



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 19, 2025
To: Planning Department/Planning Commission
From: John Carroll, Assistant Clerk, Land Use and Transportation Committee
Subject: Board of Supervisors Legislation Referral - File No. 251212
Planning Code - Modifying Conditional Use Authorizations and Nonconforming Uses

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Determination
(*California Public Resources Code, Sections 21000 et seq.*)
 - Ordinance / Resolution
 - Ballot Measure
- Amendment to the Planning Code, including the following Findings:
(*Planning Code, Section 302(b): 90 days for Planning Commission review*)
 - General Plan
 - Planning Code, Section 101.1
 - Planning Code, Section 302
- Amendment to the Administrative Code, involving Land Use/Planning
(*Board Rule 3.23: 30 days for possible Planning Department review*)
- General Plan Referral for Non-Planning Code Amendments
(*Charter, Section 4.105, and Administrative Code, Section 2A.53*)
(Required for legislation concerning the acquisition, vacation, sale, or change in use of City property; subdivision of land; construction, improvement, extension, widening, narrowing, removal, or relocation of public ways, transportation routes, ground, open space, buildings, or structures; plans for public housing and publicly-assisted private housing; redevelopment plans; development agreements; the annual capital expenditure plan and six-year capital improvement program; and any capital improvement project or long-term financing proposal such as general obligation or revenue bonds.)
- Historic Preservation Commission
 - Landmark (*Planning Code, Section 1004.3*)
 - Cultural Districts (*Charter, Section 4.135 & Board Rule 3.23*)
 - Mills Act Contract (*Government Code, Section 50280*)
 - Designation for Significant/Contributory Buildings (*Planning Code, Article 11*)

Please send the Planning Department/Commission recommendation/determination to John Carroll at john.carroll@sfgov.org.

1 [Planning Code - Modifying Conditional Use Authorizations and Nonconforming Uses]

2

3 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to allow modification and revocation of certain**
4 **Conditions of Approval for Non-Residential Uses administratively where the applicable**
5 **zoning no longer requires a Conditional Use authorization, subject to Planning**
6 **Commission delegation, clarify when enlargement or intensification of a**
7 **Nonconforming Use does not require a new Conditional Use authorization, and**
8 **delegate limited authority to the Planning Director to administratively approve requests**
9 **to modify certain Conditions of Approval imposed through a Conditional Use**
10 **authorization; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California**
11 **Environmental Quality Act; making findings of consistency with the General Plan, and**
12 **the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1; and making public**
13 **necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302.**

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

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

22 Section 1. Environmental and Land Use Findings.

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

1 determination.

2 (b) On _____, the Planning Commission, in Resolution No. _____,
3 adopted findings that the actions contemplated in this ordinance are consistent, on balance,
4 with the City's General Plan and eight priority policies of Planning Code Section 101.1. The
5 Board adopts these findings as its own. A copy of said Resolution is on file with the Clerk of
6 the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____, and is incorporated herein by reference.

7 (c) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, this Board finds that these Planning Code
8 amendments will serve the public necessity, convenience, and welfare for the reasons set
9 forth in Planning Commission Resolution No. _____, and the Board adopts such reasons
10 as its own. A copy of said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File
11 No. _____ and is incorporated herein by reference.

12 (d) Fast, predictable, and less discretionary permitting processes will help to create
13 new jobs, businesses, and homes in San Francisco, as well as facilitate the City's economic
14 recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Commonly referred to as "PermitSF," the City's effort
15 to reform permitting consists of improving the customer experience by streamlining approval
16 processes; promoting governmental accountability to provide certainty about the delivery of
17 government services; and centralizing technology to create a single point of permitting
18 access.

