

File No. 250542

Committee Item No. 1

Board Item No. 3

COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA PACKET CONTENTS LIST

Committee: Land Use and Transportation

Date: July 14, 2025

Board of Supervisors Meeting:

Date: July 22, 2025

Cmte Board

- Motion
- Resolution
- Ordinance - VERSION 2
- Legislative Digest - VERSION 2
- Budget and Legislative Analyst Report
- Youth Commission Report
- Introduction Form
- Department/Agency Cover Letter and/or Report
- MOU
- Grant Information Form
- Grant Budget
- Subcontract Budget
- Contract / DRAFT Mills Act Agreement
- Form 126 – Ethics Commission
- Award Letter
- Application
- Public Correspondence

OTHER

- Office of Small Business Presentation – June 30, 2025
- Planning Commission Transmittal – June 27, 2025
- SBC Response – June 24, 2025
- CEQA Determination – June 4, 2025
- Referrals CEQA, PC, FYI – May 28, 2025
- Mayor's Introduction Memo – May 20, 2025
- Referral BLA – July 3, 2025
- Committee Report Request Memo – July 9, 2025

Prepared by: John Carroll

Date: July 10, 2025

Prepared by: John Carroll

Date: July 14, 2025

Prepared by: _____

Date: _____

1 [Planning Code - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and
2 Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts]

3 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to 1) principally permit certain non-retail sales**
4 **and service uses, including general office, design professional, business services,**
5 **non-retail professional services, and trade offices, on the ground floor in the C-3**
6 **(“Downtown Commercial”) Districts through December 31, 2030, after which such uses**
7 **will be conditionally permitted, and make accompanying revisions to required ground**
8 **floor uses and Floor Area Ratio; 2) principally permit retail sales and service uses on**
9 **the second floor and above in the RC (“Residential-Commercial”) Districts; 3)**
10 **principally permit non-retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above, and**
11 **conditionally permit catering and laboratory uses on the ground floor in the RC**
12 **Districts; 4) update transparency and fenestration requirements for ground floor**
13 **actives uses and exempt child care facilities, homeless shelters, mortuaries, religious**
14 **institutions, reproductive health clinics, and school uses from those requirements; 5)**
15 **~~define an Interior Sign and the applicable standards for Interior Signs~~ modify the**
16 **definition of a Window Sign; 6) ~~exempt Interior Signs of six square feet or less and~~**
17 **~~Business and Identifying Signs painted on building facades from a permit under the~~**
18 **~~Planning Code~~ modify Planning review and approval of changes in copy of a Sign and**
19 **Wall and Window Signs applied to doors, windows, or building facades; 7) modify the**
20 **definition of a Non-Residential Use for the purposes of certain development impact fee**
21 **waivers; and 8) modify permitted and required ground floor uses in the RH-DTR**
22 **(“Rincon Hill Downtown Residential”) District, including uses in certain historic**
23 **buildings, subject to various conditions; affirming the Planning Department’s**
24 **determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making findings of**
25 **consistency with the General Plan and the eight priority policies of Planning Code,**

1 **Section 101.1; and making findings of public necessity, convenience, and welfare**
2 **pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302.**

3 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
4 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
5 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.
6 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.
7 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
8 **Asterisks (* * * *)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code
9 subsections or parts of tables.

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

9 Section 1. Environmental and Land Use Findings.

10 (a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this
11 ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources
12 Code Sections 21000 et seq.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of
13 Supervisors in File No. 250542 and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board affirms
14 this determination.

15 (b) On June 26, 2025, the Planning Commission, in Resolution No. 21758, adopted
16 findings that the actions contemplated in this ordinance are consistent, on balance, with the
17 City’s General Plan and eight priority policies of Planning Code Section 101.1. The Board
18 adopts these findings as its own. A copy of said Resolution is on file with the Clerk of the
19 Board of Supervisors in File No. 250542, and is incorporated herein by reference.

20 (c) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, this Board finds that these Planning Code
21 amendments will serve the public necessity, convenience, and welfare for the reasons set
22 forth in Planning Commission Resolution No. 21758, and the Board incorporates such
23 reasons herein by reference. A copy of said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of
24 Supervisors in File No. 250542.

1 Section 2. Background and General Findings.

2 (a) Fast, predictable, and transparent permitting processes will create new jobs,
3 businesses, and homes, as well as facilitate the City’s economic recovery from the COVID-19
4 pandemic. Commonly referred to as “PermitSF,” the City’s effort to reform permitting consists
5 of improving the customer experience by streamlining approval processes; promoting
6 government accountability to provide certainty about the delivery of government services; and
7 centralizing technology to create a single point of permitting access.

8 (b) This ordinance enhances customer experience by removing barriers to ground floor
9 uses in the downtown, where economic recovery continues to lag behind other
10 neighborhoods. Removing the conditional use requirement will streamline the approval of
11 certain non-retail sales and service uses—including office uses—in the C-3 (Downtown
12 Commercial) Districts through December 31, 2030. To facilitate these ground floor uses, the
13 ordinance makes accompanying changes to required ground floor commercial uses and Floor
14 Area Ratio requirements. The ordinance also promotes downtown recovery by expanding the
15 definition of a Non-Residential Use for the purpose of existing development impact fee
16 waivers available to projects in the C-3 District, or a C-2 (Community Business) District east of
17 or fronting Franklin Street/13th Street and north of Townsend Street. The ordinance also
18 principally permits all uses in certain historic buildings in the RH-DTR (“Rincon Hill Downtown
19 Residential”) District, subject to various conditions.

20 (c) This ordinance also streamlines the approval of sales and service uses on upper
21 floors in the RC (Residential-Commercial Districts) by removing the conditional use
22 requirement for retail sales and service uses and removing the prohibition on non-retail sales
23 and service uses on the upper floors.

24 (d) This ordinance also enhances the customer experience by centralizing information
25 in the Planning Code, specifically, codifying an existing Zoning Administrator Interpretation of

1 fenestration and visibility requirements for ground floor active uses. The ordinance also
2 exempts various uses with unique operational needs that necessitate privacy (such as
3 reproductive health, childcare, schools, and mortuaries) from these fenestration and visibility
4 requirements.

5 (e) This ordinance streamlines the approval process of various types of signs, by
6 ~~creating a permit exception for business or identifying signs painted on building facades and~~
7 ~~interior signs that measure six square feet or less. The ordinance also defines an interior sign~~
8 ~~and provides clear, objective criteria for the regulation of interior signs~~including changes in
9 copy of Signs and Wall and Window Signs that are applied (such as through the use of nylon
10 or paint) to building facades, windows, and doors. The ordinance also narrows the definition
11 of a Window Sign to such Signs that touch only glazing, to enable businesses to have more
12 flexibility in the ways they display Signs inside the business premises.

13
14 Section 3. Articles 1.2, 2, 4, 6, and 68 of the Planning Code are hereby amended by
15 revising Sections 124, 145.1, 145.4, 209.3, 210.2, 249.78, 401, 406, 602, 604, 606, 607,
16 607.1, 607.2, and 608.14, and 803.9, to read as follows:

17
18 **SEC. 124. BASIC FLOOR AREA RATIO.**

19 (a) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this Section
20 124, the basic Floor Area Ratio limits specified in the Zoning Control Table for the district in
21 which the lot is located, or in Table 124 below, shall apply to each building or development in
22 the districts indicated.

23 * * * *

1 (m) Floor Area Ratio limits shall not apply to any new Gross Floor Area created in a C-
2 3 District through a change of use on the ground floor of space that was devoted to uses
3 previously excluded from Gross Floor Area per Section 102.

4
5 **SEC. 145.1. STREET FRONTAGES IN NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL,**
6 **RESIDENTIAL-COMMERCIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND MIXED USE DISTRICTS.**

7 * * * *

8 (c) **Controls.** The following requirements shall generally apply, except for those
9 controls listed in subsections (c)(1) Above Grade Parking Setback and (c)(4) Ground Floor
10 Ceiling Height, which only apply to a “development lot” as defined above and except as
11 specified in subsection (d).

12 * * * *

13 (6) **Transparency and Fenestration.** Frontages with active uses ~~that are not~~
14 ~~PDR~~ must comply with the following requirements:

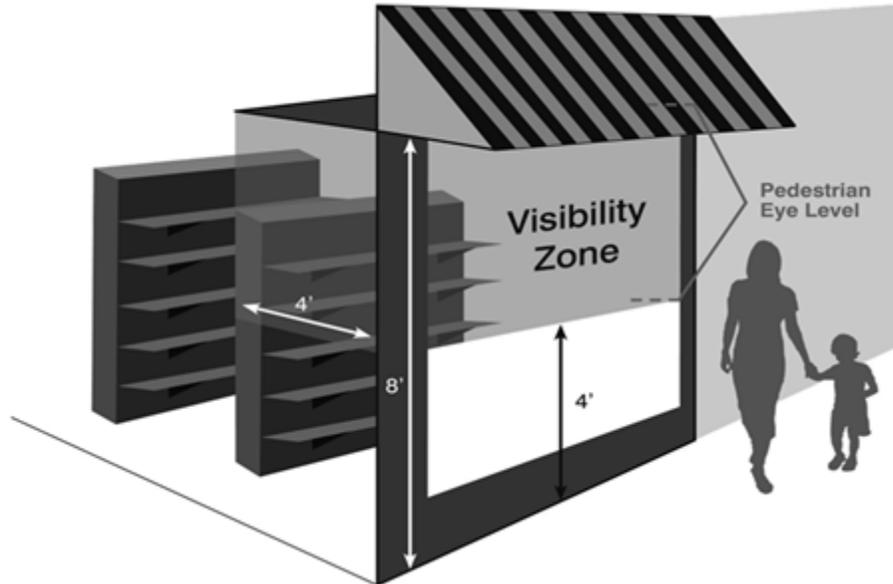
15 _____ (A) The portion of the frontage with active uses must be fenestrated with
16 transparent windows and doorways for no less than 60% of the area of the ground level façade
17 street frontage at the ground level and allow visibility to the inside of the building; and

18 _____ (B) The fenestration required by subsection (c)(6)(A) must allow visibility to the
19 inside of the building that:

20 _____ (i) extends within four feet from the surface of the window glass;

21 _____ (ii) leaves at least 75% of the area inside the building open to
22 perpendicular view within a 4-foot by 4-foot visibility zone; and

1 _____ (iii) provides the aforementioned visibility zone at pedestrian eye level,
2 defined as the space that is between four feet and eight feet in height above the adjacent sidewalk level,
3 following the slope if applicable. See figure, immediately below.



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14 _____ (C) Notwithstanding the transparency requirements of subsection (c)(6)(B), the
15 following features are permitted within the visibility zone:

16 _____ (i) Individual products for sale or used in service and on display inside
17 the building; and

18 _____ (ii) Window Signs and Interior Signs not exceeding one third the
19 area of the window on or in which the Signs are located, provided that such Signs are
20 permitted by the Planning Code; and

21 _____ (iii) Interior curtains and blinds.

22 _____ (D) The use of dark or mirrored glass shall not count towards the
23 required ~~transparent area~~ transparent area visibility zone in this subsection (c)(6)(B).

1 (E) Buildings located inside of, or within an unobstructed line of less than
2 300 feet of an Urban Bird Refuge, as defined in Section 139(c)(1), shall follow glazing
3 requirements within Section 139(c) of this Code.

4 (F) In C-3 zoning districts, for tenant spaces with at least two frontages
5 ~~and active uses that are not PDR, those~~ frontages ~~may must be fenestrated with transparent windows~~
6 ~~and doorways for no less than 60% of the street frontage at the ground level or~~ contain window
7 displays of at least four feet in depth to allow visibility to the inside of the building or activate
8 the street instead of complying with the requirements of subsection (c)(6)(A)-(B).

9 * * * *

10 (d) **Exceptions.**

11 * * * *

12 (4) Exceptions to Transparency and Fenestration. The transparency and fenestration
13 requirements in Section 145.1(c)(6) shall not apply to a Production, Distribution, and Repair Use;
14 Child Care Facility; Homeless Shelter; Mortuary; Religious Institution; Reproductive Health Clinic;
15 School Use; and any Social or Health Service Use proposed on-site with either a Homeless Shelter or
16 an affordable housing project that meets the requirements of Section 315(b).

17
18 **SEC. 145.4. REQUIRED GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL USES.**

19 * * * *

20 (e) **Modifications.** Except as otherwise provided in subsection (f), Modifications to
21 the requirements of this Section 145.4 are not permitted in DTR Districts. In Neighborhood
22 Commercial and Commercial Districts, modifications to the requirements of this Section may
23 be granted through the Conditional Use process, as set forth in Section 303. In the Eastern
24 Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts, modifications to the requirements of this Section may be
25 granted through the procedures of Section 329 for projects subject to that Section or through

1 an Administrative Modification from the Zoning Administrator for other projects, as set forth in
 2 Section 307(h)(1)(A).

3 (f) This Section 145.4 shall not apply to the following:

4 (1) Buildings in the RH-DTR District that are (i) designated landmark buildings
 5 or contributory buildings within a designated historic district pursuant to Article 10 of the
 6 Planning Code, or (ii) listed on or determined eligible for the California Register of Historical
 7 Resources by the State Office of Historic Preservation; and

8 (2) C-3 Districts through December 31, 2030.

