

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning Code, Zoning Map - Housing Production]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to encourage housing production, by 1) streamlining construction of housing citywide, but outside of Priority Equity Geographies, as defined; 2) streamlining development of housing on large lots 3) allowing construction of buildings to the allowable height limit; 4) streamlining review of State Density Bonus projects; 5) streamlining construction of additional units in lower density zoning districts; 6) streamlining process for senior housing; 7) exempting certain affordable housing projects from development fees; 8) amending rear yard, front setback, lot frontage and minimum lot size requirements; 9) amending residential open space requirements; 10) allowing additional uses on the ground floor in residential buildings; 11) allowing homeless shelters and group housing in residential districts; 12) expanding the eligibility for the Housing Opportunities Mean Equity - San Francisco (HOME - SF) program and density exceptions in residential districts; and 13) allowing administrative review of reasonable accommodations; amending the Zoning Map to create the Priority Equity Geographies Special Use District; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

Existing Law

The Planning Code sets forth different zoning districts throughout the City, where different uses are permitted, conditionally permitted, or prohibited, and where various controls (such as height, bulk, setbacks, etc.) apply. It also contains permit application, noticing, and hearing requirements, as well as appeal procedures, as applicable, for different permits and entitlements.

The Zoning Map is a component of the Planning Code, and it contains maps and figures that depict zoning regulations spatially, showing how land can be used in areas of San Francisco called "zoning districts" (also known as "zones" or "use districts").

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance amends the Planning Code to implement a series of process reforms with the goal to encourage housing production. For instance:

- The ordinance exempts housing demolition Citywide, but outside of Priority Equity Geographies, from the currently existing Conditional Use (CU) authorization requirement, if some conditions are met. Priority Equity Geographies are areas that have been identified in the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Community Health Needs Assessment as Areas of Vulnerability. The ordinance maps the Priority Equity Geographies in a Special Use District (SUD).
- It exempts expansion and new construction projects from neighborhood notice in areas outside of the Priority Equity Geographies SUD.
- It deletes the Planning Code requirement for a CU authorization for large lot developments (usually 10,000 sq. ft. or greater).
- It deletes the CU authorization requirement for projects to exceed a specified height in certain districts, even if the height limit allows for a greater height. By removing the CU requirement, the ordinance allows construction of buildings to the permitted height limit.
- It provides that if the Planning Commission delegates approval authority to the Planning Director, State Density Bonus (SDB) projects can be approved without a Commission hearing, regardless of any other requirements in the Planning Code.
- It allows construction of more units than currently principally permitted in larger lots in residential (RH-1, RH-2, and RH-3) districts, based on the lot area, removing the current CU requirement.
- It deletes the requirement that in order for senior housing projects to take advantage of double density allowances, they must be located within a quarter mile of a mid-sized Neighborhood Commercial District, or obtain a CU authorization.
- It expands development fee waivers to apply to 100% affordable housing projects with units affordable to up to 120% of the Area Medium Income, regardless of the funding source, and to 100% affordable SDB projects.
- It reduces and standardizes rear yard, front setback, lot frontage, and minimum lot size requirements.
- It simplifies residential open space requirements.
- It allows additional uses on the ground floor in residential buildings.
- It makes homeless shelters and group housing permitted in residential districts.
- It expands the eligibility for the Housing Opportunities Mean Equity – San Francisco (HOME – SF) program and density exceptions in residential districts, by removing some of the applicability thresholds for each of these programs.
- It allows for administrative review of reasonable accommodations.

The ordinance also amends the Zoning Map, to create the Priority Equity Geographies SUD.

Background Information

The ordinance contains findings explaining its intent to implement the 2022 Housing Element Update.

FILE NO. 230446

n:\legana\as2023\2300309\01671035.docx