of such departments to treat all permit applicants the  
20 same regardless of the relationship of the applicant and/or the applicant's representatives to  
21 any officer or employee of the City and County and regardless of whether the applicant hires a  
22 permit consultant to provide permit consulting services. Intentional preferential treatment of  
23 any permit applicant and/or the applicant's representatives by any officer or employee of the  
24 Department of Building Inspection, the Planning Department, or the Department of Public  
25 Works shall subject the officer or employee to disciplinary action for official misconduct.

1 (b) **APPLICATION PRIORITY.** It shall be the policy of the Department of  
2 Building Inspection, the Planning Department, the Department of Public Works and the  
3 officers and employees of such departments to review, consider, and process all applications,  
4 revisions, corrections and other permit-related material in the order in which that type of  
5 material is received unless there is a written finding of a public policy basis for not doing so,  
6 such as the involvement of public funds in the project for which the permit is sought, or the  
7 response to a delay caused by an earlier procedural error in processing the permit or another  
8 permit for the same project. Absent such a finding, any officer or employee of the Department  
9 of Building Inspection, the Planning Department, or the Department of Public Works who  
10 intentionally fails to review, consider, and process all applications, revisions, corrections, and  
11 other permit-related material in the order in which that type of material is received shall be  
12 subject to disciplinary action for official misconduct. The Department of Building Inspection,  
13 the Planning Department, and the Department of Public Works shall each adopt written  
14 guidelines for determining when there is a public policy basis for processing permit material  
15 out of order and shall periodically review such guidelines as provided in subsection (c) of this  
16 ~~Section 3.400.~~ For purposes of this ~~Section 3.400,~~ and any corresponding written guidelines,  
17 expediting of work consisting primarily of disability access improvements for real property  
18 shall qualify as a public policy basis for processing permit material out of order, on a priority  
19 basis.

20 (c) **PERIODIC REVIEW AND COORDINATION OF PERMIT**

21 **PRIORITIZATION GUIDELINES.** *The Department of Building Inspection, the Planning*  
22 *Department, and the Department of Public Works shall review and update their respective permit*  
23 *prioritization guidelines as provided in this subsection (c).*

24 (1) *Interdepartmental Permit Prioritization Task Force Review of Permit*  
25 *Prioritization Guidelines.*



1 shall consider the Task Force’s Citywide list of prioritized permits and project types and the  
2 Task Force’s recommendations in making modifications to the department’s prioritization  
3 guidelines. Each department shall retain discretion to designate department-specific  
4 prioritized permits.

5 (3) No later than June 30, 2024, the Task Force shall approve the  
6 recommended Citywide list of prioritized permits and project types, make recommendations to  
7 the Department of Building Inspection, the Planning Department, and the Department of Public  
8 Works for updates to their respective prioritization guidelines, and each such department and  
9 oversight commission shall approve any modifications to its prioritization guidelines shall  
10 complete the first review of their existing prioritization guidelines pursuant to this subsection  
11 (c) no later than December 31, 2023.

12 (4) Ongoing Review of Prioritization Guidelines. Following the first review  
13 process required by subsection (c)(3) of this Section 3.400, the Department of Building Inspection, the  
14 Planning Department, and the Department of Public Works shall review their prioritization guidelines  
15 prior to June 30, 2026 and no later than June 30 every other year thereafter and, with commission  
16 approval, make any changes deemed necessary or appropriate. The Director of the Permit Center may  
17 reconvene the Task Force by providing notice to the appointing authorities of the Task Force members,  
18 upon determining that it is in the public interest to modify the recommended Citywide list  
19 prioritized permits and project types and/or to recommend modifications to one or more of the  
20 departments’ prioritization guidelines.

21 (5) Data Collection and Reporting. The Department of Building Inspection, the  
22 Planning Department, and the Department of Public Works shall collect data on the processing time  
23 for each permit type included in their respective permit prioritization guidelines. On an annual basis at  
24 least 60 days prior to the reporting deadline to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors specified in this  
25 subsection (c)(5), such departments shall each transmit to the Director of the Permit Center data

1 concerning the department's average processing time for each prioritized permit type in the previous  
2 calendar year. The departments may separately report the average time the department is awaiting a  
3 response from the permit applicant per prioritized permit type, where such data is available. Where  
4 data is available, such departments shall also include data concerning the impact of prioritization on  
5 permit types that are not prioritized. Alternatively, the departments may provide the Director of  
6 the Permit Center direct access to their electronic permitting systems so that the Director may  
7 gather the required data. The Director of the Permit Center shall compile such data and transmit an  
8 annual report to the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors no later than June 30, 2025<sup>4</sup>, and every year  
9 thereafter no later than June 30.

10 (6) Sunset. This subsection (c) shall expire by operation of law, and the  
11 Task Force shall terminate, on June 30, 2030, unless extended by ordinance. No later than  
12 January 1, 2030, the Director of the Permit Center shall submit a recommendation to the  
13 Board of Supervisors and the Mayor concerning reauthorization of this subsection (c). In the  
14 event that this subsection expires, the City Attorney shall cause it to be removed from the  
15 Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code and shall renumber the subsections of this  
16 Section 3.400 to conform to the removal of subsection (c).

17 (ed) **PERMIT PROCESSING CODE OF CONDUCT.** No later than 60 days after the  
18 effective date of this Article, the Ethics Commission shall adopt a code of conduct for permit  
19 processing (the "Permit Processing Code of Conduct") containing ethical guidelines for permit  
20 applicants, permit consultants, and officers and employees of the Department of Building  
21 Inspection, the Planning Department, the and Department of Public Works. The Permit  
22 Processing Code of Conduct shall be posted in a conspicuous place in each department, and  
23 a copy shall be distributed to each officer of the City and County who makes or participates in  
24 making decisions related to permit applications.