9
 10 **SEC. 209.3. RC (RESIDENTIAL-COMMERCIAL) DISTRICTS.**

11 These Districts are intended to recognize, protect, conserve, and enhance areas
 12 characterized by structures combining Residential uses with neighborhood-serving
 13 Commercial uses. The predominant Residential uses are preserved, while provision is made
 14 for supporting Commercial uses, *usually in or below the ground story*, that meet the frequent
 15 needs of nearby residents without generating excessive vehicular traffic. The compact,
 16 walkable, transit-oriented and mixed-use nature of these Districts is recognized by no off-
 17 street parking requirements. The RC Districts are composed of two separate districts, as
 18 follows:

19 * * * *

20 **Table 209.3**

21 **ZONING CONTROL TABLE FOR RESIDENTIAL-COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS**

Zoning Category	§ References	RC-3	RC-4
* * * *			
NON-RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS AND USES			
* * * *			

Sales and Service Category			
Retail Sales and Service Uses*	§§ 102. 202.2(a)	P (4)	P (4)
* * * *			
Non-Retail Sales and Service*	§ 102	<u>NP(14)</u>	<u>NP(14)</u>
* * * *			

* Not listed below.

* * * *

(4) ~~C~~ required if located on the second floor or above. [Reserved]

* * * *

(14) Catering and Laboratory are C on ground floor; all other Non-Retail Sales and Service Uses are NP on ground floor.

SEC. 210.2. C-3 DISTRICTS: DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL.

* * * *

Table 210.2

ZONING CONTROL TABLE FOR C-3 DISTRICTS

Zoning Category	§ References	C-3- O	C-3- O(SD)	C-3- R	C-3- G	C-3- S
* * * *						
NON-RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS AND USES						
* * * *						
Sales and Service Category						
* * * *						

1	Non-Retail Sales and	§ 102	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)
2	Service*						
3	Catering	§ 102	P	P	P	P	P
4	Design Professional	§ 102	P	P	P(1)	P	P
5	Laboratory	§ 102	P	P	P	P	P
6	Life Science	§ 102	P	P	P	P	P
7	Storage, Commercial	§ 102	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP
8	Storage, Wholesale	§ 102	NP	NP	NP	NP	P
9	Wholesale Sales	§ 102	P	P	P	P	P
10	* * * *						

11 * Not listed below.

12 (1) C required ~~if at or below on~~ the ground floor after December 31, 2030.

13 * * * *

14
15 **SEC. 249.78. CENTRAL SOMA SPECIAL USE DISTRICT.**

16 * * * *

17 (c) **Land Use Controls.**

18 (1) **Active Uses.** The controls of Section 145.1 and 145.4 shall apply, except
19 as specified below:

20 * * * *

21 (F) Notwithstanding the ~~PDR~~ exemption_s found in Section
22 145.1(e)(6)(d)(4), PDR uses shall meet the following transparency and fenestration
23 requirements:

24 * * * *

1 **SEC. 401. DEFINITIONS.**

2 * * * *

3 **C**

4 “Change of Use.” A change from one land use to another land use. For purposes of calculating
5 any impact fees, credits, or waivers under Article 4, if the Gross Floor Area to be changed has no
6 legally established use, the change of use shall consider the last legal use.

7 “Child-care provider.” A provider as defined in California Health and Safety Code
8 Section 1596.791.

9 * * * *

10 **R**

11 * * * *

12 “Replacement of use.” The total amount of Gross Floor Area, as defined in Section 102
13 of this Code, to be demolished and reconstructed by a development project. For purposes of
14 calculating any impact fees, credits, or waivers under Article 4, if the Gross Floor Area to be
15 demolished has no legally established use, the replacement of use shall consider the last legal use.

16 * * * *

17
18 **SEC. 406. WAIVER, REDUCTION, OR ADJUSTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT**
19 **PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.**

20 * * * *

21 (j) **Waiver for Certain Non-Residential to Residential Conversion and Replacement**
22 **Projects.** This subsection 406(j) provides eligible Non-Residential or Production, Distribution,
23 and Repair (PDR) to Residential conversion and replacement projects with a waiver of any
24 Development fee or Development impact requirement imposed by this Article 4, as specified
25 in this subsection.

1 (1) **Eligible Projects.** To be eligible for the waiver, a project must replace
2 Gross Floor Area of existing PDR uses or Non-Residential uses, other than a Hotel use, with
3 Gross Floor Area established as Residential use, whether as part of a change of use of
4 existing Gross Floor Area, or through the demolition of Non-Residential Gross Floor Area and
5 construction of new Gross Floor Area for Residential use. For purposes of this subsection
6 406(j), any Gross Floor Area established as Live/Work use shall be considered as Residential
7 use. Projects must be located in a C-3 district, or a C-2 district east of or fronting Franklin
8 Street/13th Street and north of Townsend Street.

9 (2) **Waiver Amount.** Eligible projects shall be entitled to a waiver from any
10 applicable Development fee or Development impact requirement imposed by this Article 4 on
11 any net new Gross Floor Area of Residential use in an amount up to 110% of the Gross Floor
12 Area of Non-Residential use or PDR use converted to Residential use. Converted Non-
13 Residential or PDR Gross Floor Area shall be calculated as the net reduction of Non-
14 Residential Gross Floor Area resulting from the project.

15 (3) **Calculation of Space.** In a mixed-use project with Residential and Non-
16 Residential or PDR uses, the Gross Floor Area of Residential use shall be calculated based on
17 the definition of Gross Floor Area in Planning Code Section 102, in the proportion that such
18 areas serve the Residential use to the total square feet of Gross Floor Area served by such
19 areas.

20 * * * *

21 (8) **Cap on the Total Square Footage Subject to a Development Fee**
22 **Waiver.** The waiver in this subsection 406(j) shall apply only to the first 7,000,000 square feet
23 of Gross Floor Area that replaces Gross Floor Area of existing PDR uses or Non-Residential
24 uses, other than a Hotel use, with Gross Floor Area established as Residential use associated
25 with Eligible Projects in the order that the projects receive a Final Approval. If an Eligible

1 Project does not receive a building or site permit within five years of the Final Approval, the
2 project shall forfeit any rights to the approved waiver, and any Gross Floor Area associated
3 with such project shall no longer be counted against the 7,000,000 square foot limit set forth in
4 this subsection 406(j)(8).

5
6 **SEC. 602. SIGN DEFINITIONS.**

7 * * * *

8 **Indirectly Illuminated Sign.** A Sign illuminated with a light directed primarily toward
9 such Sign and so shielded that no direct rays from the light are visible elsewhere than on the
10 lot where said illumination occurs. If not effectively so shielded, such sign shall be deemed to
11 be a Directly Illuminated Sign.

12 ~~**Interior Sign.** A Sign that is located in the interior of a building within four feet of any
13 window or clear door through which the Sign is visible but not including a Window Sign.~~

14 * * * *

15 **Sign.** Any structure, part thereof, or device or inscription which is located upon,
16 attached to, or painted, projected, or represented on any land or right-of-way, or on the
17 outside of any building or structure including an Awning, Canopy, Marquee, or similar
18 appendage, or ~~affixed to~~ that touches the glass on the outside or inside of a window or other
19 glazing, so as to be seen from the outside of the building ~~clear door, or located inside a
20 building within four feet of any window or clear door through which the Sign is visible~~ *so as to be
21 seen from the outside of the building*, and which displays or includes any numeral, letter, word,
22 model, banner, emblem, insignia, symbol, device, light, trademark, or other representation
23 used as, or in the nature of, an announcement, advertisement, attention-arrester, direction,
24 warning, or designation by or of any person, firm, group, organization, place, commodity,
25 product, service, business, profession, enterprise, or industry.

1 A "Sign" is composed of those elements included in the Area of the Sign as defined in
2 this Section 602, and in addition the supports, uprights, and framework of the display. Except
3 in the case of General Advertising Signs, two or more faces shall be deemed to be a single
4 Sign if such faces are contiguous on the same plane, or are placed back to back to form a
5 single structure and are at no point more than two feet from one another. Also, on Awnings or
6 Marquees, two or more faces shall be deemed to be a single Sign if such faces are on the
7 same Awning or Marquee structure.

8 * * * *

9 **Window Sign.** A Sign ~~located~~ located that touches only the inside or outside directly on
10 the surface of a window glass or clear door or other glazing, so as to be seen from the outside of
11 a building, or placed behind the surface of a window glass or clear door.

12
13 **SEC. 604. PERMITS AND CONFORMITY REQUIRED.**

14 * * * *

15 (b) **Applicability of Section.** The provisions of this Section 604 shall apply to work of
16 the above types on all ~~s~~ Signs unless specifically exempted by this Code, whether or not a
17 permit for such ~~s~~ Sign is required under the San Francisco Building Code. In cases in which
18 permits are not required under the Building Code, a Planning application shall be submitted to the
19 Planning Department for approval. applications for permits shall be filed with the Central Permit
20 Bureau of the Department of Building Inspection on forms prescribed by the Planning Department,
21 together with a permit fee of \$5.00 for each sign, and the permit number shall appear on the completed
22 sign in the same manner as required by the Building Code.

23 (c) Exceptions to Permit and Planning Approval Requirements. No permit or Planning
24 approval that would otherwise be required by this Article 6 shall be required for the Signs in
25 this subsection (c) to the extent such Signs are permitted by this Code.

1 ~~(1) Business or Identifying Sign Painted on Door, or Window, or Building~~
2 ~~Façade. No permit shall be required under this Code for a Business or Identifying sSign~~
3 ~~painted or repainted directly on a door, or window, or façade of a building, except for such~~
4 ~~sSigns in P and Residential Districts. Repainting of any painted Business or Identifying sSign~~
5 ~~that does require a permit shall be deemed to be a replacement of the Business or Identifying~~
6 ~~sSign, except as provided in Ssubsection (fc)(5) below. Wall and Window Signs applied on a~~
7 ~~door, window, or any façade of a building, except for:~~

- 8 ~~(A) Signs located in Public and Residential Districts;~~
- 9 ~~(B) Signs that would otherwise require review and approval under Articles~~
10 ~~10 and 11;~~
- 11 ~~(C) Signs that require a building permit; or~~
- 12 ~~(D) General Advertising Signs.~~

13 ~~(2) Interior Sign. No permit shall be required under this Code for an interior~~
14 ~~business or identifying sign measuring six square feet or less.~~

15 ~~(#32) Ordinary Maintenance and Repairs. Except as provided in Ssubsection~~
16 ~~(e)(1) above, no permit shall be required under this Code for eOrdinary maintenance and~~
17 ~~minor repairs which do not involve replacement, alteration, reconstruction, relocation,~~
18 ~~intensification, or expansion of the sSign.~~

19 ~~(e43) Temporary Sale or Lease Signs. No permit shall be required under this~~
20 ~~Code for tTemporary sale or lease sSigns, temporary sSigns of persons and firms connected~~
21 ~~with work on buildings under actual construction or alteration, and temporary Business sSigns,~~
22 ~~to the extent that such sSigns are permitted by this Code.~~

23 ~~(#54) Change of Copy. No permit shall be required under this Code for aA mere~~
24 ~~eChange of copy on a sSign the customary use of which involves frequent and periodic~~

1 ~~changes of copy shall not be subject to the provisions of this Section 604, provided that the change~~
2 ~~in copy does not:~~

3 _____ (A) ~~require a building permit;~~

4 _____ (B) ~~except that constitute~~ a change from general advertising to
5 nongeneral advertising sign copy or from nongeneral advertising to general advertising sign
6 copy; or

7 _____ (C) ~~an increase in the Area, Height, Illumination, or Projection, excluding~~
8 ~~any changes to Area, Height, Illumination, or Projection that affect only the copy on the Sign,~~
9 ~~including, but not limited to, any extensions in the form of writing, representation, emblem or~~
10 ~~any figure of similar character shall in itself constitute a new sSign subject to the provisions of~~
11 ~~this Section 604. In the case of sSigns the customary use of which does not involve frequent~~
12 ~~and periodic changes of copy, and except as provided in subsection (mj), below, a change of~~
13 ~~copy shall in itself constitute a new sSign subject to the provisions of this Section 604 if the~~
14 ~~new copy concerns a different person, firm, group, organization, place, commodity, product,~~
15 ~~service, business, profession, enterprise, or industry.~~

16 (gd) **Scaled Drawing.** Each application for a permit for a sSign shall be accompanied
17 by a scaled drawing of the sSign, including the location of the sSign on the building or other
18 structure or on the lot, and including (except in the case of a sSign the customary use of which
19 involves frequent and periodic changes of copy) such designation of the copy as is needed to
20 determine that the location, Area, and other provisions of this Code are met.

21 (he) **Nonconforming Signs; Replacement, Alteration, Reconstruction,**
22 **Relocation, Intensification, or Expansion.** Unless otherwise provided in this Code or in
23 other Codes or regulations, a lawfully existing sSign which fails to conform to the provisions of
24 this Article 6 shall be brought into conformity when the activity for which the sSign has been
25 posted ceases operation or moves to another location, when a new building is constructed, or

1 at the end of the sSign’s normal life. Such sSign may not, however, be replaced, altered,
2 reconstructed, relocated, intensified, or expanded in aArea or in any dimension except in
3 conformity with the provisions of this Code, including subsection (if) below. Ordinary
4 maintenance and minor repairs shall be permitted, but such maintenance and repairs shall not
5 include replacement, alteration, reconstruction, relocation, intensification, or expansion of the
6 sSign; provided, however, that alterations of a structural nature required to reinforce a part or
7 parts of a lawfully existing sSign to meet the standards of seismic loads and forces of the
8 Building Code, to replace a damaged or weathered signboard, to ensure safe use and
9 maintenance of that sSign, to remediate hazardous materials, or any combination of the above
10 alterations shall be considered ordinary maintenance and shall be allowed. A sSign which is
11 damaged or destroyed by fire or other calamity shall be governed by the provisions of
12 Sections 181(d) and 188(b) of this Code.