19
20 Section 2. The Planning Code is hereby amended by revising Sections 174, 178,
21 186.1, and 303, to read as follows:

22 **SEC. 174. COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS, STIPULATIONS, AND SPECIAL
23 RESTRICTIONS REQUIRED.**

24 Every condition, stipulation, special restriction, and other limitation imposed by
25 administrative actions pursuant to this Code, whether such actions are discretionary or

1 ministerial, shall be complied with in the development and use of land and structures. All such
2 conditions, stipulations, special restrictions, and other limitations shall become requirements
3 of this Code, and failure to comply with any such condition, stipulation, special restriction, or
4 other limitation shall constitute a violation of the provisions of this Code. *Such conditions,*
5 *stipulations, special restrictions, and other limitations shall include but not be limited to the following:*

6 **(a) Such conditions, stipulations, special restrictions, and other limitations shall include but**
7 **not be limited to the following:**

8 **(1) Conditions prescribed by the Zoning Administrator and the City Planning**
9 Commission, and by the Board of Permit Appeals and the Board of Supervisors on appeal, in
10 actions on permits, licenses, conditional uses and variances, and in other actions pursuant to
11 their authority under this Code;

12 **(2) Stipulations upon which any reclassification of property prior to May 2, 1960,**
13 was made contingent by action of the City Planning Commission, where the property was
14 developed as stipulated and the stipulations as to the character of improvements are more
15 restrictive than the requirements of this Code that are otherwise applicable. Any such
16 stipulations shall remain in full force and effect under this Code;

17 **(3) Special restrictions prescribed by the Zoning Administrator in actions on**
18 permits pursuant to the authority prescribed by this Code, and in the performance of other
19 powers and duties to secure compliance with this Code.

20 **(b) Non-Residential Uses No Longer Subject to Conditional Use authorization**

21 **Requirement. A Non-Residential Use subject to Conditions of Approval associated with a Conditional**
22 **Use authorization that is no longer required for such a Use, or a Use Characteristic that no longer**
23 **meets the definition of a Conditional Use, may have the Conditions of Approval that were adopted**
24 **through a prior Conditional Use authorization removed pursuant to subsection (b)(1) below if all the**
25 **following conditions are met: (i) the existing Use is a Non-Residential Use or a Use Characteristic**

1 associated with a Non-Residential Use, as defined by Section 102; (ii) the applicable zoning no longer
2 requires a Conditional Use authorization for the Non-Residential Use or Use Characteristic; (iii) the
3 existing Non-Residential Use or Use Characteristic was established pursuant to a Conditional Use
4 authorization that was required for that specific Use or Use Characteristic at the time of approval; (iv)
5 the existing Non-Residential Use or Use Characteristic was not established pursuant to a Conditional
6 Use authorization required pursuant to a Development Agreement; and (v) the existing Non-Residential
7 Use or Use characteristic was not established pursuant to a Conditional Use authorization that was
8 appealed to and approved by the Board of Supervisors.

9 (1) Removal of Conditions. Conditions of Approval meeting the criteria in this
10 subsection (b) may be removed pursuant to the following:

11 (A) Upon the filing of a complete Development Application to remove the
12 previously adopted Conditions of Approval, the Planning Department shall review the proposed project
13 for compliance with the Planning Code currently in effect and any applicable design guidelines,
14 policies, or standards approved by the Planning Commission.

15 (B) Provided that the Planning Commission has delegated the authority, the
16 Planning Director may determine if the removal of the Conditions of Approval meets the requirements
17 in this subsection (b) and approve, conditionally approve, or deny the application.

18 (2) Replacement with New Conditions. If the Planning Director removes one or more
19 conditions pursuant to this subsection (b), the Planning Director may also impose one or more new
20 conditions to bring the project into compliance with the Planning Code, any applicable design
21 guidelines, policies, or standards approved by the Planning Commission, or the General Plan.

22

23 **SEC. 178. CONDITIONAL USES.**

24 The following provisions shall apply to conditional uses:

25 (a) **Definition.** For the purposes of this Section, a permitted Conditional Use shall

1 refer to:

2 (1) Any Use or feature authorized as a Conditional Use pursuant to Article 3
3 of this Code, provided that such Use or feature was established within the time limits
4 specified as a Condition of Approval or, if no time limit was specified, within a reasonable time
5 from the date of authorization; or

6 (2) Any Use or feature that is classified as a Conditional Use in the district in
7 which it is located and that lawfully existed either on the effective date of this Code, or on the
8 effective date of any amendment imposing new Conditional Use requirements upon such
9 Use or feature; or

10 (3) Any Use deemed to be a permitted Conditional Use pursuant to Section
11 179 of this Code.

