

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Planning, Environment Codes - Bicycle Parking Standards]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to revise the bicycle parking standards, allow a portion of the bicycle parking requirements to be satisfied by payment of an in lieu fee, allow automobile parking spaces to be reduced and replaced by bicycle parking spaces, and authorize the Zoning Administrator to waive or modify required bicycle parking; amending the Environment Code to revise cross-references to the Planning Code and make technical amendments; and making environmental findings, Planning Code, Section 302, findings, and findings of consistency with the General Plan and the priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

Existing Law

Existing Planning Code Sections 155.1 through 155.5 require City-owned and leased buildings, existing City-owned and privately-owned parking garages, new and renovated commercial buildings, and residential buildings of four units or more to provide specified numbers of bicycle parking spaces. Shower facilities and lockers are required for tenants and employees in new commercial buildings (including public or privately-owned buildings containing employees working for City agencies or departments), new industrial buildings, and existing buildings undergoing major renovations.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed ordinance repeals existing Planning Code Sections 155.1 through 155.5 in their entirety and replaces them with new Sections 155.1 through 155.4. These new provisions would expand the existing bicycle parking space requirements by applying the requirements to more uses and, where the current Code now requires bicycle parking, generally to require the provisions of a greater number of spaces. It expands to additional uses the requirement to provide shower and lockers for tenants or employees.

The ordinance has a Table showing the required number of bicycle parking spaces for various uses, specifies layout and design standards for the parking spaces, and has specific requirements for City-owned and leased properties. Section 430 is added to the Code to allow a project sponsor to pay a fee in lieu of providing some or all of the required bicycle parking spaces. The off-street parking requirements in Section 150 are amended to allow automobile parking spaces to be reduced and replaced by bicycle parking spaces. Sections 305 and 307 are amended to allow the Zoning Administrator to waive or modify the bicycle parking requirements under specified circumstances; such waiver or modification would require the payment of an in-lieu fee.

Section 402 of the Environment Code and various other sections of the Planning Code are modified to correct section references and make other technical corrections.

Background Information

Bicycle parking requirements were first adopted in San Francisco in 1996 for City-owned and leased buildings in San Francisco. These requirements were subsequently expanded on a piecemeal basis to City-owned and privately-owned garages in 1998, commercial and industrial uses in 2001, and residential uses in 2005. These requirements have not undergone a holistic review since then. Meanwhile, bike ridership in San Francisco has surged significantly in the past decade.

The US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) shows a 66 percent increase in bicycle commuters in San Francisco from 2002 (2.1 percent of work trips) to 2010 (3.5 percent of work trips). This figure is even higher than 5 percent in some areas of San Francisco including the Mission, Richmond, Sunset, and Outer Mission. San Francisco MTA's annual bicycle counts have more than doubled between 2006 (4,862 riders) and 2011 (10,139 riders) at sampled locations. Additionally, local surveys and traffic modeling estimates show about 75,000 bike trips are being made each day out of over 2 million total trips by all modes (3.7 percent).

The San Francisco Bicycle Plan, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2009 (Ordinance No. 188-09) set as one of its major goals to "ensure plentiful, high quality bike parking" in San Francisco. In order to achieve this goal, SFMTA has asked that the existing Planning Code be amended to better address bicycle parking. The Plan identifies changes that would expand and increase these requirements and also organize and consolidate the existing Code sections.

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