

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code - Permitting a Five Feet Ground Floor Height Increase for Active Ground Floor Uses in the Castro Street and the 24th Street - Noe Valley Neighborhood Commercial Districts]

Ordinance amending the San Francisco Planning Code by: 1) amending Section 263.20 to permit a five feet ground floor height increase for active ground floor uses in the Castro Street and the 24th Street - Noe Valley Neighborhood Commercial Districts; 2) replacing the figure in Section 263.20; 3) amending Sections 715.1 and 728.1 to make reference to this height exception; and 4) making findings including environmental findings and findings of consistency with Planning Code Section 101.1 and the General Plan.

Existing Law

The San Francisco Planning Code currently provides for an extra 5 feet for ground floor uses in Neighborhood Commercial Transit (NCT) 40-x and 50-x Height and Bulk districts; in the Upper Market Street, Inner Clement, and Outer Clement Neighborhood Commercial Districts (NCDs); and in other designated Neighborhood Commercial parcels. (See Planning Code Section 263.20.)

This height exception is available only for projects with ground floor commercial space or other active uses, as defined by Section 145.1(e), i.e., uses that are oriented to public access and primarily to walk-up pedestrian activities.

Amendments to Current Law

This Ordinance amends Section 263.20 to make the 5 feet height exception for ground floor uses applicable also in the Castro Street and the 24th Street – Noe Valley NCDs.

This Ordinance also replaces the figure in Section 263.20, which was erroneously replaced with a wrong image by a previous piece of legislation.

Background Information

The purpose of the 5 feet height exception is "to encourage generous ground floor ceiling heights for commercial and other active uses, encourage additional light and air into ground floor spaces, allow for walk-up ground floor residential uses to be raised slightly from sidewalk level for privacy and usability of front stoops, and create better building frontage on the public street."