13 A sSign which is voluntarily destroyed or removed by its owner or which is required by
14 law to be removed may be restored only in full conformity with the provisions of this Code,
15 except as authorized in subsection (if) below. A gGeneral aAdvertising sSign that has been
16 removed shall not be reinstalled, replaced, or reconstructed at the same location, and the
17 erection, construction, and/or installation of a gGeneral aAdvertising sSign at that location to
18 replace the previously existing sSign shall be deemed to be a new sSign in violation of Section
19 611(a) of this Code; provided, however, that such reinstallation, replacement, or
20 reconstruction pursuant to a permit duly issued prior to the effective date of this requirement
21 shall not be deemed a violation of Section 611(a) and shall be considered a lawfully existing
22 nonconforming gGeneral aAdvertising sSign; and further provided that this prohibition shall not
23 prevent a gGeneral aAdvertising sSign from being relocated to that location pursuant to a
24 Relocation Agreement and conditional use authorization under Sections 611 and 303(k) of
25 this Code and Section 2.21 of the Administrative Code.

1 A nonconforming Neon Sign may be physically detached from the building for any
2 required repairs or maintenance, except that such maintenance or repairs shall not include
3 replacement, reconstruction, relocation, intensification, or expansion of the Neon Sign. After
4 the off-site repair or maintenance work is complete, the Neon Sign may be reinstalled at the
5 premises in the same location where the Neon Sign was previously affixed, so long as such
6 replacement is completed within 18 months of removal.

7 (if) **Business Signs.** When the activity for which a Business Sign has been posted
8 has ceased operation for more than 90 days, all Signs pertaining to that business activity
9 shall be removed after that time. A lawfully existing business that is relocating to a new
10 location within 300 feet of its existing location within the North Beach Neighborhood
11 Commercial District described in Section 722 of this Code may move to the new location
12 within said North Beach Neighborhood Commercial District one existing Business Sign
13 together with its associated sign structure, whether or not the Sign is nonconforming in its
14 new location; provided, however, that the Sign is not intensified or expanded in Area or in
15 any dimension except in conformity with the provisions of this Code. With the approval of the
16 Zoning Administrator, however, the sign structure may be modified to the extent mandated by
17 the Building Code. In no event may a painted Sign or a Sign with flashing, blinking,
18 fluctuating, or other animated light be relocated unless in conformity with current code
19 requirements applicable to its new location. In addition, the provisions of Articles 10 and 11 of
20 this Code shall apply to the relocation of any Sign to a location regulated by the provisions of
21 said Articles.

22 (jg) Nothing in this Article 6 shall be deemed to permit any use of property that is
23 otherwise prohibited by this Code, or to permit any Sign that is prohibited by the regulations
24 of any Special Sign District or the standards or procedures of any Redevelopment Plan or
25 any other Code or legal restriction.

1 (h) **Public Areas.** No sSign shall be placed upon any public street, alley, sidewalk,
2 public plaza or right-of-way, or in any portion of a transit system, except such projecting sSigns
3 as are otherwise permitted by this Code and sSigns, structures, and features as are
4 specifically approved by the appropriate public authorities under applicable laws and
5 regulations and under such conditions as may be imposed by such authorities.

6 (i) **Maintenance.** Every sSign shall be adequately maintained in its appearance.
7 When the activity for which a bBusiness sSign has been posted has ceased operation for more
8 than 90 days, all sSigns pertaining to that business activity shall be removed after that time.

9 ~~(mj) **Existing Signs in the C-3 Zoning District and portions of the C-2 Zoning**~~
10 ~~**District.** A change of copy on existing sSigns the customary use of which does not involve~~
11 ~~frequent and periodic changes of copy within (1) the C-3 zoning district, (2) a C-2 zoning~~
12 ~~district that is east of or fronting Franklin Street/13th Street and north of Townsend Street, or~~
13 ~~(3) a C-2 zoning district that is also within the Stonestown SSD shall not be considered a new~~
14 ~~sSign for purposes of subsection (fc)(5) so long as a permit is sought and approved subject to~~
15 ~~the provisions of this Section 604 or a more restrictive provision in a sSpecial sSign dDistrict~~
16 ~~in Section 608 et seq., provided that a change from general advertising to nongeneral~~
17 ~~advertising sign copy or from nongeneral advertising to general advertising sign copy or an~~
18 ~~increase in aArea including, but not limited to, any extensions in the form of writing,~~
19 ~~representation, emblem or any figure of similar character shall in itself constitute a new sSign~~
20 ~~subject to the provisions of this Section 604. Consistent with Section 608, this provision shall~~
21 ~~control over any conflicting, more restrictive provision in a sSpecial sSign dDistrict.~~

22 23 **SEC. 606. RESIDENTIAL AND RESIDENTIAL ENCLAVE DISTRICTS.**

24 Signs in Residential and Residential Enclave Districts, other than those sSigns
25 exempted by Section 603 of this Code, shall conform to the following provisions:

1 * * * *

2 (c) **Business Signs for Limited Commercial Uses.** For Limited Commercial Uses,
3 as described in Section 186 of this Code, and for Limited Corner Commercial Uses, as
4 permitted by Section 231, the following controls shall apply:

5 * * * *

6 (2) **Window and Interior Signs.** ~~Window sSigns, limited to sSigns painted or~~
7 ~~similarly applied directly on the surface of the window glass or clear door, and Interior Signs~~
8 ~~are permitted. The total aArea of all wWindow sSigns, as defined in Section 602.1(b), shall not~~
9 ~~exceed one-quarterthird the total area of the business’s ground floor windows and clear doors.~~
10 ~~the window or door on which the sSigns are located. The total Area of all Interior Signs shall~~
11 ~~not exceed one-quarter the area of the window or clear door through which the Interior Sign is~~
12 ~~visible, whichever is greater. Such Window and Interior sSigns may be nNonilluminated or~~
13 ~~iIndirectly iIlluminated.~~

14 * * * *

15
16 **SEC. 607. COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS.**

17 Signs in C, M, and PDR Districts, other than those Signs exempted by Section 603 of
18 this Code, shall conform to the following provisions:

19 * * * *

20 (d) **Window and Interior Signs.** The total Area of all Window Signs shall not exceed
21 one-third the total area of the business’s ground floor windows and clear doors. ~~window or~~
22 ~~clear door on or in which the Signs are located. The total Area of all Interior Signs shall not~~
23 ~~exceed one-third the area of the window or clear door through which the Interior Sign is~~
24 ~~visible, whichever is greater. Such Window and Interior Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly~~
25 ~~Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.~~

1 * * * *

2
3 **SEC. 607.1. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL-COMMERCIAL**
4 **DISTRICTS.**

5 Signs located in Neighborhood Commercial Districts shall be regulated as provided
6 herein, except for those sSigns which are exempted by Section 603 of this Code or as more
7 specifically regulated in a Special Sign District under Sections 608 et seq. In the event of
8 conflict between the provisions of Section 607.1 and other provisions of Article 6, the
9 provisions of Section 607.1 shall prevail in Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-
10 Commercial Districts.

11 In each such Special Sign District, sSigns, other than those sSigns exempted by Section
12 603 of this Code, shall be subject to the special controls in Sections 608.1 through 608.~~18~~,
13 respectively, in addition to all other or, if so expressly specified in those Sections, in lieu of
14 other applicable sign provisions of this Code. In the event of inconsistency with any other
15 provision of Article 6, the most restrictive provision shall prevail unless this Code specifically
16 provides otherwise.

17 * * * *

18 (c) **Identifying Signs.** Identifying Signs, as defined in Section 602, shall be permitted
19 in all Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts subject to the limits set
20 forth below.

21 (1) One Sign per lot shall be permitted and such Sign shall not exceed 20
22 square feet in area. The sign may be a Freestanding sSign, if the building is recessed from the
23 Street Property Line, or may be a Wall Sign or a projecting Sign. The existence of a
24 Freestanding Identifying Sign shall preclude the erection of a Freestanding Business Sign on
25 the same lot. A Wall Sign or projecting Sign shall be mounted on the first-story level; a

1 Freestanding Sign shall not exceed 15 feet in height. Such Sign may be Nonilluminated,
2 Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

3 * * * *

4 (f) **Business Signs.** Business Signs, as defined in Section 602, shall be permitted in
5 all Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts subject to the limits set
6 forth below.

7 (1) **Cole Valley, Lakeside Village, NC-1 and NCT-1 Districts.**

8 (A) **Window and Interior Signs.** The total Area of all Window Signs, as
9 defined in Section 602, shall not exceed one-third the total area of the business's ground floor
10 windows and clear doors. ~~window or clear door on or in which the Signs are located. The total~~
11 ~~Area of all Interior Signs shall not exceed one-third the area of the window or clear door~~
12 ~~through which the Interior Sign is visible, whichever is greater. Such Window and Interior Signs~~
13 may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

14 * * * *

15 (2) **RC, NC-2, NCT-2, NC-S, Inner Balboa Street, Outer Balboa Street,**
16 **Broadway, Castro Street, Inner Clement Street, Outer Clement Street, Cortland Avenue,**
17 **Divisadero Street, Excelsior Outer Mission Street, Fillmore Street, Upper Fillmore**
18 **Street, Folsom Street, Glen Park, Inner Sunset, Irving Street, Haight Street, Lower**
19 **Haight Street, Hayes-Gough, Japantown, Judah Street, Leland Avenue, Upper Market**
20 **Street, Noriega Street, North Beach, Ocean Avenue, Pacific Avenue, Polk Street,**
21 **Regional Commercial District, Sacramento Street, San Bruno Avenue, SoMa, Taraval**
22 **Street, Inner Taraval Street, Union Street, Valencia Street, 24th Street-Mission, 24th**
23 **Street-Noe Valley, and West Portal Avenue Neighborhood Commercial Districts.**

24 (A) **Window and Interior Signs.** The total Area of all Window Signs, as
25 defined in Section 602, shall not exceed one-third the total area of the business's ground floor

1 ~~windows and clear doors.~~ window or clear door on or in which the Signs are located. The total
2 Area of all Interior Signs shall not exceed one-third the area of the window or clear door
3 through which the Interior Sign is visible, whichever is greater. *Such Window* and Interior Signs
4 may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

5 * * * *

6 (3) **Bayview, Geary Boulevard, Mission Bernal, Mission Street, Lower Polk**
7 **Street, NCT, NC-3, and NCT-3 Neighborhood Commercial Districts.**

8 (A) **Window and Interior Signs.** The total Area of all Window Signs, as
9 defined in Section 602, shall not exceed one-third the total area of the business's ground floor
10 ~~windows and clear doors.~~ window or clear door on or in which the Signs are located. The total
11 Area of all Interior Signs shall not exceed one-third the area of the window or clear door
12 through which the Interior Sign is visible, whichever is greater. *Such Window* and Interior Signs
13 may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

14 * * * *

15
16 **SEC. 607.2. MIXED USE DISTRICTS.**

17 Signs located in Mixed Use Districts shall be regulated as provided herein, except for
18 ~~s~~Signs in Residential Enclave Districts, which are regulated by Section 606, and those ~~s~~Signs
19 which are exempted by Section 603. ~~s~~Signs not specifically regulated in this Section 607.2
20 shall be prohibited. In the event of conflict between the provisions of Section 607.2 and other
21 provisions of Article 6, the provisions of Section 607.2 shall prevail in Mixed Use Districts.

22 * * * *

23 (f) **Business Signs.** Business Signs, as defined in Section 602, shall be permitted in
24 all Mixed Use Districts subject to the limits set forth below.

25 (1) **Chinatown Residential Neighborhood Commercial District.**

1 (A) **Window and Interior Signs.** The total Area of all Window Signs, as
2 defined in Section 602, shall not exceed one-third the total area of the business's ground floor
3 windows and clear doors. window or clear door on or in which the Signs are located. The total
4 Area of all Interior Signs shall not exceed one-third the area of the window or clear door
5 through which the Interior Sign is visible, whichever is greater. *Such Window* and Interior Signs
6 may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

7 * * * *

8 (2) **Chinatown Visitor Retail District.**

9 (A) **Window and Interior Signs.** The total Area of all Window Signs, as
10 defined in Section 602, shall not exceed one-third the total area of the business's ground floor
11 windows and clear doors. window or clear door on or in which the Signs are located. The total
12 Area of all Interior Signs shall not exceed one-third the area of the window or clear door
13 through which the Interior Sign is visible, whichever is greater. *Such Window* and Interior Signs
14 may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

15 * * * *

16 (3) **Chinatown Community Business District, Eastern Neighborhoods,**
17 **South of Market Mixed Use ~~Mixed Use~~ Districts, and the Downtown Residential Districts.**

18 (A) **Window and Interior Signs.** The total Area of all Window Signs, as
19 defined in Section 602, shall not exceed one-third the total area of the business's ground floor
20 windows and clear doors. window or clear door on or in which the Signs are located. The total
21 Area of all Interior Signs shall not exceed one-third the area of the window or clear door
22 through which the Interior Sign is visible, whichever is greater. *Such Window* and Interior Signs
23 may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

24 * * * *

1 **SEC. 608.14. VINTAGE SIGNS.**

2 (a) **Restoration and Maintenance.** Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 604(~~he~~)
3 of this Code, sSigns which depict in text or graphic form a particular residential, business,
4 cultural, economic, recreational, or other valued resource which is deemed by the Planning
5 Commission to be a cultural artifact that contributes to the visual identity and historic character
6 of a City neighborhood or the City as a whole shall be considered a vintage sSign and
7 allowed to be restored, reconstructed, maintained, and technologically improved on a property
8 by Conditional Use authorization of the Planning Commission provided that: (~~1a~~) the vintage
9 sSign to be restored, reconstructed, or technologically improved depicts a use, person, place,
10 thing, cultural icon, or other valued character or characteristics of the City or a City
11 neighborhood that, at the time of the vintage sSign authorization, is at least 40 years old; (~~2b~~)
12 at least 50% percent of the ~~a~~Area of the sSign remains legible, (~~3e~~) the sSign does not visually
13 obstruct or significantly impair or detract from, by glare or any other means, a City landmark or
14 public vista; (~~4a~~) the sSign is not larger than the sSign that existed prior to the vintage sSign
15 authorization and does not appear to be more visually prominent than the sSign that existed
16 prior to the vintage sSign authorization; and (~~5e~~) the sSign is maintained in good condition,
17 repair, and working order. Designation as a vintage sSign under this Section 608.14 does not
18 by itself protect the sSign from being obscured or removed by future development projects.

