



September 25, 2025

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk
Honorable Supervisor Chan
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 2025-006251PCA:**
Permitting Outdoor Handwashing, Vacuuming, and Detailing of Automobiles in the Geary Boulevard NCD
Board File No. 250716

Planning Commission Recommendation: Approval with Modification

Dear Ms. Calvillo and Supervisor Chan,

On September 18, 2025, the Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance, introduced by Supervisor Chan that would amend Planning Code Sections 102 and 739. At the hearing the Planning Commission adopted a recommendation for approval with modifications.

The Commission's proposed modifications were as follows:

Modify the Ordinance so that ANY Automotive Service Station is allowed to have outdoor handwashing, vacuuming, and detailing of automobiles as an Accessory Use.

The proposed amendments are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c) 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.

Transmittal Materials CASE NO. 2025-006251PCA

Permitting Outdoor Handwashing, Vacuuming, and Detailing of Automobiles in the Geary Boulevard NCD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron D. Starr", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Starr

Manager of Legislative Affairs

cc: Kristen Jensen, Deputy City Attorney
Calvin Ho, Aide to Supervisor Chan
John Carroll, Office of the Clerk of the Board

ATTACHMENTS :

Planning Commission Resolution
Planning Department Executive Summary



PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 21816

HEARING DATE: September 18, 2025

Project Name: Permitting Outdoor Handwashing, Vacuuming, and Detailing of Automobiles in the Geary Boulevard NCD

Case Number: 2025-006251PCA [Board File No. 250716]

Initiated by: Supervisor Chan / Introduced July 1, 2025

Staff Contact: Lisa Gluckstein

Lisa.Gluckstein@sfgov.org, 628-652-7475

Reviewed by: Aaron Starr, Manager of Legislative Affairs
aaron.starr@sfgov.org, 628-652-7533

RESOLUTION ADOPTING A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL OF A PROPOSED ORDINANCE MODIFYING THE GEARY BOULEVARD NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (NCD) TO AUTHORIZE OUTDOOR HANDWASHING, VACUUMING, AND DETAILING OF AUTOMOBILES AS AN ACCESSORY USE IN CERTAIN AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE STATIONS; 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 UNDER PLANNING CODE, SECTION 302.

WHEREAS, on July 1, 2025 Supervisor Chan introduced a proposed Ordinance under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter "Board") File Number 250716, which would amend Sections 102 and 739 of the Planning Code to authorize outdoor handwashing, vacuuming, and detailing of automobiles as an Accessory Use in certain Automotive Service Stations;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance on September 18, 2025; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Ordinance has been determined to be categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Sections 15378 and 15060(c); 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 modifications** of the proposed ordinance. The Commission's proposed recommendation is as follows:

- **Modify the Ordinance so that ANY Automotive Service Station is allowed to have outdoor handwashing, vacuuming, and detailing of automobiles as an Accessory Use.**

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 Commission finds that proposed ordinance supports the continued operation of local businesses, which is consistent with the General Plan's goals to retain commercial activity and foster a favorable business climate. The proposed accessory use is compatible with the existing profile of the Geary Boulevard NCD, and potential environmental impacts are addressed through the requirement for a Mobile Washer Permit from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

The Commission recommends a modification to expand the ordinance's applicability to any Automotive Service Station, not only those in operation as of the ordinance's effective date, including those in districts other than the Geary Boulevard NCD. This proposed modification would align the ordinance with the best practice of creating generally applicable land use regulations rather than ones that apply to just one site. This modification would provide a clear and equitable regulatory path for similar businesses.

General Plan Compliance

The proposed Ordinance and the Commission's recommended modifications are consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 2

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE A SOUND AND DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE AND FISCAL STRUCTURE FOR THE CITY.

Policy 2.1

Seek to retain existing commercial and industrial activity and to attract new such activity to the city.

Policy 2.3

Maintain a favorable social and cultural climate in the city in order to enhance its attractiveness as a firm location.

OBJECTIVE 4

IMPROVE THE VIABILITY OF EXISTING INDUSTRY IN THE CITY, THE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE, AND THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE CITY AS A LOCATION FOR NEW INDUSTRY.

POLICY 4.1

Maintain and enhance a favorable business climate in the city.

The proposed Ordinance allows new commercial activity in the Geary NCT. This added commercial activity will help maintain a favorable social, cultural, and business climate in San Francisco as it creates new business opportunities and serves customer needs. This enhances San Francisco as a location for firms and new businesses.

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 MODIFICATIONS the proposed Ordinance as described in this Resolution.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on September 18, 2025.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Williams, Braun, Imperial, McGarry, Moore, So
NOES: None
ABSENT: Campbell
ADOPTED: September 18, 2025



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLANNING CODE TEXT AMENDMENT

HEARING DATE: September 18, 2025

90-Day Deadline: September 29, 2025

Project Name: Permitting Outdoor Handwashing, Vacuuming, and Detailing of Automobiles in the Geary Boulevard NCD
Case Number: 2025-006251PCA [Board File No. 250716]
Initiated by: Supervisor Chan / Introduced July 1, 2025
Staff Contact: Lisa Gluckstein
Lisa.Gluckstein@sfgov.org, 628-652-7475
Reviewed by: Aaron Starr, Manager of Legislative Affairs
aaron.starr@sfgov.org, 628-652-7533
Environmental Review: Not a Project Under CEQA

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a Recommendation for Approval with Modifications

Planning Code Amendment

Ordinance modifying the Geary Boulevard Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) to authorize outdoor handwashing, vacuuming, and detailing of automobiles as an Accessory Use in certain Automotive Service Stations.

