

1 [Interim Zoning Controls - Large Residential Projects in RC, RM and RTO Districts]

2

3 **Resolution imposing interim zoning controls for an 18-month period for parcels in**  
4 **Residential-Commercial Combined (RC), Residential - Mixed (RM) and Residential -**  
5 **Transit Oriented (RTO) districts, requiring Conditional Use Authorization for any**  
6 **residential development that does not maximize the number of units allowed by**  
7 **applicable density restrictions; affirming the Planning Department's determination**  
8 **under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making findings of consistency**  
9 **with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section, 101.1.**

10

11 WHEREAS, Planning Code, Section 306.7, authorizes the Board of Supervisors to  
12 impose interim zoning controls to allow time for the orderly completion of a planning study and  
13 for the adoption of appropriate legislation, which are necessary to ensure that the legislative  
14 scheme that may be ultimately adopted is not undermined during the planning and legislative  
15 process by the approval or issuance of permits authorizing changes of use that could conflict  
16 with that scheme; and

17 WHEREAS, In recent decades, the rate of production of housing in San Francisco has  
18 failed to keep pace with an influx of jobs and increased demand for housing in San Francisco  
19 and in the broader region, which has contributed to increased unaffordability and repeat  
20 waves of evictions and displacement, largely to the detriment of long-term residents and  
21 communities and lower-income communities, in particular; and

22 WHEREAS, Policymakers at the City and state level have sought to increase housing  
23 density across the state, including through the implementation of a Citywide Accessory  
24 Dwelling Unit Program in San Francisco that applies to existing structures and to new

25

1 construction and which allows for the increased densification of residential and mixed use  
2 neighborhoods and zoning districts; and

3 WHEREAS, While significant emphasis has been placed on increasing the capacity for  
4 increased housing density in residential and mixed use zoning districts, and to remove various  
5 substantive and procedural restrictions on the construction of affordable housing in particular,  
6 comparatively little emphasis has been placed on setting density minimums and creating  
7 disincentives for low-density projects in zoning districts that allow for greater density; and

8 WHEREAS, The construction of large residences is indicative of a market preference  
9 for demonstrably unaffordable housing, even in zoning districts that permit greater capacity for  
10 housing density and which tend to be characterized by higher density, more affordable, and  
11 rent-stabilized housing; and

12 WHEREAS, The construction of large residences in zoning districts that permit greater  
13 capacity for housing density, such as Residential-Commercial Combined (RC), Residential -  
14 Mixed (RM) or Residential - Transit Oriented (RTO) districts, forgoes opportunities for more  
15 affordable housing, and frequently results in the loss or conversion of housing protected by  
16 rent stabilization provisions of the San Francisco Rent Ordinance; and

17 WHEREAS, Objective 2 of San Francisco’s 2014 Housing Element states that  
18 “conserving and improving the existing (housing) stock is critical to San Francisco's long term  
19 housing strategy”; and

20 WHEREAS, The 2020 Housing Balance Report, produced by the Planning Department  
21 pursuant to Section 103 of the Planning Code, indicates that for the period from 2010 Quarter  
22 1 - 2019 Quarter 4, 7,081 units of net new affordable housing have been built in San  
23 Francisco while 3,951 units have been removed from protected status, a ratio of just 1.79  
24 units built for every 1 unit lost; and

1           WHEREAS, The loss of affordable and rent controlled housing is driven in part by the  
2 demolition, merger, and conversion of those homes and their replacement with market rate  
3 housing and, notably, large single family homes in zoning districts that permit increased  
4 capacity for housing density; and

5           WHEREAS, Planning Commission Resolution No. 20024, also known as the  
6 “Residential Flat Removal Policy,” defines a “Residential Flat” as a common San Francisco  
7 housing typology consisting of a single dwelling unit, generally occupying an entire story  
8 within a building, and having exposure onto open areas at the front and rear of the property;  
9 and

10           WHEREAS, Planning Commission Resolution No. 20024 enconces a preference for  
11 the Residential Flat housing typology by subjecting any project that proposes to remove a  
12 Residential Flat to mandatory discretionary review before the Planning Commission; and

