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SEC. 601. PURPOSES OF SIGN CONTROLS.

This [Article 6](#) is adopted in recognition of the important function of signs and of the need for their regulation under the Planning Code. In addition to those purposes of the Planning Code stated in Section [101](#), it is the further purpose of this [Article 6](#) to:

- (a) promote the aesthetic and environmental values of San Francisco by providing for signs that serve as effective means of communication and do not impair the attractiveness of the City as a place to live, work, visit, and shop;
- (b) protect public investment in and the character and dignity of public buildings, streets, and open spaces;
- (c) protect the distinctive appearance of San Francisco which is produced by its unique geography, topography, neighborhoods, street patterns, skyline and architectural features;
- (d) ensure that signs are designed and proportioned in relation to the structures to which they are attached, adjacent structures, and the streets on which they are located;
- (e) enhance sidewalks as public spaces by preserving sunlight and views, and foster the unobstructed growth of street trees;
- (f) provide an environment which will safeguard and enhance neighborhood livability and property values, and promote the development of business in the City;
- (g) encourage sound practices and lessen the objectionable effects of competition in respect to size and placement of signs;
- (h) aid in the attraction of tourists and other visitors who are so important to the economy of the City and County;
- (i) reduce hazards to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians caused by visual distractions and obstructions; and
- (j) thereby promote the public health, safety and welfare.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. [188-15](#), File No. 150871, App. 11/4/2015, Eff. 12/4/2015; Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section amended; Ord. [188-15](#), Eff. 12/4/2015. Section amended and divisions (a)–(j) designated; Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

SEC. 602. SIGN DEFINITIONS.

The following definitions shall apply to this [Article 6](#), in addition to such definitions elsewhere in this Code as may be appropriate.

Area (of a Sign).

- (a) **All Signs Except on Windows, Awnings and Marquees.** The entire area within a single continuous rectangular perimeter formed by extending lines around the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, or any figure of similar character, including any frame or other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate such Sign from the background against which it is placed; excluding the necessary supports or uprights on which such Sign is placed but including any Sign Tower. Where a Sign has two or more faces, the area

of all faces shall be included in determining the Area of the Sign, except that where two such faces are placed back to back and are at no point more than two feet from one another, the Area of the Sign shall be taken as the area of one face if the two faces are of equal area, or as the area of the larger face if the two faces are of unequal area.

(b) **On Windows.** The Area of any Sign painted directly on a window shall be the area within a rectangular perimeter formed by extending lines around the extreme limits of writing, representation, or any figure of similar character depicted on the surface of the window. The Area of any Sign placed on or behind the window glass shall be as described above in subsection (a).

(c) **On Awnings or Marquees.** The Area of any Sign on an Awning or Marquee shall be the total of all signage on all faces of the structure. All sign copy on each face shall be computed within one rectangular perimeter formed by extending lines around the extreme limits of writing, representation, or any figure of similar character depicted on the surface of the face of the awning or marquee.

Attached to a Building. Supported, in whole or in part, by a building.

Business Sign. A Sign which directs attention to the primary business, commodity, service, industry or other activity which is sold, offered, or conducted on the premises upon which such Sign is located, or to which it is affixed. Where a number of businesses, services, industries, or other activities are conducted on the premises, or a number of commodities, services, or other activities with different brand names or symbols are sold on the premises, up to one-third of the area of a Business Sign, or 25 square feet of Sign area, whichever is the lesser, may be devoted to the advertising of one or more of those businesses, commodities, services, industries, or other activities by brand name or symbol as an accessory function of the Business Sign, provided that such advertising is integrated with the remainder of the Business Sign, and provided also that any limits which may be imposed by this Code on the area of individual Signs and the area of all Signs on the property are not exceeded. The primary business, commodity, service, industry, or other activity on the premises shall mean the use which occupies the greatest area on the premises upon which the Business Sign is located, or to which it is affixed.

Directly Illuminated Sign. A Sign designed to give forth artificial light directly (or through transparent or translucent material) from a source of light within such Sign, including but not limited to neon and exposed lamp signs.

Freestanding. In no part supported by a building.

Freeway. A highway, in respect to which the owners of abutting lands have no right or easement of access to or from their abutting lands or in respect to which such owners have only limited or restricted right or easement of access, the precise route for which has been determined and designated as a Freeway by an authorized agency of the State or a political subdivision thereof. The term shall include the main traveled portion of the trafficway and all ramps and appurtenant land and structures. Trans-Bay highway crossings shall be deemed to be Freeways within the meaning of this definition for purposes of this Code.