The Way It Is Now:

Currently, the Planning Code does not permit outdoor car washing facilities. Commercial car washing facilities, defined as Automotive Wash uses in the Code, must be conducted in an enclosed building. Additionally, Automotive Wash uses require a conditional use authorization in the Geary Boulevard NCD.

The Way It Would Be:

A facility that provides outdoor handwashing, vacuuming, and detailing of automobiles as of the effective date of this ordinance will be permitted as an Accessory Use at Automotive Service Stations in the Geary Boulevard NCD, provided that the use does not occupy more than 5 on-site parking spaces.

Background

An existing gas station located at 4501 Geary Boulevard has been offering on-site outdoor hand car washing services. The ordinance would legalize this hand car washing use as an accessory use. This is the only known hand car wash use on an existing Automotive Service Station use in the Geary NCD and thus is likely the only business impacted by the ordinance as currently drafted.

Issues and Considerations

Limited Applicability of Ordinance

The applicability of this Ordinance is very limited, applying only to existing hand car wash uses located on an existing gas station in the Geary Boulevard NCD. The ordinance was drafted this way specifically to permit the existing car wash at 4501 Geary without permitting similar uses elsewhere. It is a best practice to allow use types generally wherever possible instead of adopting code changes that exclusively apply to a single property. Other region-serving NCs that accommodate automotive uses may also benefit from the proposed changes.

Automotive Use Compatibility with the Geary NCD

Generally, the Planning Code closely restricts automotive uses in Neighborhood Commercial Districts due to their associated noise, pollution, and adverse impacts to safety and pedestrian-oriented commercial activity. The Geary NCD conditionally permits many Automotive Use types, and many such businesses are present within the Geary NCD, including repair shops and multiple other gas stations. Allowing outdoor handwashing, vacuuming, and detailing of automobiles on an existing Automotive Service Station use would be compatible with the characteristics of the Geary NCD.

Mobile Washer Permit

The outdoor handwashing, vacuuming, and detailing of automobiles is subject to Mobile Washer Permits issued by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. These permits require the use of less toxic cleaning products and require the containment of any wastewater discharged from the site to ensure it does not enter the sewer system. This change to the Planning Code to permit the proposed use at 4515 Geary and other Automotive Service Stations in the Geary NCD does not alter the obligation for car washing uses to receive a Mobile Washer permit to operate legally.

General Plan Compliance

The proposed ordinance is consistent with Policies 2.1 and 4.1 of the Commerce and Industry Element of the General Plan. In alignment with Policy 2.1's goal to retain existing commercial activity, the ordinance supports the continued operation of local car washing business. This action is also consistent with Policy 4.1, as it demonstrates the City's responsiveness to business needs, thereby fostering a favorable business climate.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

The Ordinance is not anticipated to have significant direct effects on racial and social equity, as it is focused on existing businesses within a specific commercial district. The primary beneficiaries of this ordinance are the owners and employees of the existing Automotive Service Stations within the Geary Boulevard NCD, who may see increased business activity by being allowed to offer additional services. Potential burdens related to increased activity are likely to be minor and are not expected to disproportionately impact marginalized communities, as the affected businesses are located along a major, high-traffic commercial thoroughfare. To ensure there are not unintended environmental impacts to adjacent communities, businesses that operate under this Ordinance must receive a "Mobile Washer Permit" from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to avoid toxic cleaning products and ensure that water discharged from the use is properly managed.

Implementation

The Department has determined that this ordinance will not impact our current implementation procedures.

Recommendation

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

1. Modify the Ordinance so that **ANY** Automotive Service Station is allowed to have outdoor handwashing, vacuuming, and detailing of automobiles as an Accessory Use.

Basis for Recommendation

The Department supports the overall goal of the proposed ordinance as it supports the continued operation of local businesses, which is consistent with the General Plan's goals to retain commercial activity and foster a favorable business climate. The proposed accessory use is compatible with the existing profile of the Geary Boulevard NCD, and potential environmental impacts are addressed through the requirement for a Mobile Washer Permit from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

Recommendation 1: Modify the Ordinance so that ANY Automotive Service Station is allowed to have outdoor handwashing, vacuuming, and detailing of automobiles as an Accessory Use. The Department

recommends a modification to expand the ordinance's applicability to any Automotive Service Station, not only those in operation as of the ordinance's effective date, including those in districts other than the Geary Boulevard NCD. This proposed modification would align the ordinance with the best practice of creating generally applicable land use regulations rather than ones that apply to just one site. This modification would provide a clear and equitable regulatory path for similar businesses.

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. 250716