12 (b) **Continuation.** Except as provided for temporary uses in Section 205 of this Code,
13 and except where time limits are otherwise specified as a Condition of Approval, any *permitted*
14 Conditional Use may continue in the form in which it was authorized, or in the form in which
15 it lawfully existed either on the effective date of this Code or the effective date of any
16 amendment imposing new Conditional Use requirements upon such Use or feature, unless
17 otherwise provided in this *Section or in Article 2 of this* Code.

18 (c) **Enlargement, Alteration, or Intensification.**

19 (1) A permitted Conditional Use may not be significantly *altered*, enlarged, or
20 intensified, except upon approval of a new Conditional Use authorization application pursuant
21 to the provisions of Article 3 of this Code. *For purposes of this Section 178, the following types of*
22 *changes shall not be considered significant enlargements or intensifications:*

23 (A) *A Non-Residential Use, previously approved as a Conditional Use, that fails*
24 *to meet the Non-Residential Use Size requirements of this Code may be divided into smaller uses sizes,*
25 *consistent with Sections 121.2 and 121.5.*

(B) A Non-Residential Use, previously approved as a Conditional Use, may add a Non-Residential Use pursuant to the zoning controls in the applicable Zoning District.

(C) A Conditional Use may add the lesser of: up to 500 square feet of Gross Floor Area or 25% of the existing Gross Floor Area associated with the Conditional Use.

(D) The addition of an ABC license or exchange of an ABC license type.

* * * *

SEC. 186.1. EXEMPTION OF NONCONFORMING USES IN NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

The purpose of this Section is to provide for the further continuance ~~in NC Districts~~ of nonconforming Uses in NC Districts ~~created by adoption of Ordinance No. 69-87, as herein described, and subsequent ordinances that change the uses allowed in NC Districts~~, which are beneficial to, or can be accommodated within the neighborhood commercial areas in which they are located.

It is hereby found and declared that certain Uses which traditionally have been permitted to locate in neighborhood commercial areas can be beneficial to a neighborhood commercial area in small or limited numbers, but which if allowed to proliferate, can disrupt the balanced mix of neighborhood-serving retail stores and services. It is further found and declared that ~~in order~~ to prevent undesirable over concentrations of such Uses, the controls in Article 7 for NC Districts shall establish the appropriate concentrations of such Uses—~~establishment of additional such uses shall be prohibited pursuant to controls governing uses in NC Districts~~. At the same time, however, it is desirable to provide for the further continuance, expansion, enlargement, alteration, changes, discontinuance, and relocation of such existing uses, which are nonconforming as a result of zoning controls governing uses in NC Districts.

The following provisions shall govern with respect to nonconforming *uses* and

1 features located in *Neighborhood Commercial NC* Districts to the extent that there is a conflict
2 between the provisions of this Section and other Sections contained in this Article 1.7.

3 (a) **Expansion.** A nonconforming Use may expand in floor area as provided in
4 ~~subsection (b) below~~, but may not expand beyond the Lot which it occupies, nor may the
5 boundaries of such Lot be expanded for purposes of expanding the Use; nor may the Use
6 expand upward above the Story or Stories which it lawfully occupies, except as provided in
7 Section 186.2~~below~~.

8 (b) **Enlargements or Alteration.**

9 (1) *Except as specified in subsection (b)(4), A nonconforming Use may not be*
10 *significantly altered; enlarged or intensified, except upon approval of a Conditional Use*
11 *authorization application* pursuant to the provisions of Section 303 of this Code, provided that
12 the Use not have or result in a greater height, bulk, or floor area ratio, less required rear yard
13 or open space, or less required ~~off street parking space or~~ loading space than permissible under
14 the limitations set forth in this Code for the district or districts in which such Use is located.