General Advertising Sign. A Sign, legally erected prior to the effective date of Section [611](#) of this Code, which directs attention to a business, commodity, industry or other activity which is sold, offered or conducted elsewhere than on the premises upon which the Sign is located, or to which it is affixed, and which is sold, offered or conducted on such premises only incidentally if at all.

Height (of a Sign). The vertical distance from the uppermost point used in measuring the Area of a Sign, as defined in this Section [602](#), to the ground immediately below such point or to the

level of the upper surface of the nearest curb of a Street, Alley or highway (other than a structurally elevated roadway), whichever measurement permits the greater elevation of the Sign.

Historic Movie Theater Projecting Sign. A projecting Business Sign attached to a Qualified Movie Theater, as defined in Section [188\(e\)\(1\)](#), when such sign was originally constructed in association with the Qualified Movie Theater or similar historic use. Such Signs are typically characterized by (a) perpendicularity to the primary facade of the building, (b) fixed display of the name of the establishment, often in large lettering descending vertically throughout the length of the Sign; (c) a narrow width that extends for a majority of the vertical distance of a building's facade, typically terminating at or slightly above the Roofline, and (d) an overall scale and nature such that the Sign comprises a significant and character defining architectural feature of the building to which it is attached. Elimination or change of any lettering or other inscription from a Historic Movie Theater Projecting Sign, such as that which may occur with a change of ownership, change of use, or closure does not preclude classification of the Sign under this Section. For specific controls on the preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration of these signs, refer to Section [188\(e\)](#) of this Code.

Historic Movie Theater Marquee. A Marquee, as defined in Section [102](#), attached to a Qualified Movie Theater, as defined in Section [188\(e\)\(1\)](#), when such Marquee was originally constructed in association with a Movie Theater or similar historic use. Elimination or change of any lettering or other inscription from a Historic Movie Theater Marquee, such as that which may occur with a change of ownership, change of use or closure, does not preclude classification of the Marquee under this Section. For specific controls on the preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration of these Signs, refer to Section [188\(e\)](#) of this Code.

Historic Sign. An Historic Sign is any Sign identified on its own or as one of the character defining features of a property listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resource, or designated in any manner under [Articles 10](#) or [11](#) of the Planning Code.

Identifying Sign. A Sign for a use listed in [Article 2](#) of this Code as either a principal or a conditional use permitted in an R District, regardless of the district in which the use itself may be located, which Sign serves to tell only the name, address, and lawful use of the premises upon which the Sign is located, or to which it is affixed. With respect to shopping malls containing five or more stores or establishments in NC Districts, and shopping centers containing five or more stores or establishments in NC-S Districts or in the City Center Special Sign District, Identifying Signs shall include Signs which tell the name of and/or describe aspects of the operation of the mall or center. Shopping malls, as that term is used in this Section, are characterized by a common pedestrian passageway which provides access to the businesses located therein.

(Amended by Ord. [218-16](#), File No. 160-553, App. 11/10/2016; Eff. 12/10/2016)

Indirectly Illuminated Sign. A Sign illuminated with a light directed primarily toward such Sign and so shielded that no direct rays from the light are visible elsewhere than on the lot where said illumination occurs. If not effectively so shielded, such sign shall be deemed to be a Directly Illuminated Sign.

Landscaped Freeway. Any part of a Freeway that is now or hereafter classified by the State or a political subdivision thereof as a Landscaped Freeway, as defined in the California Outdoor Advertising Act. Any part of a Freeway that is not so designated shall be deemed a nonlandscaped Freeway.

Nameplate. A sign affixed flat against a wall of a building and serving to designate only the name or the name and professional occupation of a person or persons residing in or occupying space in such building.

Nonilluminated Sign. A Sign which is not illuminated, either directly or indirectly.

Projection. The horizontal distance by which the furthestmost point used in measuring the Area of a Sign, as defined in this Section [602](#), extends beyond a Street Property Line or a building setback line. A Sign placed flat against a wall of a building parallel to a Street or Alley shall not be deemed to project for purposes of this definition. A Sign on an Awning, Canopy or Marquee shall be deemed to project to the extent that such Sign extends beyond a Street Property Line or a building setback line.