19 * * * *

20
21 **SEC. 803.9. COMMERCIAL USES IN ~~EASTERN NEIGHBORHOODS~~ MIXED USE**
22 **DISTRICTS.**

23 * * * *

24 (b) **Preservation of Historic Buildings within Certain ~~Eastern Neighborhoods~~**
25 **Mixed Use Districts.** The following controls are intended to support the economic viability of

1 buildings of historic importance within certain Mixed Use Districts ~~within Eastern~~
2 ~~Neighborhoods~~.

3 * * * *

4 (4) RH-DTR Districts. This subsection (b)(4) applies only to buildings in RH-
5 DTR Districts that are designated landmark buildings or contributory buildings within a
6 designated historic district pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code, or buildings listed on
7 or determined eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources by the State Office of
8 Historic Preservation.

9 (A) All uses are principally permitted, provided that prior to the issuance
10 of any necessary permits, the Zoning Administrator, with the advice of the Historic
11 Preservation Commission, determines that allowing the use will enhance the feasibility of
12 preserving the building.

13 (B) The Historic Preservation Commission shall review the proposed
14 project for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, (36 C.F.R. § 67.7 (2001))
15 and any applicable provisions of the Planning Code.

16 * * * *

17
18 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after
19 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the
20 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board
21 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor’s veto of the ordinance.

22
23 Section 5. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors
24 intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles,
25 numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal

1 Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment
2 additions, and Board amendment deletions in accordance with the “Note” that appears under
3 the official title of the ordinance.

4

5 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
6 DAVID CHIU, City Attorney

7 By: /s/ Giulia Gualco-Nelson
8 GIULIA GUALCO-NELSON
9 Deputy City Attorney

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REVISED LEGISLATIVE DIGEST
(Amended in Committee – June 30, 2025)

[Planning Code - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to 1) principally permit certain non-retail sales and service uses, including general office, design professional, business services, non-retail professional services, and trade offices, on the ground floor in the C-3 (“Downtown Commercial”) Districts through December 31, 2030, after which such uses will be conditionally permitted, and make accompanying revisions to required ground floor uses and Floor Area Ratio; 2) principally permit retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC (“Residential-Commercial”) Districts; 3) principally permit non-retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above, and conditionally permit catering and laboratory uses on the ground floor in the RC Districts; 4) update transparency and fenestration requirements for ground floor active uses and exempt child care facilities, homeless shelters, mortuaries, religious institutions, reproductive health clinics, and school uses from those requirements; 5) modify the definition of a Window Sign; 6) modify Planning review and approval of changes in copy of a Sign and Wall and Window Signs applied to doors, windows, or building facades; 7) modify the definition of a Non-Residential Use for the purposes of certain development impact fee waivers; and 8) modify permitted and required ground floor uses in the RH-DTR (“Rincon Hill Downtown Residential”) District, including uses in certain historic buildings, subject to various conditions; 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 pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302.

Existing Law

A Retail Sales and Service Use involves the sale of goods or services directly to the ultimate consumer. A Non-Retail Sales and Service Use involves the sale of goods or services to other businesses rather than the end user. (Planning Code § 102.)

In the C-3 (Downtown Commercial) Districts, certain non-retail sales and service uses are principally permitted on the ground floor, including catering, design professional, laboratory, and life science. Other non-retail sales and service uses are conditionally permitted on the ground floor, including office, business services, and trade offices. (Planning Code § 210.2.) Floor Area Ratio (“FAR”) limits also apply in the C-3 Districts. (*Id.* § 124.)

In the RC (Residential Commercial) Districts, certain retail sales and service uses, including animal hospitals, bars, restaurants, general retail sales, and health services, are conditionally

permitted on the second floor and above. Non-retail sales and service uses are not permitted in the RC Districts, except for Design Professional uses. (Planning Code § 209.3.)

The Planning Code imposes transparency and fenestration requirements in Neighborhood Commercial, Residential Commercial, Commercial, and Mixed Use Districts. (Planning Code § 145.1(c)(6).) Currently, PDR uses are exempt from these requirements. (*Ibid.*)

The Planning Code also imposes active ground use requirements in certain districts, including in portions of the RH-DTR (Rincon Hill Downtown Residential Mixed Use) District and the C-3 Districts. (Planning Code § 145.4.) Additional ground-floor retail requirements apply in the RH-DTR. (*Id.* § 827(a)(2).)

Currently, in the Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts, all uses are principally permitted in certain historic buildings, subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission. (Planning Code § 803.9.)

Article 4 of the Planning Code governs development impact fees and requirements. Section 406 provides for a waiver of development impact fees and requirements for Non-Residential uses (other than a hotel use) that will be converted into a residential use, subject to certain eligibility conditions. (Planning Code § 406(j).) Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR) Uses are not classified as Non-Residential Uses. (See *id.* §102.)

Article 6 of the Planning Code governs signs throughout the City. A Sign is defined as “Any structure, part thereof, or device or inscription which is located upon, attached to, or painted, projected, or represented on any land or right-of-way, or on the outside of any building or structure including an Awning, Canopy, Marquee, or similar appendage, or affixed to the glass on the outside or inside of a window. . . .” (Planning Code § 602.) Permits are required for Signs regulated under Article 6, except for certain types of Signs set forth in Section 604, including Business and Identifying Signs painted on windows or doors.

Amendments to Current Law

C-3 Districts

This ordinance amends the Planning Code to:

- principally permit certain non-retail sales and service uses on the ground floor in the C-3 Districts, including office, business services, and trade offices, through December 31, 2030. After December 31, 2030, such uses will be conditionally authorized;
- exempt from FAR requirements any new Gross Floor Area created in a C-3 District through a change of use on the ground floor (§ 124); and
- exempt C-3 Districts from ground floor active use requirements through December 31, 2030 (§ 145.4).

RC Districts

This ordinance amends the Planning Code to:

- principally permit certain retail sales and service uses, including animal hospitals, bars, restaurants, general retail sales, and health services, on the second floor and above in RC Districts;
- principally permit non-retail sales and service uses at the second floor and above in RC Districts; and
- conditionally permit laboratory and catering uses on the ground floor in RC Districts.

RH-DTR Districts

This ordinance amends the Planning Code to:

- principally permit in the RH-DTR District all uses in designated landmark or contributory buildings within an Article 10 District, or buildings listed on or eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources, subject to review by the Zoning Administrator and the Historic Preservation Commission (§ 803.9); and
- exempt the foregoing buildings in RH-DTR Districts from ground floor active use requirements (§ 145.4).

Transparency and Fenestration

This ordinance also codifies a Zoning Administrator Interpretation defining fenestration and visibility requirements for frontages with active uses in Neighborhood Commercial, Residential-Commercial, and Mixed Use Districts. (Planning Code Section 145.1(c)(6).) This ordinance also exempts the following uses from these transparency and fenestration requirements: Child Care Facility; Homeless Shelter; Mortuary; Religious Institution; Reproductive Health Clinic; School Use; and any Social or Health Service Use proposed on-site with either a Homeless Shelter or an affordable housing project that meets the requirements of Planning Code Section 315(b). This ordinance amends the Central SOMA Special Use District (§ 249.78) to clarify cross-references to the transparency and fenestration exemptions.

Impact Fees

This ordinance amends Planning Code Section 406(j) to define a replacement of use for the purpose of calculating impact fees and make existing PDR uses eligible for the residential conversion development impact fee and requirements waiver.

Signs

The ordinance also amends Article 6 of the Planning Code to:

- narrow the definition of a Window Sign to one that touches the glass on the inside or outside of a building and make associated revisions to the definition of a Sign;
- clarify that Signs listed under Section 604(c) do not require a permit or Planning approval to the extent such Signs are permitted by the Code;
- expand the existing exception for painted Signs to any Wall or Window Sign that: (i) is not located in a Public or Residential District; (ii) does not otherwise require review and

- approval under Articles 10 and 11; (iii) does not require a building permit; and (iv) is not a General Advertising Sign;
- expand the existing change in copy exception to all changes of copy that do not (i) require a Building Permit; (ii) constitute a change from a General Advertising Sign; (iii) increase the Area, Height, Illumination, or Projection of a Sign, excluding any changes that affect only the copy of the Sign;
 - delete the existing change in copy exceptions for the C-3 Districts and portions of the C-2 District, which are now unnecessary due to the expansion of the Citywide change in copy exception;
 - make the allowable area of a Window Sign a function of the total area of a business's windows and clear doors; and
 - increase the allowable area of a Window Sign in Residential Districts to one-third the area of the total area of a business's windows and clear doors.

Background Information

This ordinance contains findings detailing the need for a fast, predictable, and transparent permitting process, which will create new jobs, businesses, and homes, as well as facilitate the City's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by removing barriers to active streetscapes in the City's downtown neighborhoods.

This ordinance incorporates amendments made at the June 30, 2025 meeting of the Land Use and Transportation Committee. Those amendments:

- C-3 Districts
 - exempt from FAR requirements any new Gross Floor Area created in a C-3 District through a change of use on the ground floor (§ 124); and
 - exempt C-3 Districts from ground floor active use requirements through December 31, 2030 (§ 145.4).
- RC Districts
 - conditionally permit laboratory and catering uses on the ground floor in RC Districts.
- RH-DTR Districts
 - principally permit in the RH-DTR District all uses in designated landmark or contributory buildings within an Article 10 District, or buildings listed on or eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources, subject to review by the Zoning Administrator and the Historic Preservation Commission (§ 803.9); and
 - exempt the foregoing buildings in RH-DTR Districts from ground floor active use requirements (§ 145.4).
- Transparency and Fenestration
 - make clarifying edits to transparency and fenestration requirements and delete references to Window and Interior Signs.
- Signs

FILE NO. 250542

- delete references to Interior Signs in the original ordinance and instead narrowed the definition of a Window Sign to one that only touches the glass of a building so as to be seen from the outside;
- clarify that no permit or Planning review is required for signs listed in Section 604(c)
- expand the existing change in copy and painted sign exceptions; and
- expand the allowable area of Window Signs.

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PERMITSF REFORMING CITY PERMITTING PROCESSES



PermitSF

Item 2

250538 - Priority Processing for Certain Commercial Uses

Proposal: Consolidate the two priority permit processing programs into one codified program.



49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400
San Francisco, CA 94103
www.sfpplanning.org

COMMUNITY BUSINESS PRIORITY PROCESSING PROGRAM (CB3P) CHECKLIST FOR ELIGIBILITY

The CB3P streamlines the Conditional Use process for certain small and mid-sized businesses applications.

Projects that qualify for, and enroll in, the CB3P are guaranteed (1) a hearing date within 90 days of filing a complete application and (2) placement on the Planning Commission's consent calendar. The analysis of CB3P-projects is documented through a two-page Project Summary and Motion ("PS&M") rather than the lengthier Executive Summary and Draft Motion documents prepared in connection with conventional applications.

WHAT TO SUBMIT:

- One (1) complete checklist (available on the next page) documenting eligibility for applications.

THE PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS:

The following types of projects require a Pre-Application Meeting Notification. Please be aware that a Pre-Application meeting is also required.



SEC. 303.2. PRIORITY PROCESSING FOR CERTAIN USES IN COMMERCIAL SPACE: EXPEDITED CONDITIONAL USE REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS AND REDUCED APPLICATION FEE.

(a) Findings.

- In April 2013, the Planning Commission adopted the Small Business Priority Processing Pilot Program. The stated goal of the pilot program was to business applications without compromising the review times of other applications.
- Building on the success of the pilot program, Planning Department staff in consultation with staff from the Office of Small Business proposed expansion of applications. The expanded program was adopted by the Planning Commission in February 2015 and renamed the Community Business Priority Process Commission's adoption Resolution No. 19323, the intent was to support the business community – especially small and mid-sized businesses – and to increase Commission and Department handle related applications.
- By enacting this Section 303.2, the Board of Supervisors underscores the importance of small and mid-sized businesses to the economic vitality of the City as a whole, its residents, and visitors. The intent of this Section 303.2 is to expedite the review and hearing process for these vital small and mid-size public notice and input or the review times of other applications, and to build upon the success of the Community Business Priority Process Program by exp and ensuring that all eligible projects are considered accordingly, while preserving critical opportunities for community input and accountability to the legal
- The Calle 24 Special Use District is still in its infancy, and due to its unique history and special identity the projects within its boundaries require special enhancement, and support its character. It is, therefore, exempted from the priority processing provisions of this Section 303.2.

BAY AREA // HEATHER KNIGHT

All they wanted was to open a noodle shop. Their tangle with S.F. bureaucracy has them regretting they tried

By Heather Knight, Columnist
Updated Nov 15, 2021 9:38 a.m.



LOCAL // HEATHER KNIGHT

He spent \$200,000 trying to open an S.F. ice cream shop, but was no match for city bureaucracy

By Heather Knight, Columnist
Updated April 21, 2021 9:13 a.m.



Yoko and Chris Tan have been unable to open a restaurant in S.F.'s Inner



Jason Yu stands outside the commercial space on 20th Street that he has been trying to turn into an ice cream shop for 16 months in San Francisco. After spending \$200,000 on rent, an architect, a lawyer, equipment and fees, he still has nothing to show for it and has given up on the idea. See Susaki / The Chronicle

Hospitals and Clinics Get Rx Discounts.

