

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST
(Substituted 1/13/2015)

[Planning Code - Signs, Awnings, Canopies, and Marquees]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to consolidate the definitions and controls for awnings, canopies, and marquees into a single section and revise the controls for certain zoning districts; require a Business Sign to be removed or brought into conformity with the Code when the business ceases operation, moves, or a new building is constructed; prohibit the relocation of General Advertising Signs into the Van Ness corridor and specified Neighborhood Commercial Districts; and add The Embarcadero to the list of Scenic Streets where General Advertising Signs are prohibited; amending the Zoning Map to conform with the Code amendments; affirming the Planning Department’s California Environmental Quality Act determination; and making findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

Existing Law

The Planning Code defines “Awning” in Sections 790.20 and 890.21, “Canopy” in Sections 790.26 and 890.24, and “Marquee” in Sections 790.58 and 890.58. The Code regulates various types of Signs in Article 6. Controls for signs, awnings, canopies, and marquees are contained in the Zoning Control Tables in Articles 7 and 8.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed ordinance deletes the definitions of “Awning,” “Canopy,” and “Marquee” that are currently in Sections 790.20, 790.26, 790.58, 890.21, 890.24, and 890.58 and consolidates them into Section 102. The Articles 7 and 8 Zoning Control Tables are amended to reflect the new section references. Awnings are not permitted to extend onto residential stories or to obscure important architectural features. Only awnings covered with cloth are allowed in Residential Districts.

The sign controls in Article 6 are amended to clarify the definition of “Business Sign” and require the sign to either be removed or brought into conformity with the Code when the activity for which a business sign has been posted has ceased operation for more than 90 days, moves to another location, or when a new building is constructed.

The Zoning Control Tables in Article 7 are amended to prohibit the relocation of General Advertising Signs into the Van Ness corridor and various Neighborhood Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial Transit Districts. The RC (Residential-Commercial) District sign controls are consolidated with those for NC (Neighborhood Commercial) Districts and made consistent. Language in the Market Street Sign District is updated to reflect current conditions, such as removal of the Central Freeway, and certain sign controls in C (Commercial) Districts

are made consistent with the Market Street Sign District. The Embarcadero for its entire length is added to the list of Scenic Streets where General Advertising Signs are not allowed.

Background Information

The new standards for awnings were adapted from the Planning Department's standards for the Union Square area, which were created to dignify buildings and enhance neighborhood streetscapes. The new controls on signs and general advertising update the controls, achieve greater consistency, and foster the City's efforts to preserve the character, identity, and livability of San Francisco's neighborhood commercial districts and improve the City's streetscapes.

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