Roofline. The upper edge of any building wall or parapet, exclusive of any Sign Tower.

Roof Sign. A Sign or any portion thereof erected or painted on or over the roof covering any portion of a building, and either supported on the roof or on an independent structural frame or Sign Tower, or located on the side or roof of a penthouse, roof tank, roof shed, elevator housing or other roof structure.

Sale or Lease Sign. A Sign which serves only to indicate with pertinent information the availability for sale, lease or rental of the lot or building on which it is placed, or some part thereof.

Sign. Any structure, part thereof, or device or inscription which is located upon, attached to, or painted, projected or represented on any land or right-of-way, or on the outside of any building or structure including an Awning, Canopy, Marquee or similar appendage, or affixed to the glass on the outside or inside of a window so as to be seen from the outside of the building, and which displays or includes any numeral, letter, word, model, banner, emblem, insignia, symbol, device, light, trademark, or other representation used as, or in the nature of, an announcement, advertisement, attention-arrester, direction, warning, or designation by or of any person, firm, group, organization, place, commodity, product, service, business, profession, enterprise or industry.

A “Sign” is composed of those elements included in the Area of the Sign as defined in this Section [602](#), and in addition the supports, uprights and framework of the display. Except in the case of General Advertising Signs, two or more faces shall be deemed to be a single Sign if such faces are contiguous on the same plane, or are placed back to back to form a single structure and are at no point more than two feet from one another. Also, on Awnings or Marquees, two or more faces shall be deemed to be a single Sign if such faces are on the same Awning or Marquee structure.

Sign Tower. A tower, whether attached to a building, Freestanding, or an integral part of a building, which is erected for the primary purpose of incorporating a Sign, or having a Sign attached thereto.

Street Property Line. For purposes of this [Article 6](#) only, “street property line” shall mean any line separating private property from either a Street or an Alley.

Video Sign. A Sign that displays, emits, or projects or is readily capable of displaying, emitting or projecting a visual representation or image; an animated video, visual representation, or image; or other video image of any kind onto a building, fabric, screen, sidewalk, wall, or other surface through a variety of means, including, but not limited to: camera; computer; digital cinema, imaging, or video; electronic display; fiber optics; film; internet; intranet; light emitting diode screen or video display; microprocessor or microcontrolled based systems; picture frames;

plasma display; projector; satellite; scrolling display; streaming video; telephony; television; VHS; wireless transmission; or other technology that can transmit animated or video images.

Vintage Sign. A Sign that depicts a land use, a business activity, a public activity, a social activity or historical figure or an activity or use that recalls the City's historic past, as further defined in Section [608.14](#) of this Code, and as permitted by Sections [303](#) and [608.14](#) of this Code.

Wall Sign. A Sign painted directly on the wall or placed flat against a building wall with its copy parallel to the wall to which it is attached and not protruding more than the thickness of the sign cabinet.

Wind Sign. Any Sign composed of one or more banners, flags, or other objects, mounted serially and fastened in such a manner as to move upon being subjected to pressure by wind or breeze.

Window Sign. A Sign painted directly on the surface of a window glass or placed behind the surface of a window glass.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 125-70, App. 4/14/70; Ord. 234-72, App. 8/18/72; Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98; Proposition G, 3/5/2002; Ord. 28-02, File No. 011962, App. 3/15/2002; Ord. 242-08, File No. 071431, App. 10/30/2008; Ord. [140-11](#), File No. 110482, App. 7/5/2011, Eff. 8/4/2011; Ord. [195-11](#), File No. 110448, App. 10/4/2011, Eff. 11/3/2011; Res. [319-14](#), File No. 140821, App. 8/7/2014; Ord. [20-15](#), File No. 110548, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015; Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016; Ord. [218-16](#), File No. 160553, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section header amended; section amended in its entirety; Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016 (for the legislative history of prior definition provisions, see the Editor's Note below). See individual definitions for subsequent amendment history notes.

Editor's Note:

As part of its amendments to this Code, by Ord. [217-16](#), consolidated the Art. 6 definitions into a single section, Sec. [602](#) above. Previously, Art. 6 definitions had been codified under separate section numbers. For the purpose of retaining the legislative history of the now superseded Art. 6 definition provisions, the terms formerly defined in the Article are set forth below, along with their history notes as they existed immediately prior to the effectiveness of Ord. [217-16](#).