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Item 3

250539 - Existing Awning, Sign, and Gate Amnesty Program; Design Standards for Gates, Railings, and Grillwork

- Proposal: Allow businesses with security gates to participate in amnesty program and ease transparency requirements for security gates, allowing them to be 100% non-transparent.
- Approx. 100 small businesses currently facing Planning Code violation complaints for security gate installations without a permit
- Examples: Businesses along Grant Ave and Mission Street with pending complaints for unpermitted gates



Item 4

250542 - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements; Sales & Service Uses in the C-3 and RC District

Storefront Transparency

- Proposal: Exempt certain critical uses from storefront transparency requirements
- Example: A Child Care Facility received a complaint for violating the storefront transparency requirement; they did not want children visible from a busy corridor



Business Signs

- Proposal: Remove permit requirement for business signs painted on building facades, window signs and interior signs.
- Example: Both businesses shown below received complaints for unpermitted signs; they had to obtain a permit to close out the complaint. One business owner came to the Permit Center twice and spent several hours there.



Item 4 (cont)

250542 - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements; Sales & Service Uses in the C-3 and RC District

Downtown Uses

- Proposal: Principally permit certain non-retail sales and service uses on the ground floor in the Downtown-Commercial (C-3) Districts, including office, business services, and trade offices through 2030.



Example of activated ground floor workspace downtown



Residential-Commercial Districts

- Proposal: Ease the filling of non-ground floor vacancies within Residential-Commercial (RC) Districts by principally permitting retail sales and service uses and non-retail sales and services uses at the second floor and above.
- Example: Industrial design studio on the second floor along Van Ness Ave received a complaint and would need to vacate its space because the use is not currently permitted.



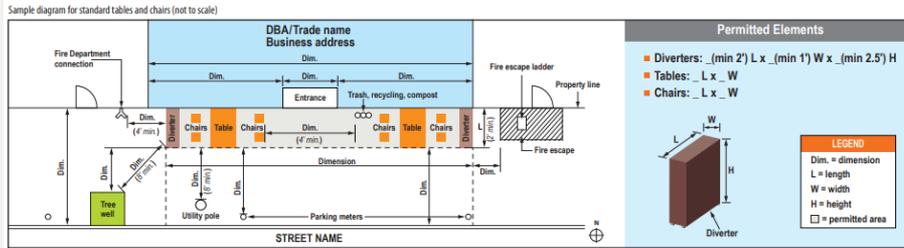
Van Ness Ave

Item 5

250541 - Café Tables and Chairs, Display Merchandise, Appurtenant Building Features, and Sidewalk Shared Spaces

Current Tables and Chairs Requirements

- Permit application + fee
 - A typical business pays approximately \$1,000
- Certificate of Insurance
- Site plan



New Process

- Registration (no fee)
- Attestation to operating guidelines and program requirements
- Administrative penalties on second and subsequent valid and unaddressed violations



Approx. 215 businesses currently hold Tables and Chairs permits

Item 5 (cont)

250541 - Café Tables and Chairs, Display Merchandise, Appurtenant Building Features, and Sidewalk Shared Spaces

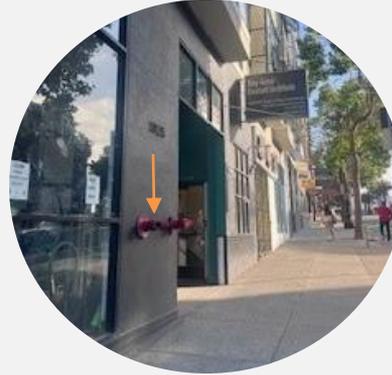
Eliminate minor encroachment permits for routine tenant improvements

Businesses spend significant time and money for permits to install:

- Door actuators, wheelchair lifts, or other elements constructed for compliant with accessibility standards
- Water spouts, standpipes, outswinging doors, and security gates – which are affixed to the building extending no more than four inches into the public right of way

These permits can cost thousands of dollars upfront, and they are assessed an annual fee thereafter.

Applications for accessibility related sidewalk improvements commonly take 6 –12 months.



Item 6

250540 - Temporary Use Authorizations

- Proposal: Simplify and clarify the duration of allowable temporary uses, and clarify and expand the definition of "Retail Pop Up" uses



Example: Retail sales activities within RH-1 District – Outer Sunset Farmers Market

Current Temporary Use Authorization Categories

TEMPORARY USE CATEGORY

Check the box for the temporary use category into which the proposed use would fall. Please note that this summary table in no way supersedes Planning Code Section 205 et. seq. or Section 211.1(g) which provide greater detail on allowable uses and conditions of operation. If the proposed use does not conform to one of the following categories it cannot be approved as a Temporary Use.

	USE TYPE	MAXIMUM TIME LIMIT	ZONING DISTRICT	CODE SECTION
<input type="checkbox"/>	A Neighborhood festival sponsored by residents in the vicinity	60 days	all	205.1(a)
<input type="checkbox"/>	B Neighborhood festival sponsored by property owners or businesses in the vicinity	60 days	NC, Mixed Use, PDR, C, M	205.1(a)
<input type="checkbox"/>	C Booth for charitable, patriotic or welfare purpose	60 days	all	205.1(b)
<input type="checkbox"/>	D Open air sale of seasonal decorations such as Christmas trees or Halloween pumpkins.	60 days	all	205.1(c)
<input type="checkbox"/>	E Outdoor "intermittent activities" such as mobile food facilities (a.k.a. street food) or farmers markets	3 days/week or 6 twelve-hour days/week for 1 year	all except RH, RM, RED, RTO	205.4
<input type="checkbox"/>	F Mobile food facilities located in P Districts larger than one acre	1 year, no hourly/daily limit	P	205.4(b)(3)
<input type="checkbox"/>	G Rental or sales office incidental to a new residential development	1 year	all	205.2(b)
<input type="checkbox"/>	H Automobile wrecking	2 years	M-1, M-2	205.2(c)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I Structures and uses incidental to construction activities	2 years	all	205.2(a)
<input type="checkbox"/>	J Celebration or exhibition sponsored by a residential or commercial occupant(s)	single 24-hour event per month for 1 year	PDR, C, M, NC, Mixed Use Districts	205.3(a) & (b)
<input type="checkbox"/>	K Wireless facility	1 year	all where WTS permitted	205.2(d)
<input type="checkbox"/>	L Temporary uses on Public Property	3 years	P	211.1(g)
<input type="checkbox"/>	M "Pop Up" retail or Host Facility	60 days	all; limited in R-districts; must be within either a vacant commercial space or a space occupied by a legally established Commercial Use.	205.1(d)
<input type="checkbox"/>	N Long Term parking of and overnight camping in vehicles and ancillary uses	2 years	NCT-2, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 6973, Lot No. 039	205.2(f)
<input type="checkbox"/>	O Interim Uses within Bars and Entertainment Uses	Not to exceed 4 years from effective date of any such authorization, provided that the period terminates within 6 years of December 18, 2020	all	205.6
<input type="checkbox"/>	P Arts Activities, Social Service or Philanthropic Facilities, and COVID-19 Relief and Recovery uses in vacant storefronts	2 years, may be extended for an additional 2 years	all except R districts	205.7
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q Entertainment, Arts, and Recreational Uses in outdoor areas/temporary structures and ancillary uses of indoor areas	1 year, may be extended for 1 additional year; Maximum daily hours 9 a.m. - 10 p.m.	all	205.8
<input type="checkbox"/>	R Interim Activities on Development Sites	36 months may be extended up to 12 months	Eligible development sites as identified in Sec. 205.5	205.5
<input type="checkbox"/>	S Pop-Up Activations	1 year	Certain streets within C-2 or C-3 districts	205.2(a)(2)



October 24, 2014

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk
Honorable Mayor Lurie
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 Numbers 2025-004733PCA, 2025-004734PCA, 2025-004737PCA and 2025-004740PCA: Permit SF Planning Code Amendments**
Board File Nos. 250542, 250540, 250539 and 250538

Planning Commission Recommendation:	250542: Approval with Modification
	250540: Approval
	250539: Approval
	250538: Approval with Modification

Dear Ms. Calvillo and Mayor Lurie,

On June 26, 2025, the Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider four proposed Ordinance, introduced by Mayor Lurie, that would amend the Planning Code, and are associated with the mayor's Permit SF effort. At the hearing, the Planning Commission adopted a recommendation for approval for all four ordinances, with recommended amendments for two of the ordinances, as noted above.

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.

Mayor Lurie, 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron D. Starr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Aaron D. Starr
Manager of Legislative Affairs

cc: Austin Yang, Deputy City Attorney
Guilia Gualco-Nelson, Deputy City Attorney
Robb Kapla, Deputy City Attorney
Katy Tang, Office of Small Business
John Carroll, Office of the Clerk of the Board

ATTACHMENTS :

Planning Commission Resolution
Planning Department Executive Summary



PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 21758

HEARING DATE: June 26, 2025

Project Name: Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts
Case Number: 2025-004733PCA [Board File No. 250542]
Initiated by: Mayor Lurie / Introduced May 20, 2025
Staff Contact: aaron starr, Legislative Affairs
aaron.starr@sfgov.org, 628-652-7533

RESOLUTION ADOPTING A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL WITH MODIFICATIONS OF A PROPOSED ORDINANCE THAT WOULD AMEND THE PLANNING CODE TO 1) PRINCIPALLY PERMIT CERTAIN NON-RETAIL SALES AND SERVICE USES, INCLUDING GENERAL OFFICE, DESIGN PROFESSIONAL, BUSINESS SERVICES, NON-RETAIL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, AND TRADE OFFICES, ON THE GROUND FLOOR IN THE C-3 (“DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL”) DISTRICTS THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2030, AFTER WHICH SUCH USES WILL BE CONDITIONALLY PERMITTED; 2) PRINCIPALLY PERMIT RETAIL SALES AND SERVICE USES ON THE SECOND FLOOR AND ABOVE IN THE RC (“RESIDENTIAL-COMMERCIAL”) DISTRICTS; 3) PRINCIPALLY PERMIT NON-RETAIL SALES AND SERVICE USES ON THE SECOND FLOOR AND ABOVE IN THE RC DISTRICTS; 4) UPDATE TRANSPARENCY AND FENESTRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GROUND FLOOR ACTIVE USES AND EXEMPT CHILD CARE FACILITIES, HOMELESS SHELTERS, MORTUARIES, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CLINICS, AND SCHOOL USES FROM THOSE REQUIREMENTS; 5) DEFINE AN INTERIOR SIGN AND THE APPLICABLE STANDARDS FOR INTERIOR SIGNS; 6) EXEMPT INTERIOR SIGNS OF SIX SQUARE FEET OR LESS AND BUSINESS AND IDENTIFYING SIGNS PAINTED ON BUILDING FACADES FROM A PERMIT UNDER THE PLANNING CODE; 7) MODIFY THE DEFINITION OF A NON-RESIDENTIAL USE FOR THE PURPOSES OF CERTAIN DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEE WAIVERS; AND 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 May 20, 2025 Mayor Lurie introduced a proposed Ordinance under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter “Board”) File Number 250542, which would amend the Planning Code to 1) principally permit certain non-retail sales and service uses, including general office, design professional, business services, non-retail professional services, and trade offices, on the ground floor in the C-3 (“Downtown Commercial”) Districts through December 31, 2030, after which such uses will be conditionally permitted; 2) principally permit retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC (“Residential-Commercial”) Districts; 3) principally permit non-retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC Districts; 4) update transparency and fenestration requirements for ground floor active uses and exempt child care facilities, homeless shelters, mortuaries, religious institutions, reproductive health clinics, and school uses from those requirements; 5) define an Interior Sign and the applicable standards for Interior Signs; 6) exempt Interior Signs of six square feet or less and Business and Identifying Signs painted on building facades from a permit under the Planning Code; and 7) modify the definition of a Non-Residential Use for the purposes of certain development impact fee waivers; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance on June 26, 2025; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Ordinance has been determined to be categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Section 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 recommendations are as follows:

1. Sign changes:
 - a. Eliminate Interior Sign references. Instead define a Window Sign as a Sign that touches only the inside or outside of a Window.
 - b. Change the way Window Sign area is measured from “ the area as a function of the window on which the Sign is displayed” to “the area as a function of all the individual business’s ground floor windows, regardless of which window the Sign is displayed on.”
 - c. Increase permitted Window Sign area in R Districts from one-fourth to one-third of the area of the business’s ground floor windows.

- d. Expand existing change of copy exception to include signs that do not customarily involve a change in copy, provided that the change in copy does not require a building permit, does not constitute a change from general advertising to non-general advertising sign copy or from non-general advertising to general advertising sign copy, and does not increase Area, Height, Illumination, or Projection, excluding any of the aforementioned changes that affect only the copy on the Sign
 - e. Expand existing painted sign exception to include all Window or Wall Signs applied on door, window, or any building façade except (A) Signs located in Public and Residential Districts; (B) Signs that would otherwise require review and approval under Articles 10 and 11; (C) Signs that require a building permit; and (D) General Advertising Signs.
 - f. Clarify that the signs listed in 604(c) do not require a Planning approval or review.
2. Transparency:
 - a. Remove Interior and Window Sign exception to transparency requirements
 - b. Other minor clarifying edits to transparency requirements.
 3. Facilitate ground floor office uses by:
 - a. amending Sec. 124 to exempt new Gross Floor Area created in a C-3 District through a change of use on the ground floor of space that was devoted to uses previously excluded from Gross Floor Area per Section 102
 - b. Exempting C-3 Districts from 145.4 [required ground floor commercial uses] through December 31, 2030.
 4. RH-DTR changes:
 - a. Exempting Historic Buildings in the RH-DTR District from 145.4 [required ground floor commercial uses] through December 31, 2030
 - b. Amending 803.9 to principally permit all uses in certain historic buildings in RH-DTR, subject to certain exceptions
 5. Allow Laboratory and Catering Uses in the RC Zoning Districts with CU Authorization.