15 (2) A nonconforming Use may expand to include public sidewalk space
16 provided that such space is only occupied with tables and chairs as permitted by this
17 Municipal Code.

18 (3) No existing Use or structure which fails to meet the requirements of this
19 Code in any manner as described *above* in this subsection (b) shall be constructed,
20 reconstructed, enlarged, altered, or relocated so as to increase the discrepancy, or to create a
21 new discrepancy, at any level of the structure, between existing conditions on the Lot and the
22 required standards for new construction set forth in this Code.

23 (4) **Permitted Expansions and Intensifications of Nonconforming Uses.** *For purposes*
24 *of this Section 186.1, the following types of changes shall not be considered significant enlargements or*
25 *intensifications of a noncomplying Use:*

(A) A noncomplying However, a Non-Residential Use that fails to meet the Non-Residential Use Size requirements of this Code may be divided into smaller uses sizes, consistent with Sections 121.2 and 121.5.

(B) A noncomplying Non-Residential Use may add a Non-Residential Use pursuant to the zoning controls in the applicable Zoning District.

(C) A noncomplying Use may add the lesser of: up to 500 square feet of Gross Floor Area or 25% of the existing Gross Floor Area associated with the noncomplying Use.

(D) The addition of an ABC license or exchange of an ABC license type.

* * * *

SEC. 303. CONDITIONAL USES.

* * * *

(c) **Determination.** After its hearing on the application, *or upon the recommendation of the Director of Planning that no hearing is required,* the Planning Commission shall approve the application and authorize a Conditional Use if the facts presented are such to establish that:

* * * *

(d) **Conditions.** When considering an application for a Conditional Use as provided herein with respect to applications for development of “dwellings” as defined in Chapter 87 of the Administrative Code, the Commission shall comply with that Chapter which requires, among other things, that the Commission not base any decision regarding the development of “dwellings” in which “protected class” members are likely to reside on information which may be discriminatory to any member of a “protected class” (as all such terms are defined in Chapter 87 of the Administrative Code). In addition, when authorizing a Conditional Use as provided herein, the Planning Commission, or the Board of Supervisors on appeal, shall prescribe such additional conditions, beyond those specified in this Code, as are in its opinion

necessary to secure the objectives of the Code. Once any portion of the Conditional Use authorization is utilized, all such conditions pertaining to such authorization shall become immediately operative. The violation of any condition so imposed shall constitute a violation of this Code and may constitute grounds for revocation of the Conditional Use authorization. Such conditions may include time limits for exercise of the Conditional Use authorization; otherwise, any exercise of such authorization must commence within a reasonable time

(e) **Modification of Conditions.** Authorization of a change in any condition previously imposed in the authorization of a Conditional Use shall be subject to the same procedures as a new Conditional Use, except that, provided the Planning Commission has delegated authority to the Planning Director, following submission of the appropriate type of Development Application, the Planning Director may, in the discretion of the Director, approve of the following modifications to Conditions of Approval imposed through a Conditional Use authorization:

(i) extensions of the performance period for the project; or (ii) changes in the project such that the number of residential units or square footage of construction changes by 20% or less, provided the requested changes are consistent with all applicable design guidelines and do not reduce by more than 10% the number of affordable units required to be provided under Sections 415.1 et seq. of this Code, unless permitted under 415A et seq., and subject to any increase in the number of affordable units or in-lieu fee applicable to any increase in the number of approved units under Sections 415.1 et seq. of this Code. The Planning Director may not approve modifications to a Conditional Use authorization where such approval was issued to correct a violation of the Municipal Code, in connection with an enforcement action by the Planning Department or following an appeal of the Conditional Use authorization to the Board of Supervisors. Such procedures shall also apply to applications for modification or waiver of conditions set forth in prior stipulations and covenants relative thereto continued in effect by the provisions of Section 174 of this Code.

