

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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## MEMORANDUM

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Date: November 17, 2023  
To: Planning Department / Commission  
From: Brent Jalipa, Clerk of the Budget and Finance Committee  
Subject: Board of Supervisors Legislation Referral - File No. 230862  
Building Code - Vacant or Abandoned Commercial Storefronts Registration and Fee Suspension

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- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Determination  
(*California Public Resources Code, Sections 21000 et seq.*)
  - Ordinance / Resolution
  - Ballot Measure
  
- 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 Brent Jalipa at [Brent.Jalipa@sfgov.org](mailto:Brent.Jalipa@sfgov.org).

1 [Building Code - Vacant or Abandoned Commercial Storefronts Registration and Fee  
2 Suspension]

3 **Ordinance amending the Building Code to temporarily suspend the annual registration**  
4 **requirement and registration fee for vacant or abandoned commercial storefronts**  
5 **through December 31, 2024; and affirming the Planning Department’s determination**  
6 **under the California Environmental Quality Act.**

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

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

15 Section 1. Findings.

16 (a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this  
17 ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources  
18 Code Sections 21000 et seq.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of  
19 Supervisors in File No. \_\_\_\_ and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board affirms this  
20 determination.

21 (b) On \_\_\_\_\_, at a duly noticed public hearing, the Building Inspection  
22 Commission considered this ordinance in accordance with Charter Section D3.750-5 and  
23 Building Code Section 104A.2.11.1.1. A copy of a letter from the Secretary of the Building  
24 Inspection Commission regarding the Commission’s recommendation is on file with the Clerk  
25 of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 230862.

1 (c) No local findings are required under California Health and Safety Code Section  
2 17958.7 because the amendments to the Building Code contained in this ordinance do not  
3 regulate materials or manner of construction or repair, and instead relate in their entirety to  
4 administrative procedures for implementing the code, which are expressly excluded from the  
5 definition of a “building standard” by California Health and Safety Code Section 18909(c).

6  
7 Section 2. Chapter 1A of the Building Code is hereby amended by adding Section  
8 103A.5.8, to read as follows:

9  
10 **103A.5 Vacant or Abandoned Commercial Storefronts – Annual Registration;  
11 Registration Fees; Maintenance and Security Requirements.**

12 **103A.5.1 Definitions.** For the purposes of Section 103A.5, including Sections  
13 103A.5.1-103A.5.7:

14 **COMMERCIAL STOREFRONT.** A Commercial Storefront shall be any area within a  
15 building that may be individually leased or rented for any purpose other than Residential Use  
16 as defined in Planning Code Sections 790.88 and 890.88.

17 **VACANT OR ABANDONED.** A Commercial Storefront shall be Vacant or  
18 Abandoned if it (1) is unoccupied and unsecured; or (2) is unoccupied and secured by  
19 boarding or other similar means; or (3) is unoccupied and unsafe as defined in Section 102A  
20 of this Code; or (4) is unoccupied and has multiple code violations; or (5) has been  
21 unoccupied for over 30 days. Notwithstanding the foregoing sentence, a Commercial  
22 Storefront shall not be considered Vacant or Abandoned if

23 (1) There is a valid building permit for repair, rehabilitation, or construction of the  
24 Commercial Storefront and the owner completes the repair, rehabilitation, or construction  
25 within one year from the date the initial permit was issued, unless the Department, in its sole

1 discretion, determines that the owner needs additional time to complete the repair,  
2 rehabilitation, or construction of the Commercial Storefront; or

3 (2) The owner or leaseholder has filed an application for, and is actively seeking to  
4 obtain, authorization, permits, or a license required by state or local law permitting the lawful  
5 use and occupancy of the Commercial Storefront.

6 **103A.5.2 Property owner’s obligation to register a vacant or abandoned**  
7 **commercial storefront; registration fee.** The owner of a Vacant or Abandoned Commercial  
8 Storefront shall, within 30 days after it has become vacant or abandoned, register the  
9 Commercial Storefront with the Department on a form provided by the Department. The form  
10 shall describe the methods by which the owner has secured the Commercial Storefront  
11 against unauthorized entry, provide a contact phone number for the Commercial Storefront  
12 owner or party responsible for maintenance of the Commercial Storefront, state the most  
13 recent legal use of the Commercial Storefront, state the square footage of the Commercial  
14 Storefront, declare any future plans for the Commercial Storefront, state whether there is fire  
15 and liability insurance coverage, and provide such other information as the Department may  
16 require. The owner shall pay an annual registration fee, which shall be due when the owner  
17 submits the registration form to the Department (“registration payment deadline”). The  
18 registration payment deadline will serve as the date for subsequent annual renewals of  
19 registration each year the Commercial Storefront remains Vacant or Abandoned (“annual  
20 renewal date”). The annual registration fee shall be paid on or before the annual renewal date.  
21 However, if the owner rents the Commercial Storefront to a tenant who occupies the premises  
22 in a manner that complies with all provisions of state and local law prior to the registration  
23 payment deadline, the Commercial Storefront shall be removed from the Department’s  
24 registry and the owner shall be refunded up to half of the registration fee based on any  
25 remaining days before the Commercial Storefront’s annual renewal date. The registration fee

1 shall be equal to the amount due under Section 103A.4.2 of this Code. See Section 110A,  
2 Table 1A-J for applicable fees.