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 the proposed ordinance advances multiple policy goals related to economic recovery, regulatory clarity, and neighborhood vitality. By codifying long-standing staff interpretations of fenestration and signage standards, the ordinance enhances transparency and predictability for applicants—particularly small businesses and nonprofits—who may otherwise struggle with the ambiguity of case-by-case review.

The Commission finds that the ordinance facilitates more flexible use of ground-floor space in Downtown Commercial (C-3) districts, allowing for office-related amenities and institutional uses that can contribute to a more active and resilient downtown.

General Plan Compliance

The proposed Ordinance is consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1

MANAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CHANGE TO ENSURE ENHANCEMENT OF THE TOTAL CITY LIVING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT.

Policy 1.1

Encourage development which provides substantial net benefits and minimizes undesirable consequences. Discourage development which has substantial undesirable consequences that cannot be mitigated.

The ordinance streamlines land use regulations by reducing permitting barriers for a wider range of commercial and institutional uses in Downtown Commercial (C-3) zoning districts and clarifying transparency standards for ground-floor activation. These changes create net economic and regulatory benefits without undermining the character or functionality of existing neighborhoods.

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.

By enabling a broader range of service, office, and institutional uses on the ground floor in the C-3 Districts and easing signage regulations citywide, the ordinance helps support small businesses, cultural organizations, and nonprofits—many of which serve diverse communities. The ordinance contributes to economic vitality while enhancing neighborhood flexibility and cultural expression.

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1

EMPHASIS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC PATTERN WHICH GIVES TO THE CITY AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS AN IMAGE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND A MEANS OF ORIENTATION.

Policy 1.6

Make centers of activity more prominent through design of street features and by other means.

The ordinance supports revitalization of Downtown Commercial districts by enabling a greater diversity of uses to occupy ground-floor spaces. This flexibility enhances the role of downtown as a civic and economic center and reinforces its visibility and presence within the city fabric.

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 June 26, 2025



Jonas P Ionin

Digitally signed by Jonas P Ionin
Date: 2025.06.27 09:25:11 -07'00'

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Campbell, Williams, Braun, Imperial, Moore and So.
NOES: None
ABSENT: McGarry
ADOPTED: June 26, 2025



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLANNING CODE TEXT AMENDMENT

HEARING DATE: June 26, 2025

90-Day Deadline: August 18, 2025

Project Name: Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts
Case Number: 2025-004733PCA [Board File No. 250542]
Initiated by: Mayor Lurie / Introduced May 20, 2025
Staff Contact: Aaron Starr, Legislative Affairs
aaron.starr@sfgov.org, 628-652-7533
Environmental Review: Not a Project Under CEQA

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt of Recommendation for Approval with Modifications

Planning Code Amendment

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to 1) principally permit certain non-retail sales and service uses, including general office, design professional, business services, non-retail professional services, and trade offices, on the ground floor in the C-3 (“Downtown Commercial”) Districts through December 31, 2030, after which such uses will be conditionally permitted; 2) principally permit retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC (“Residential-Commercial”) Districts; 3) principally permit non-retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC Districts; 4) update transparency and fenestration requirements for ground floor active uses and exempt child care facilities, homeless shelters, mortuaries, religious institutions, reproductive health clinics, and school uses from those requirements; 5) define an Interior Sign and the applicable standards for Interior Signs; 6) exempt Interior Signs of six square feet or less and Business and Identifying Signs painted on building facades from a permit under the Planning Code; and

7) modify the definition of a Non-Residential Use for the purposes of certain development impact fee waivers.

	The Way It Is Now:	The Way It Would Be:
1	The Planning Code contains transparency requirements in Section 145.1. The Planning Department developed guidelines, published on the Planning Department’s website, to better illustrate how businesses can comply with the Planning Code Section 145.1 requirements.	The Transparency requirements in Section 145.1 would be amended and refined by incorporating the guidelines developed by the Planning Department. Note: these transparency requirements are only intended to apply during business hours, and not when the business is closed.
2	PDR uses are exempt from the transparency requirements in Section 145.1	In addition to PDR uses, Child Care Facility, Homeless Shelters, Mortuaries, Religious Institution, Reproductive Health Clinic, Schools, and any Social or Health Service Use proposed on-site with either a Homeless Shelter or an affordable housing project would be exempt from the Transparency Requirements Section 145.1.
3	Retail Sales and Service Uses require Conditional Use if located above the ground floor in RC Districts.	Retail Sales and Services uses would be Principally Permitted above the ground floor in RC Zoning Districts.
4	Non-Retail Sales and Service Uses are Prohibited in RC Zoning Districts.	Non-Retail Sales and Service Uses would be principally permitted above the ground floor and not permitted on the ground floor in RC Zoning Districts.
5	Certain Non-Retail Sales and Service Uses, like Offices, require CU authorization if located on the ground floor in C-3 (Downtown) zoning districts.	Certain Non-Retail Sales and Service Uses, like offices, located on the ground floor would be principally permitted on the ground floor in the C-3 (downtown) zoning districts until December 31, 2030. After that time CU authorization would be required.
6	Change of Use is not defined in the Planning Code.	Change of Use would be defined in Planning Code Section 102.
7	The definition of Replacement Use, which is used when calculating <i>for impact fees, credits, or waivers under Article 4</i> , does not include a	The definition of replacement use would be amended to include a provision that accounts for when a space has no legally established use. The

	provision for when space has no legally established use.	added wording would be as follows. <i>“For purposes of calculating any impact fees, credits, or waivers under Article 4, if the Gross Floor Area to be demolished has no legally established use, the replacement of use shall consider the last legal use.”</i>
8	Planning Code Section 406 provides for a waiver of development impact fees and requirements for Non-Residential uses that will be converted into a residential use, subject to certain eligibility conditions. Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR) Uses are not classified as Non-Residential Uses.	This ordinance amends Planning Code Section 406(j) to make existing PDR uses eligible for the residential conversion development impact fee and requirements waiver.
9	Planning Code Section 604 stipulates that “Signs painted on a door or window do not require a permit.”	This provision would be clarified by stipulating “Business or identifying signs” painted on a door or window, and expanded to include “signs painted directly on a building façade.”
10	The Planning Code does not specifically define Interior signs.	Planning Code Section 602- Sign Definitions - would be amended to include a definition of an interior sign that would read as follows: <i>A Sign that is located in the interior of a building within four feet of any window or clear door through which the Sign is visible but not including a Window Sign.</i> Further the Code would now stipulate that no permit shall be required for “an interior business or identifying sign measuring six square feet or less.”
11	Interior Sign controls are not included in the sign controls for various zoning districts	Interior sign controls would be added to the sign controls for various zoning districts. Controls would be <i>“The total Area of all Interior Signs shall not exceed one-third the area of the window or clear door through which the Interior Sign is visible.”</i> For Residential and Residential Enclave Districts the limit would be one-quarter of the area of the window.
12	A Window Sign is defined as a sign painted directly on a window	Window sign definitions would be amended. Instead of being <i>“a sign painted directly on a window”</i> it would be <i>“be a sign located directly on a window or clear door”</i>

Background

This ordinance builds on the City’s broader PermitSF initiative to streamline permitting processes and support economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing that downtown San Francisco continues to experience high vacancy rates and slower economic rebound compared to other neighborhoods, the Planning Department identified outdated land use controls and overly restrictive fenestration standards as barriers to ground floor activation and tenant flexibility. Previous Planning Code requirements limit the ability of certain service-oriented uses—such as general offices or trade services—to occupy ground-floor spaces in the C-3 Districts, even on a temporary basis. In response, the sponsor is advancing this legislation to modernize use permissions, codify existing interpretations related to transparency requirements, and simplify sign regulations, with the goal of improving customer experience, reducing permitting delays, and encouraging a broader range of active, community-serving uses in key commercial corridors.

Issues and Considerations

Existing Sign Controls

The ordinance codifies long-standing guidelines developed by Planning Department staff to interpret transparency and sign controls, creating clear, consistent standards within the Planning Code. By moving these interpretations into the Code itself, the ordinance eliminates ambiguity for applicants and staff, streamlining the permitting process and reducing the need for case-by-case discretion. This is especially beneficial for small business owners, who often lack the resources to navigate complex or unclear regulations. Codification ensures that all applicants are held to the same objective criteria, improving predictability, reducing processing time, and making it easier for neighborhood-serving businesses to comply with signage requirements and activate their storefronts.

Window and Painted Signs

The ordinance recognizes the need for greater flexibility in regulating window and painted signs, particularly for small businesses that rely on simple, cost-effective methods to advertise their presence and attract customers. Many of these businesses—especially immigrant-owned and neighborhood-serving establishments—face disproportionate challenges navigating the City’s permitting process for signage. By exempting small interior signs and painted business or identifying signs on building facades from requiring a separate Planning Code permit, the ordinance reduces administrative burdens and compliance costs. This change supports economic resilience, improves equity in how the City regulates commercial storefronts, and helps maintain vibrant, visually engaging streetscapes that reflect the character and diversity of San Francisco’s neighborhoods.

Downtown Ground Floor Uses

The ordinance supports downtown revitalization by introducing greater flexibility for ground floor uses in C-3 districts, allowing non-retail service and office-related functions—such as gyms, cafeterias, or other amenities accessory to office space—to operate without requiring Conditional Use authorization through December 31, 2030. Under current regulations, such uses are often discouraged or prohibited outright due to

their classification as accessory to office, even when they contribute to a more vibrant and active streetscape. By removing these barriers on a temporary basis, the ordinance gives property owners and tenants the opportunity to adapt creatively to evolving market demands and tenant expectations. If these changes prove ineffective or result in unintended consequences, the time-limited nature of the policy ensures the City can reassess and adjust course as needed.

General Plan Compliance

The proposed ordinance is consistent with the General Plan because it streamlines permitting for a broader range of commercial and institutional uses in Downtown Commercial (C-3) districts and simplifies transparency and signage regulations citywide. These changes provide substantial net benefits by supporting small businesses, nonprofits, and cultural organizations, while reinforcing the economic vitality and visual prominence of key activity centers. The ordinance aligns with policies that encourage flexible, inclusive, and pedestrian-oriented development, contributing to a resilient local economy and a more engaging urban environment.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

This ordinance advances race and social equity by easing regulatory burdens for a variety of community-serving and culturally significant land uses across Residential-Commercial (RC) districts and citywide sign controls. By removing barriers for uses such as child care facilities, reproductive health clinics, schools, and homeless shelters—many of which primarily serve low-income, immigrant, and historically marginalized populations—the ordinance helps improve access to critical services in neighborhoods where residents have faced longstanding structural inequities.

Exempting these uses from fenestration and transparency requirements recognizes their unique operational needs for safety and privacy. For example, reproductive health clinics and shelters often serve clients at heightened risk of harassment or trauma. Enabling such uses to operate without conflict with design-based transparency standards helps reduce permitting friction and ensures these services can locate within communities that need them most.

Additionally, the changes to sign permitting reduce compliance burdens that disproportionately affect small, immigrant-owned businesses. Many such businesses operate on slim margins and are more vulnerable to enforcement actions stemming from minor code violations. Streamlining regulations for interior and painted signs creates a more equitable regulatory environment while supporting neighborhood vibrancy and cultural expression.

Together, these reforms support a more inclusive city by ensuring the Planning Code does not unduly burden uses and services vital to San Francisco's diverse communities, particularly in underserved or lower-resourced areas.

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. Sign changes:
 - a. Eliminate Interior Sign references. Instead define a Window Sign as a Sign that touches only the inside or outside of a Window.
 - b. Change the way Window Sign area is measured from “ the area as a function of the window on which the Sign is displayed” to “the area as a function of all the individual business’s ground floor windows, regardless of which window the Sign is displayed on.”
 - c. Increase permitted Window Sign area in R Districts from one-fourth to one-third of the area of the business’s ground floor windows.
 - d. Expand existing change of copy exception to include signs that do not customarily involve a change in copy, provided that the change in copy does not require a building permit, does not constitute a change from general advertising to non-general advertising sign copy or from non-general advertising to general advertising sign copy, and does not increase Area, Height, Illumination, or Projection, excluding any of the aforementioned changes that affect only the copy on the Sign
 - e. Expand existing painted sign exception to include all Window or Wall Signs applied on door, window, or any building façade except (A) Signs located in Public and Residential Districts; (B) Signs that would otherwise require review and approval under Articles 10 and 11; (C) Signs that require a building permit; and (D) General Advertising Signs.
 - f. Clarify that the signs listed in 604(c) do not require a Planning approval or review.
2. Transparency:
 - a. Remove Interior and Window Sign exception to transparency requirements
 - b. Other minor clarifying edits to transparency requirements.
3. Facilitate ground floor office uses by:
 - a. amending Sec. 124 to exempt new Gross Floor Area created in a C-3 District through a change of use on the ground floor of space that was devoted to uses previously excluded from Gross Floor Area per Section 102
 - b. Exempting C-3 Districts from 145.4 [required ground floor commercial uses] through December 31, 2030.
4. RH-DTR changes:
 - a. Exempting RH-DTR District from 145.4 [required ground floor commercial uses] through December 31, 2030
 - b. Amending 803.9 to principally permit all uses in certain historic buildings in RH-DTR, subject to certain exceptions

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends approval of the proposed ordinance because it advances multiple policy goals related to economic recovery, regulatory clarity, and neighborhood vitality. By codifying long-standing staff

interpretations of fenestration and signage standards, the ordinance enhances transparency and predictability for applicants—particularly small businesses and nonprofits—who may otherwise struggle with the ambiguity of case-by-case review. It also facilitates more flexible use of ground-floor space in Downtown Commercial (C-3) districts, allowing for office-related amenities and institutional uses that can contribute to a more active and resilient downtown. Together, these targeted changes support a more efficient permitting process, a fairer regulatory environment, and a more vibrant and adaptable urban streetscape.