(f) **Conditional Use Abatement.** The Planning Commission may consider the

1 possible revocation of a Conditional Use or the possible modification of or placement of
2 additional conditions on a Conditional Use when the Planning Commission determines, based
3 upon substantial evidence, that the applicant for the Conditional Use had submitted false or
4 misleading information in the application process that could have reasonably had a substantial
5 effect upon the decision of the Commission or the Conditional Use is not in compliance with a
6 Condition of Approval, is in violation of law if the violation is within the subject matter
7 jurisdiction of the Planning Commission, or operates in such a manner as to create
8 hazardous, noxious, or offensive conditions enumerated in Section 202(c) if the violation is
9 within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Planning Commission and these circumstances
10 have not been abated through administrative action of the Director, the Zoning Administrator
11 or other City authority. Such consideration shall be the subject of a public hearing before the
12 Planning Commission but no fee shall be required of the applicant or the subject Conditional
13 Use operator.

14 * * * *

15 (4) **Appeals.** A decision by the Planning Commission to revoke a Conditional Use,
16 to modify conditions or ~~to~~ place additional conditions on a Conditional Use, or a decision by
17 the Planning Commission refusing to revoke or amend a Conditional Use, or a decision by the
18 Planning Director to modify or refuse to modify Conditions of Approval, may be appealed to the
19 Board of Supervisors within 30 days after the date of action by the Planning Commission or
20 the Director pursuant to the provisions of Section 308.1(b). The Board of Supervisors may
21 disapprove the action of the Planning Commission in an abatement matter by the same vote
22 necessary to overturn the Commission's approval or denial of a Conditional Use. The
23 Planning Commission's action on a Conditional Use abatement issue shall take effect when
24 the appeal period is over or, upon appeal, when there is final action on the appeal.

25 * * * *

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code - Modifying Conditional Use Authorizations and Nonconforming Uses]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to allow modification and revocation of certain Conditions of Approval for Non-Residential Uses administratively where the applicable zoning no longer requires a Conditional Use authorization, subject to Planning Commission delegation, clarify when enlargement or intensification of a Nonconforming Use does not require a new Conditional Use authorization, and delegate limited authority to the Planning Director to administratively approve requests to modify certain Conditions of Approval imposed through a Conditional Use authorization; 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 public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302

Existing Law

Under the Planning Code, significant changes to Conditions of Approval imposed through a Conditional Use authorization may only be modified by the Planning Commission through the process used for new Conditional Use authorizations. Nonconforming uses may not be modified without a Conditional Use authorization, except in limited circumstances. Under the Planning Commission's current practice, for projects approved through a Conditional Use authorization, the Zoning Administrator is authorized to administratively approve changes to the approved plans, unless the changes are significant, in which case the significant changes require a Planning Commission approval of a new Conditional Use authorization. Similarly, the Zoning Administrator is authorized to extend the time for performance where the implementation of the project is delayed by a public agency, an appeal or a legal challenge and only by the length of time for which such public agency, appeal or challenge has caused delay.

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance would specify that a Non-Residential Use, which at the time it was authorized required a Conditional Use authorization from the Planning Commission, may seek to have those Conditions of Approval removed administratively, if the applicable zoning no longer requires a Conditional Use authorization and the Non-Residential Use is Principally Permitted. The Planning Commission would be required to delegate authority to make these changes administratively.

This ordinance would also specify that certain changes in a Conditionally approved use or a non-conforming use are not considered an intensification or enlargement of that use, such that the change would require a new Conditional Use authorization. These permitted changes are: allowing a Non-Residential Use to an existing Non-Residential Use, consistent with the applicable zoning; adding the lesser of 500 square feet of Gross Floor Area or 25% of the existing Gross Floor Area to an existing Conditional Use or non-conforming use; or the addition or exchange of an ABC license type.

The ordinance would also permit the Planning Director to administratively modify Conditions of Approval imposed through a Conditional Use authorization related to: extensions of the performance period; and changes in the project up to 20% in the number of residential units or square feet of construction, subject to conditions.

4938-6320-6016, v. 1