

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code, Zoning Map - Establishing the Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to establish the Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) for the area between Geary Boulevard and Post Street from Fillmore Street to Laguna Street, the north side of Post Street from Webster Street to Laguna Street, and Buchanan Street from Post Street to mid-way between Sutter Street and Bush Street, revise various Planning Code sections to make conforming and other technical changes, and revise the Zoning Map to add the Japantown NCD; 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 findings of public necessity, convenience, and welfare under Section 302.

Existing Law

Article 7 of the Planning Code establishes a number of Neighborhood Commercial Districts and Neighborhood Commercial Transit Districts in defined areas of San Francisco in order to address the area’s particular land use concerns. The zoning controls specific to a particular area are set forth in a Zoning Control Table.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed legislation would establish a Japantown Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) for the areas that are currently zoned NC-2 and NC-3 between Geary and Post Streets from Fillmore Street to Laguna Street, the north side of Post Street from Webster to Laguna Streets, and Buchanan Street from Post Street to mid-way between Sutter and Bush Streets. The controls in the Zoning Control Table are designed to encourage and promote development that enhances the walkable, commercial character of Japantown and supports its local and regional role.

Most neighborhood- and visitor-serving businesses are strongly encouraged. Active uses are required on the ground floor; an additional five feet in height is allowed for such uses with a required upper story setback. Less active commercial uses are encouraged above the ground floor, along with housing and institutional uses. Within the NCD, only two Financial Services are permitted on the ground floor and are not permitted south of Post Street. In addition to the applicable Code requirements, Business Signs are also subject to the guidelines in the “Commission Guide for Formula Retail.” The permitted residential density is one unit per 400 square foot of lot area. New curb cuts are limited and there are maximum residential parking requirements; a Conditional Use authorization is needed for parking up to one car for each Dwelling Unit and parking above one car for each Dwelling Unit is prohibited.

Background Information

The creation of a Japantown NCD is a recommendation in the Japantown Economic and Social Heritage Strategy (JCHESS) developed by the community. The policy recommendations contained in the JCHESS were endorsed by the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Board of Supervisors in September and October of 2013. The proposed legislation received unanimous support from the Japantown Task Force at a meeting held on August 19, 2015.

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