During review of the proposed ordinance staff identified some modifications that would help further advance the goals of this ordinance. Those modifications are as follows:

Recommendation 1: Sign Changes

- a. **Eliminate Interior Sign References-** The proposed ordinance creates a new definition for Interior Signs and would now stipulate that no permit shall be required for *“an interior business or identifying sign measuring six square feet or less.”* This was done to help reduce permitting requirements for signs; however, it has inadvertently created a situation where you would need a permit for an interior sign that does not meet the 6 sq. ft. rule. Currently interior signs do not need a permit. Expanding what types of signs need a permit is not the goal of this ordinance. Staff is proposing that the proposed definition and references are removed.
- b. **Window Sign Area Measurement-** Window signs are based on the window area where the sign is located. Staff are proposing to allow window signs to take up to one-third the total area of all the windows a business has. This provides more flexibility for the business.
- c. **Window Sign area in R Districts-** Window signs in R and RED Districts are limited to one-quarter of the area of the window while all other zoning districts are limited to one-third. Staff are proposing to increase it to one-third in R and RED Districts so that the standard is consistent across all zoning districts.
- d. **Change of Copy Exception-** Currently, only signs that have a regular change in copy, like a movie marquee sign, do not require a permit if the copy is changed. Staff are proposing to allow any sign to change copy so long as a permit is not required for other reasons.
- e. **Painted Sign Exception-** Only Business or Identifying Wall or Window Signs are exempt from a permit. Staff are proposing to allow ALL Wall or Window Signs to be exempt from a permit, unless they are a General Advertising Signs, Signs that would require review and approval under Articles 10 and 11, Signs that require a building permit, and Signs in residential districts.
- f. **Clarify 604(c)-** Signs under this section do not require a permit; however, the language is not clear. Staff is proposing that clarifying language be added to this section that reads: *“No permit or Planning approval that would otherwise be required by this Article 6 shall be required for the Signs in this subsection (c) to the extent such Signs are permitted by this Code. A Planning approval may*

nonetheless be obtained on a voluntary basis for any of the Signs in this subsection (c)."

Recommendation 2: Transparency:

- a. **Interior and Window Sign exception-** The recommended modification would delete Section 145.1(c)(6)(C)(ii) to be consistent with the proposed modifications under signs above.
- b. **Clarifying Edits to Transparency-** Other clarifying edits would be made to the transparency section consistent with the changes above.

Recommendation 3: Facilitate ground floor office uses.

- a. **Exempt new Gross Floor Area-** Allowing ground floor office in the C-3 would put some projects over their FAR limit since some of those existing uses were exempt from FAR limits. The intention of this ordinance is to make it as easy as possible to activate these ground floor spaces, so staff are proposing this modification to exempt ground floor spaces converted to offices uses on the ground floor from FAR limits.
- b. **Exempting C-3 Districts from 145.4-** This Planning Code section requires ground floors to be occupied by certain commercial uses in certain zoning districts. In keeping with the intent of this ordinance, staff are proposing that ground floors in the C-3 be exempt from this requirement until December 31, 2030.

Recommendation 4: RH-DTR changes:

- a. **Exempting RH-DTR (Downtown Residential) District from 145.4-** This recommendation is consistent with the amendment above for the C-3 Districts.
- b. **Principally Permit all Uses in Certain Historic Buildings in RH-DTR-** This section currently only applies to Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts. Staff are proposing to amend this section so that it includes Downtown Residential Districts, and that all uses are permitted in historic buildings in Downtown Residential Districts. Historic Preservation Commission review and approval would still be required.

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) 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. 250542



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
DANIEL L. LURIE, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
DIRECTOR KATY TANG

June 24, 2025

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board
City Hall Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

RE: BOS File No. 250542 – Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts - Support

Dear Ms. Calvillo,

On June 23, 2025, the Small Business Commission (the Commission) heard BOS File No. 250542 – Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts. The legislation would remove the permit requirement and fees for most common business signs, including business signs painted on building facades and interior business signs, including those on the window. It would also exempt certain uses from the City's storefront transparency requirements, including child care facilities.

The Commission supported the legislation with a 6-0 vote, with one Commissioner absent. Thank you for considering the Commission's recommendations. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katy Tang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katy Tang
Director, Office of Small Business

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689
Tel. No. (415) 554-5184
Fax No. (415) 554-5163
TDD/TTY No. (415) 554-5227

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 28, 2025
To: Planning Department/Planning Commission
From: John Carroll, Assistant Clerk, Land Use and Transportation Committee
Subject: Board of Supervisors Legislation Referral - File No. 250542
Planning Code - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Determination
(California Public Resources Code, Sections 21000 et seq.)
 - Ordinance / Resolution
 - Ballot Measure

Not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378 and 15060(c)(2) because it would not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment.
6/4/2025 *Joy Navarrete*
- 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.

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689
Tel. No. (415) 554-5184
Fax No. (415) 554-5163
TDD/TTY No. (415) 554-5227

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sarah Dennis-Phillips, Executive Director, Office of Economic and Workforce Development

FROM: John Carroll, Assistant Clerk, Land Use and Transportation Committee

DATE: May 28, 2025

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

The Board of Supervisors' Land Use and Transportation Committee has received the following proposed legislation, introduced by Mayor Lurie on May 20, 2025.

File No. 250542

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to 1) principally permit certain non-retail sales and service uses, including general office, design professional, business services, non-retail professional services, and trade offices, on the ground floor in the C-3 ("Downtown Commercial") Districts through December 31, 2030, after which such uses will be conditionally permitted; 2) principally permit retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC ("Residential-Commercial") Districts; 3) principally permit non-retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC Districts; 4) update transparency and fenestration requirements for ground floor active uses and exempt child care facilities, homeless shelters, mortuaries, religious institutions, reproductive health clinics, and school uses from those requirements; 5) define an Interior Sign and the applicable standards for Interior Signs; 6) exempt Interior Signs of six square feet or less and Business and Identifying Signs painted on building facades from a permit under the Planning Code; 7) modify the definition of a Non-Residential Use for the purposes of certain development impact fee waivers; 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 pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302.

If you have comments or reports to be included with the file, please forward them to me at the Board of Supervisors, City Hall, Room 244, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102 or by email at: john.carroll@sfgov.org.

cc:

Offices of Chair Melgar and Mayor Lurie
Anne Taupier, Office of Economic and Workforce Development
Alesandra Lozano, Office of Economic and Workforce Development

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco 94102-4689
Tel. No. (415) 554-5184
Fax No. (415) 554-5163
TDD/TTY No. (415) 554-5227

MEMORANDUM

TO: Budget and Legislative Analyst

FROM: John Carroll, Assistant Clerk, Land Use and Transportation Committee

DATE: July 3, 2025

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION AMENDED - FISCAL IMPACT DETERMINATION

The Board of Supervisors' Land Use and Transportation Committee (a nonfiscal committee) amended the following legislation on June 30, 2025. Pursuant to Administrative Code, Section 2.6-3, the new version is being forwarded to you as it was initially determined not to have fiscal impact.

File No. 250542-2

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to 1) principally permit certain non-retail sales and service uses, including general office, design professional, business services, non-retail professional services, and trade offices, on the ground floor in the C-3 ("Downtown Commercial") Districts through December 31, 2030, after which such uses will be conditionally permitted, and make accompanying revisions to required ground floor uses and Floor Area Ratio; 2) principally permit retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC ("Residential-Commercial") Districts; 3) principally permit non-retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above, and conditionally permit catering and laboratory uses on the ground floor in the RC Districts; 4) update transparency and fenestration requirements for ground floor active uses and exempt child care facilities, homeless shelters, mortuaries, religious institutions, reproductive health clinics, and school uses from those requirements; 5) modify the definition of a Window Sign; 6) modify Planning review and approval of changes in copy of a Sign and Wall and Window Signs applied to doors, windows, or building facades; 7) modify the definition of a Non-Residential Use for the purposes of certain development impact fee waivers; and 8) modify permitted and required ground floor uses in the RH-DTR ("Rincon Hill Downtown Residential") District, including uses in certain historic buildings, subject to various conditions; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and 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 pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302.

If the new version is determined to have fiscal impact, the legislation will need to be referred to a fiscal committee before it can be referred to the full Board for approval.

Please send your determination or contact with me any questions at (415) 554-4445 or email: john.carroll@sfgov.org.

RESPONSE FROM THE BUDGET AND LEGISLATIVE ANALYST - Date: _____

____ This matter has fiscal impact.

____ This matter does not have fiscal impact.

____ Additional information attached.

Budget and Legislative Analyst

From: [Menard, Nicolas \(BUD\)](#)
To: [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Somera, Alisa \(BOS\)](#); [Goncher, Dan \(BUD\)](#); [BOS Legislation, \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: RE: REFERRAL BLA - FISCAL IMPACT DETERMINATION REQUEST - AMENDED IN LUT - BOS File No. 250542 - Planning Code - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts
Date: Thursday, July 3, 2025 2:49:31 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Hi John

This ordinance, as amended, does not have fiscal impact.

Nicolas Menard
Budget & Legislative Analyst's Office
415-484-5485

From: Carroll, John (BOS) <john.carroll@sfgov.org>
Sent: Thursday, July 3, 2025 10:21 AM
To: Menard, Nicolas (BUD) <nicolas.menard@sfgov.org>
Cc: Somera, Alisa (BOS) <alisa.somera@sfgov.org>; Goncher, Dan (BUD) <dan.goncher@sfgov.org>; BOS Legislation, (BOS) <bos.legislation@sfgov.org>
Subject: REFERRAL BLA - FISCAL IMPACT DETERMINATION REQUEST - AMENDED IN LUT - BOS File No. 250542 - Planning Code - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts

Good morning,

The subject ordinance was amended in LUT on June 30, 2025. It was then continued to the call of the Chair as amended.

At the time of introduction this ordinance was determined to not have fiscal impact.

[Referral to BLA – July 3, 2025](#)

Pursuant to Admin Code, Section 2.6-3, please review the amended ordinance to determine whether the amendments result in the legislation having a fiscal impact.

You are invited to review the entire matter on our [Legislative Research Center](#) by following the link below.

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250542](#)



MYRNA MELGAR

DATE: July 9, 2025

TO: Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Supervisor Myrna Melgar, Chair, Land Use and Transportation Committee

RE: Land Use and Transportation Committee
COMMITTEE REPORTS

mm

Pursuant to Board Rule 4.20, as Chair of the Land Use and Transportation Committee, I have deemed the following matters are of an urgent nature and request them be considered by the full Board on Tuesday, July 15, 2025

File No. 250542 **Planning Code - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts**
Sponsor: Mayor; Sauter, Dorsey, Mahmood, and Sherrill

File No. 250727 **Opposing California State Senate Bill No. 79 (Wiener) Unless Amended - Housing Development: Transit-Oriented Development**
Sponsors: Chan; Chen and Fielder

These matters will be heard in the Land Use and Transportation Committee at a Regular Meeting on Monday, July 14, 2025.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
SAN FRANCISCO



DANIEL LURIE
MAYOR

TO: Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
FROM: Adam Thongsavat, Liaison to the Board of Supervisors
RE: Planning Code - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts
DATE: May 20, 2025

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to 1) principally permit certain non-retail sales and service uses, including general office, design professional, business services, non-retail professional services, and trade offices, on the ground floor in the C-3 ("Downtown Commercial") Districts through December 31, 2030, after which such uses will be conditionally permitted; 2) principally permit retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC ("Residential-Commercial") Districts; 3) principally permit non-retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC Districts; 4) update transparency and fenestration requirements for ground floor active uses and exempt child care facilities, homeless shelters, mortuaries, religious institutions, reproductive health clinics, and school uses from those requirements; 5) define an Interior Sign and the applicable standards for Interior Signs; 6) exempt Interior Signs of six square feet or less and Business and Identifying Signs painted on building facades from a permit under the Planning Code; 7) modify the definition of a Non-Residential Use for the purposes of certain development impact fee waivers; 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 pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302.

Should you have any questions, please contact Adam Thongsavat at adam.thongsavat@sfgov.org

From: [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)
To: [Balboa Village Merchants Association](#)
Cc: [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: RE: Letter of Support for Small Business Permitting Reform Legislation at Land Use Committee (Mon, June 30) - BOS File Nos. 250538 250539 250540 250541 250542
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 4:25:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Thank you for your comment letter.

By copy of this message to the board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org email address, your comments will be forwarded to the full membership of the Board of Supervisors. I will include your comments in the files for these ordinance matters.

I invite you to review the entire matter on our [Legislative Research Center](#) by following the link below:

-

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250538](#)

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250539](#)

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250540](#)

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250541](#)

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250542](#)

John Carroll
Assistant Clerk

Board of Supervisors
San Francisco City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415)554-4445



Click [here](#) to complete a Board of Supervisors Customer Service Satisfaction form.

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From: Balboa Village Merchants Association <info@balboavillagesf.org>

Sent: Monday, June 30, 2025 1:26 PM

To: Carroll, John (BOS) <john.carroll@sfgov.org>

Subject: Letter of Support for Small Business Permitting Reform Legislation at Land Use Committee (Mon, June 30)

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Hi John,

Attached below, and also included below in the body of this email, is a letter of support for the PermitSF Legislation to share with the Land Use Committee. If possible, please also include it as part of the public comment for the June 30th meeting.

Thank you,

Suzie Ferras :)

--

Hello,

I am writing in support of the Permit SF Legislation. This legislation makes common-sense changes that will help make running a small business in San Francisco easier.

