

REVISED LEGISLATIVE DIGEST
(Amended in Committee, 9/12/2022)

[Planning Code - Tenderloin Neon Special Sign District]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to create the Tenderloin Neon Special Sign District within the North of Market Residential Special Use District; enacting zoning controls for neon signs within the Special Sign District; amending Sheet SS01 of the Zoning Map to show the Tenderloin Neon Special Sign District; 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 public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302.

Existing Law

Currently, signs in the North of Market Special Use District, created by Planning Code Section 249.5, are subject to the zoning controls for Residential-Commercial (RC) Districts in Planning Code Sec. 607.1.

Section 607.1(b) states, “No Sign shall have or consist of any moving, rotating, or otherwise physically animated part, or lights that give the appearance of animation by flashing, blinking, or fluctuating, except as permitted by Section 607.1(i) of this Code. In addition, all Signs or sign features not otherwise specifically regulated in this Section 607.1 shall be prohibited.”

In addition, Section 607.1(f)(2), which regulates Business Signs in RC Districts, requires, in relevant part, that

- the total Area of all Window Signs shall not exceed one-third the area of the window on or in which the Signs are located, and that such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated;
- the Area of all Wall Signs shall not exceed two square feet per foot of street frontage occupied by the use measured along the wall to which the Signs are attached, or 100 square feet for each street frontage, whichever is less, and the Height of any Wall Sign shall not exceed 24 feet, or the height of the wall to which it is attached, or the height of the lowest of any residential windowsill on the wall to which the Sign is attached, whichever is lower. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated; and
- Projecting Signs may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated; or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance would amend Sections 249.5 and 608 of the Planning Code to create the Tenderloin Neon Special Sign District, which would have the same boundaries as the North of Market Special Use District. Within the Tenderloin Neon Special Sign District, Neon Business and Identifying Signs would be permitted. For a Residential Hotel, a Neon Identifying Sign could either be a non-projecting sign not exceeding 40 square feet in area, or a projecting Sign not exceeding 25 feet in height and 5 feet in width. A Neon Sign could not have any physically moving parts and could not include flashing or blinking features, except that such Signs could include animated features. Neon Signs would be subject to any design standards adopted by the Planning Commission. Nonconforming Neon Signs may be physically detached from the building for any required off-site repairs and maintenance, except that such maintenance and repairs shall not include replacement, alteration, reconstruction, relocation, intensification, or expansion of the Neon Sign.

This ordinance would also amend Section 602 of the Planning Code to define a Neon Sign as a Sign that is illuminated through the use of noble gas in a vacuum-sealed glass tube.

In addition, this ordinance would amend Sheet SS01 of the Zoning Map to add the Tenderloin Neon Special Sign District.

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