3 **103A.5.3 Annual Report.** The owner of a registered Vacant or Abandoned  
4 Commercial Storefront shall provide a report from a licensed professional confirming the  
5 storefront’s interior and exterior has been maintained, as specified in Sections 103A.4.5.1 and  
6 103A.4.5.2 of this Code (“annual report”). The annual report shall be provided to the  
7 Department when the owner renews the storefront’s registration and pays the annual renewal  
8 fee.

9 **103A.5.4 Maintenance of vacant or abandoned commercial storefront registry.**  
10 The Department shall maintain a registry of all Vacant or Abandoned Commercial Storefronts  
11 within the City and shall furnish a copy of the registry to the Office of Economic and Workforce  
12 Development at least once per fiscal quarter.

13 **103A.5.5 Notice.** Whenever the Director has probable cause to believe, based upon  
14 an inspection, complaint, or report from another agency of the City or other governmental  
15 agency, that a Commercial Storefront is Vacant or Abandoned and has not been registered as  
16 required by Section 103A.5.2, the Director shall serve the owner of record, as shown on the  
17 Assessor’s Records, or authorized agent with a written notice requiring the owner to register  
18 the Commercial Storefront with the Department as Vacant or Abandoned and pay the  
19 registration fee within the period of time specified in the notice, which shall be no greater than  
20 30 days. The Department shall issue a Notice of Violation (“NOV”) pursuant to Section 102A.4  
21 of this Code to owners that fail to register within the period of time specified in the notice. See  
22 Section 110A, Table 1A-K, Failure to register vacant commercial storefront, for the applicable  
23 penalty.

24 **103A.5.6 Sign posting, maintenance, security, and insurance.** All requirements  
25 listed in Sections 103A.4.4-103A.4.6 of this Code shall also apply to Vacant or Abandoned

1 Commercial Storefronts. All such requirements shall be fulfilled by the owner within 30 days of  
2 the Commercial Storefront becoming Vacant or Abandoned, or within 30 days of the issuance  
3 of notice to register.

4 **103A.5.7 Violation a public nuisance; enforcement.** A Commercial Storefront in  
5 violation of this Section 103A.5, including Sections 103A.5.1-103A.5.7, is deemed to be a  
6 public nuisance and subject to enforcement by the Department and penalties under Sections  
7 102A and 103A and Section 110A, Table 1A-K of this Code or other applicable sections of the  
8 Municipal Code.

9 **103A.5.8 Temporary suspension of annual registration and registration fee.** *The*  
10 *requirements of Sections 103A.5.2-103A.5.5 shall be suspended through December 31, 2024. Sections*  
11 *103A.5.1 and 103A.5.6-103A.5.7 shall remain in effect during such period, provided, however that any*  
12 *failure to satisfy the annual registration and fee requirements in Section 103A.5.2, and any failure to*  
13 *provide the annual report required by Section 103A.5.3, shall not subject a Commercial Storefront to*  
14 *enforcement under Section 103A.5.7. This Section 103A.5.8 shall expire by operation of law on January*  
15 *1, 2025, after which the City Attorney is authorized to cause the Section to be removed from the*  
16 *Building Code.*

17  
18 Section 3. Effective Date; Retroactivity.

19 (a) This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs  
20 when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not  
21 sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the  
22 Mayor’s veto of the ordinance.

23 (b) If the effective date of this ordinance is after January 1, 2024, this ordinance shall  
24 upon its effective date be retroactive to January 1, 2024.  
25

1           Section 4. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors  
2 intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles,  
3 numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal  
4 Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment  
5 additions, and Board amendment deletions in accordance with the “Note” that appears under  
6 the official title of the ordinance.

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8           APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
9           DAVID CHIU, City Attorney

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10          By:    /s/ Peter R. Miljanich  
11                PETER R. MILJANICH  
                Deputy City Attorney

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**REVISED LEGISLATIVE DIGEST**  
(Substituted, November 14, 2023)

[Building Code - Vacant or Abandoned Commercial Storefronts Registration and Fee Suspension]

**Ordinance amending the Building Code to temporarily suspend the annual registration requirement and registration fee for vacant or abandoned commercial storefronts through December 31, 2024; and affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act.**

Existing Law

Building Code Section 103A.5 sets forth controls for Vacant or Abandoned Commercial Storefronts. Building Code Section 103A.5.2 requires the owner of a Vacant or Abandoned Commercial Storefront to register the Commercial Storefront with the Department of Building Inspection within 30 days after it has become vacant or abandoned, renew the registration annually, and pay an annual registration fee. Building Code Section 103A.5.3 requires the owner to submit an annual report to the Department confirming maintenance of the property. Building Code Section 103A.5.4 requires the Department to maintain a registry of Vacant or Abandoned Commercial Storefronts.

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance would suspend, through December 31, 2024, the requirements of Building Code Sections 103A.5.2 through 103A.5.5, including the requirements for property owners to register Vacant or Abandoned Commercial Storefronts, pay an annual registration fee, and submit an annual report to the Department.

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