These permit reforms help simplify and streamline the process for business signs, sidewalk usage, and awnings, saving time and reducing costs for small businesses.

As a small business owner and a leader in San Francisco's small business community, I support Permit SF Legislation.

Thanks!

Suzie Ferras

Owner of Creative IQ Art Studio

President of the Balboa Village Merchants Association (BVMA)

Former Vice President of the San Francisco Council of Merchant District Associations (SFCDMA)

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Balboa Village Merchants Association

www.balboavillagesf.org

www.facebook.com/balboavillagesf

www.instagram.com/balboavillagesf

www.twitter.com/balboavillagesf

From: [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)
To: [Amy Cleary](#); [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); [Low, Jen \(BOS\)](#); [Chen, Chyanne \(BOS\)](#); [Sciammas, Charlie \(BOS\)](#); [Mahmood, Bilal \(BOS\)](#); [Cooper, Raynell \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Laurie Thomas](#); [Tang, Katy \(ECN\)](#)
Subject: RE: GGRA Letter Support for Small Business Permitting Reform Legislative Package
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 10:28:00 AM
Attachments: [GGRA Letter Support for Small Business Permitting Reform Legislative Package .pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)

Thank you for your comment letter.

I am forwarding your comments to the members of the Land Use and Transportation committee, and I will include your comments in the files for these ordinance matters.

I invite you to review the entire matter on our [Legislative Research Center](#) by following the link below:

-

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250538](#)

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250539](#)

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250540](#)

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250541](#)

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250542](#)

John Carroll

Assistant Clerk

Board of Supervisors

San Francisco City Hall, Room 244

San Francisco, CA 94102

(415)554-4445



Click [here](#) to complete a Board of Supervisors Customer Service Satisfaction form.

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From: Amy Cleary <amy@ggra.org>

Sent: Monday, June 30, 2025 10:14 AM

To: Carroll, John (BOS) <john.carroll@sfgov.org>

Cc: Laurie Thomas <laurie@niceventures.com>; Tang, Katy (ECN) <katy.tang@sfgov.org>

Subject: GGRA Letter Support for Small Business Permitting Reform Legislative Package

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Good morning,

Please see the attached GGRA letter of support.

Best,

Amy

--

Amy Cleary
Director of Public Policy and Media Relations
Golden Gate Restaurant Association
415.370.9056
amy@ggra.org

June 30, 2025

Dear Land Use and Transportation Committee,

I'm writing today on behalf of the Golden Gate Restaurant Association in strong support for the small business permitting reform legislative package, which will come before you at the June 30 committee meeting and includes the following proposed ordinances (items 2-5):

- BOS File 250538– Priority Processing for Certain Commercial Uses
- BOS File 250539 – Existing Awning, Sign, and Gate Amnesty Program; Design Standards for Gates, Railings, and Grillwork
- BOS File 250540 – Temporary Use Authorizations
- BOS File 250541 – A revised process for table and chairs and sidewalk merchandise display
- BOS File 250542 - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts

As small business owners, our members know that permitting can be a confusing and challenging process. The proposed legislative package seeks to remove unnecessary permitting hurdles, including:

- Exempting painted business signs, and small window and interior signs from requiring a permit
- Relaxing transparency requirements for security gates, and providing a pathway for existing unpermitted security gates to come into compliance
- Clarifying allowable temporary uses and expanding the definition of “Retail Pop Up” uses
- A revised process for table and chairs and sidewalk merchandise display

These legislative proposals allow business owners like myself to focus on what we do best: running our business, serving our community, and bringing life and vitality to San Francisco. These are common sense solutions that I hope you can support.

Laurie Thomas



Executive Director, Golden Gate Restaurant Association

From: [Mariposas dining](#)
To: [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); [Chen, Chyanne \(BOS\)](#); [Mahmood, Bilal \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Lurie, Daniel \(MYR\)](#); [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#); [DorseyStaff \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Supporting Priority Processing and Streamlined Approvals for Small Businesses!! **Please read**
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2025 6:11:47 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Honorable Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee,

My name is Alli Goldenberg and I am a woman and minority-owned business owner operating three restaurants (SOMA district) and one nightclub in San Francisco (Fisherman's Wharf). I am writing to express my strong support for the priority processing and related ordinances being considered on your June 30th agenda, including items 250538, 250539, 250540, 250541, and 250542.

As a local small business operator, I have faced firsthand how complicated, unpredictable, and slow permitting processes can be. Delays and barriers have a real financial impact on our ability to expand, renovate, or simply adapt to changing market needs. The proposed changes would meaningfully help small businesses like mine by modernizing approvals, cutting unnecessary bureaucracy, and giving diverse owners a fairer chance to succeed.

For example, the priority processing program (250538) would be a game-changer, helping activate vacant commercial spaces faster in key neighborhoods, which supports both economic recovery and community vitality. During one of my expansions, it took over six months to secure approvals — costing us revenue, staff hours, and community momentum. Streamlining this process is crucial, especially for woman- and minority-owned businesses without large corporate resources.

Similarly, the awning and signage amnesty program (250539) is a practical and fair measure. Many of us inherit older spaces with unpermitted features; the chance to legalize them without excessive redesign or fines allows us to focus on running our businesses, keeping our staff employed, and enhancing neighborhood character.

Streamlined sidewalk seating and merchandise rules (250541) are just as vital. Sidewalk activity is essential for creating a lively street presence, boosting foot traffic, and making neighborhoods feel safe and welcoming. Eliminating duplicative permits and fees is a positive and common-sense step forward.

Finally, the updates to temporary use authorizations (250540) and flexibility in retail and service uses (250542) give small businesses the adaptability we need to test concepts, pivot quickly, and meet evolving demand, all while keeping San Francisco's commercial districts active and relevant.

If these measures pass, I am fully committed to investing further in San Francisco — expanding new concepts, hiring more staff, and revitalizing underutilized spaces in partnership with the communities where I do business. Streamlined processes and fairer approvals would give me the confidence to continue growing and reinvesting in the city I call home.

In sum, these measures represent practical, equitable solutions that benefit both the business community and the neighborhoods we serve. I urge you to advance them to support local ownership, diverse entrepreneurship, and the long-term health of our city's economy.

I hope to be in attendance tomorrow towards the end of the meeting, as I have a prior commitment at 12:30pm. I can be reached at any time at 415-845-1557.

Thank you for your time and leadership on these critical initiatives.

Warm regards,

Alli

--

Alli Goldenberg | Managing Partner

t: (415)845-1557

e: mariposasdining@gmail.com

Mariposas | 825 Mission St SF CA 94103

Read our Yelp Reviews [here!](#)

IG: @sfmariposas



From: [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)
To: [David Lindell](#); [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); [Low, Jen \(BOS\)](#); [Chen, Chyanne \(BOS\)](#); [Sciammas, Charlie \(BOS\)](#); [Mahmood, Bilal \(BOS\)](#); [Cooper, Raynell \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [MelgarStaff \(BOS\)](#); [ChenStaff](#); [MahmoodStaff](#)
Subject: RE: Support for Proposed Security Gate Legislation – Land Use Committee, Item 4 (6/30 at 1:30 PM) - BOS File No. 250542
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 10:20:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Thank you for your comment letter.

I am forwarding your comments to the members of the Land Use and Transportation committee, and I will include your comments in the file for this ordinance matter.

I invite you to review the entire matter on our [Legislative Research Center](#) by following the link below:

-

[Board of Supervisors File No. 250542](#)

John Carroll
Assistant Clerk

Board of Supervisors
San Francisco City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415)554-4445



Click [here](#) to complete a Board of Supervisors Customer Service Satisfaction form.

The [Legislative Research Center](#) provides 24-hour access to Board of Supervisors legislation and archived matters since August 1998.

***Disclosures:** Personal information that is provided in communications to the Board of Supervisors is subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act and the San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance. Personal information provided will not be redacted. Members of the public are not required to provide personal identifying information when they communicate with the Board of Supervisors and its committees. All written or oral communications that members of the public submit to the Clerk's Office regarding pending legislation or hearings will be made available to all members of the public for inspection and copying. The Clerk's Office does not redact any information from these submissions. This means that personal information—including names, phone numbers, addresses and similar information that a member of the public elects to submit to the Board and its committees—may appear on the Board of Supervisors website or in other public documents that members of the public may inspect or copy.*

From: David Lindell <david.lindell@cotopaxi.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 28, 2025 4:09 AM
To: Carroll, John (BOS) <john.carroll@sfgov.org>; MelgarStaff (BOS) <melgarstaff@sfgov.org>; ChenStaff <ChenStaff@sfgov.org>; MahmoodStaff <MahmoodStaff@sfgov.org>
Subject: Support for Proposed Security Gate Legislation – Land Use Committee, Item 4 (6/30 at 1:30

PM)

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Members of the Land Use Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the newly proposed security gate legislation—specifically the provision allowing for “reduced transparency”—which recently passed the Planning Commission and is scheduled for discussion as Item 4 during the upcoming Land Use Committee meeting on Monday, June 30th at 1:30 PM.

Our business has operated in the Bay Area for over five years. During that time, we have experienced multiple break-ins, resulting in significant financial and emotional strain on our team. In response, we installed preventative shutters on our storefront that provide approximately 25% visibility. These gates are among the most effective and widely used commercial shutters in the industry.

Unfortunately, due to the way the current San Francisco building code is written, it has been functionally impossible to secure permits for these protective measures. This regulatory gap has created numerous operational and financial challenges for our business, including:

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- Receipt of final violation notices from the City,
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- Ongoing threats to our landlord’s insurance coverage,
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- And an extensive administrative burden in our repeated attempts to obtain compliance.
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-
-

The inability to lawfully install these industry-standard shutters not only compromises the safety of our storefront and staff but also jeopardizes our long-term sustainability in San Francisco. The proposed legislation offers a balanced approach to addressing both security needs and urban design considerations.

On behalf of our team and as a committed business owner in San Francisco, I respectfully urge you to support the passage of this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
David Lindell
Cotopaxi
549 Hayes St

San Francisco, CA 94102



DAVID LINDELL

Vice President of Retail | cotopaxi.com

david.lindell@cotopaxi.com

From: [Teddy Kramer](#)
To: [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); [Chen, Chyanne \(BOS\)](#); [Mahmood, Bilal \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Support for Mayor Lurie's Permit SF Legislative Package
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 1:41:02 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Supervisors Chen, Melgar, and Mahmood:

My name is Teddy Kramer and I am the owner of [NEON](#), a drop in workspace and neighborhood event space on Union Street in Cow Hollow.

I'm writing you today in strong support for Mayor Lurie's Permit SF legislative package which will come before you at the June 26 Planning Commission hearing and includes the following proposed ordinances:

- BOS File 250538 – Priority Processing for Certain Commercial Uses
- BOS File 250539 – Existing Awning, Sign, and Gate Amnesty Program; Design Standards for Gates, Railings, and Grillwork
- BOS File 250540 – Temporary Use Authorizations
- BOS File 250542 - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally; Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts

As a small business owner, I know that permitting can not only be a confusing and challenging process but it must be efficient, transparent and frictionless.

The proposed legislative package seeks to remove unnecessary permitting hurdles, including:

- Shortening permitting processing timelines for various nightlife and entertainment related permits
- Establishing clear design guidelines for new security gates, and providing a pathway for existing unpermitted security gates to come into compliance
- Exempting basic painted business signs and small window signs from requiring a permit

These legislative proposals are just common sense and they will allow business owners like myself to focus on what we do best: running our business, serving our neighborhoods, and bringing life and vitality to San Francisco.

Let's stick with common sense solutions for small businesses here in San Francisco. I hope you will support this important and timely legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

--

Teddy Kramer
CEO/Founder

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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MEMORANDUM

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

SAN FRANCISCO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

TO: Supervisor Myrna Melgar, Chair
Land Use and Transportation Committee

FROM: John Carroll, Assistant Clerk

DATE: July 14, 2025

SUBJECT **COMMITTEE REPORT, BOARD MEETING**
Tuesday, July 15, 2025

The following file should be presented as COMMITTEE REPORT during the Board meeting on Tuesday, July 15, 2025. This ordinance was acted upon during the Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting on Monday, July 14, 2025, at 1:30 p.m., by the votes indicated.

BOS Item No. 53

File No. 250542

**[Planning Code - Fenestration, Transparency, and Sign Requirements Generally;
Sales and Service Uses in the C-3 and RC Districts]**

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to 1) principally permit certain non-retail sales and service uses, including general office, design professional, business services, non-retail professional services, and trade offices, on the ground floor in the C-3 ("Downtown Commercial") Districts through December 31, 2030, after which such uses will be conditionally permitted, and make accompanying revisions to required ground floor uses and Floor Area Ratio; 2) principally permit retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above in the RC ("Residential-Commercial") Districts; 3) principally permit non-retail sales and service uses on the second floor and above, and conditionally permit catering and laboratory uses on the ground floor in the RC Districts; 4) update transparency and fenestration requirements for ground floor active uses and exempt child care facilities, homeless shelters, mortuaries, religious institutions, reproductive health clinics, and school uses from those requirements; 5) modify the definition of a Window Sign; 6) modify Planning review and approval of changes in copy of a Sign and Wall and Window Signs applied to doors, windows, or building facades; 7) modify the definition of a Non-Residential Use for the purposes of certain development impact fee waivers; and 8) modify permitted and required ground floor uses in the RH-DTR ("Rincon Hill Downtown Residential") District, including uses in certain historic buildings, subject to various conditions; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and 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 pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302.

RECOMMENDED AS A COMMITTEE REPORT

Vote: Supervisor Myrna Melgar – Aye
Supervisor Chyanne Chen – Aye
Supervisor Bilal Mahmood – Aye

Cc: Board of Supervisors
Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board
Alisa Somera, Legislative Deputy
Brad Russi, Deputy City Attorney