13           WHEREAS, The interim controls established by this Resolution will allow time for the  
14 orderly completion of a planning study and for the adoption of appropriate legislation; and

15           WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors (Board) has considered the impact on the public  
16 health, safety, peace, and general welfare if these interim controls are not imposed; and

17           WHEREAS, The Board has determined that the public interest will best be served by  
18 imposition of these interim controls to ensure that the legislative scheme which may be  
19 ultimately adopted is not undermined during the planning and legislative process for  
20 permanent controls; and

21           WHEREAS, The Board makes the following findings of consistency with the Priority  
22 Policies set forth in Planning Code, Section 101.1: by requiring Conditional Use authorization  
23 for any residential development in an RC, RM or RTO district that does not maximize the  
24 number of units that could be constructed based on the applicable density limits, these interim  
25 controls advance Priority Policy 2, that existing housing and neighborhood character be

1 conserved and protected to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our  
2 neighborhoods, and these interim controls do not conflict with the other Priority Policies of  
3 Section 101.1; and

4 WHEREAS, Unlike parcels in RC, RM, and RTO districts, parcels in RTO-M districts do  
5 not have any density limit but instead density is regulated by permitted height, bulk, and other  
6 standards; and

7 WHEREAS, The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in  
8 this Resolution comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public  
9 Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.); said determination is on file with the Clerk of the  
10 Board of Supervisors in File No. 201370 and is incorporated herein by reference; the Board  
11 hereby affirms this determination; now, therefore be it

12 RESOLVED, That in multi-unit residential (R) districts, and in single family home zoning  
13 districts that allow for the construction of an Accessory Dwelling Unit, the City and County of  
14 San Francisco hereby reiterates its preference for multi-unit buildings consisting of equitably-  
15 sized Residential Flats, as that housing typology is defined in Planning Commission  
16 Resolution No. 20024; and, be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That as to the proposed new construction of a residential  
18 building in RC, RM and RTO zoning districts or as to any proposed alteration that would result  
19 in the expansion of a residential building in RC, RM and RTO zoning districts, Conditional Use  
20 Authorization under Planning Code, Section 303, shall be required if the residential building  
21 does not maximize the principally permitted residential density, not including any additional  
22 residential density permitted under state law or Planning Code, Section 206 et seq, while  
23 adhering to the minimum unit size requirements set forth in Planning Code, Section 206.3;  
24 and, be it

25

1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That for purposes of this resolution, RTO zoning districts shall  
2 not include parcels zoned RTO-M; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That if existing lot conditions or form-based restrictions on  
4 development (e.g., height, bulk, rear yard requirements) are such that a proposed project  
5 cannot maximize density without seeking a variance or subdividing existing units on the lot,  
6 and while adhering to the minimum unit size requirements set forth in Planning Code, Section  
7 206.3, Conditional Use Authorization under Planning Code, Section 303 shall not be required  
8 if a proposed project increases density on a subject lot, does not include any single unit  
9 greater than 2000 square feet in size, and would not be subject to Conditional Use  
10 Authorization under any other provision of the Planning Code; and, be

11 FURTHER RESOLVED, That Conditional Use Authorization shall not be required for  
12 expansions of existing residential buildings in RC, RM and RTO districts, wherein the  
13 proposed expansion is 25% or less of the existing residential building, provided that the  
14 proposed expansion (1) does not increase the size of any unit that is already larger than 2000  
15 square feet in size; (2) does not create any new unit that is greater than 2000 square feet in  
16 size; and (3) does not cause an existing unit that is less than 2000 square feet in size to be  
17 larger than 2000 square feet in size; and, be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon imposition of these interim controls, the Planning  
19 Department shall conduct a study of the contemplated zoning proposal and propose  
20 permanent legislation to address the issues posed by large residential development that does  
21 not maximize the allowable density; and be it

22 FURTHER RESOLVED, That these interim controls shall apply to all applications for  
23 residential development where a final site or building permit has not been issued as of the  
24 effective date of this Resolution, to the extent allowed by law; and be it

25