SEC. 602.1 AREA (OF A SIGN).

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87)

SEC. 602.2 ATTACHED TO A BUILDING.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 602.3 BUSINESS SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Res. [319-14](#), File No. 140821, App. 8/7/2014; Ord. [20-15](#), File No. 110548, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015)

SEC. 602.4 DIRECTLY ILLUMINATED SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 602.5 FREESTANDING.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 602.6 FREEWAY.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 602.7 GENERAL ADVERTISING SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Proposition G, 3/5/2002)

SEC. 602.8 HEIGHT (OF A SIGN).

(Amended by Ord. 234-72, App. 8/18/72)

SEC. 602.9 HISTORIC SIGNS AND HISTORIC SIGN DISTRICTS.

(Added by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.10 IDENTIFYING SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98; Ord. [195-11](#), File No. 110448, App. 10/4/2011, Eff. 11/3/2011)

SEC. 602.11 INDIRECTLY ILLUMINATED SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.12 LANDSCAPED FREEWAY.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.13 NAME PLATE.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.14 NONILLUMINATED SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.15 PROJECTION.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.16 ROOFLINE.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.17 ROOF SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.18 SALE OR LEASE SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.19 SIGN.

(Amended by Ord. 125-70, App. 4/14/70; Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.20 SIGN TOWER.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.21 STREET PROPERTY LINE.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.21A VIDEO SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 28-02, File No. 011962, App. 3/15/2002)

SEC. 602.22 WALL SIGN.

(Amended by Ord. 125-70, App. 4/14/70; Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.23 WIND SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98)

SEC. 602.24 WINDOW SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98; Ord. [20-15](#), File No. 110548, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015)

SEC. 602.25 HISTORIC MOVIE THEATER PROJECTING SIGN.

(Added by Ord. 242-08, File No. 071431, App. 10/30/2008; amended by Ord. [140-11](#), File No. 110482, App. 7/5/2011, Eff. 8/4/2011)

SEC. 602.26 HISTORIC MOVIE THEATER MARQUEE.

(Added by Ord. 242-08, File No. 071431, App. 10/30/2008; amended by Ord. [140-11](#), File No. 110482, App. 7/5/2011, Eff. 8/4/2011)

📌 SEC. 603. EXEMPTED SIGNS.

Nothing in this [Article 6](#) shall apply to any of the following signs:

- (a) Noncommercial Signs, including but not limited to
 - (1) Official public notices, and notices posted by public officers in performance of their duties;
 - (2) Governmental signs for control of traffic and other regulatory purposes, street signs, danger signs, railroad crossing signs, and signs of public service companies indicating danger and aids to service or safety;
 - (3) Temporary display posters, without independent structural support, in connection with political campaigns and with civic noncommercial health, safety, and welfare campaigns;
 - (4) Flags, emblems, insignia, and posters of any nation or political subdivision, and temporary displays of a patriotic, religious, charitable, or other civic character;

(5) House numbers, whether illuminated or not, “no trespassing,” “no parking,” and other warning signs;

(6) Commemorative plaques placed or provided by recognized historical agencies;

(7) Religious symbols;

(8) Information plaques or signs which identify to the public open space resources, architectural features, creators of artwork, or otherwise provide information required by this Code or by other City agencies, or an identifying sign which directs the general public and/or patrons of a particular establishment to open space or parking resources.

(b) Signs within a stadium, open-air theater, or arena which are designed primarily to be viewed by patrons within such stadium, open-air theater, or arena;

(c) Two General Advertising Signs each not exceeding 24 square feet in area on either a transit shelter or associated advertising kiosk furnished by contract with the Municipal Transportation Agency or predecessor agency for the Municipal Railway in RTO, RTO-M, RM-2, RM-3, RM-4, RC, NC, C, M, PDR, Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts, and South of Market Mixed Use Districts, and in those P Districts where such Signs would not adversely affect the character, harmony, or visual integrity of the district as determined by the Planning Commission; eight General Advertising Signs each not exceeding 24 square feet in area on transit shelters located on publicly owned property on a high level Municipal Railway boarding platform in an RH-1D District adjacent to a C-2 District, provided that such advertising signs solely face the C-2 District; up to three double-sided General Advertising Signs each not exceeding 24 square feet in area on or adjacent to transit shelters on publicly owned high level Municipal Railway boarding platforms along The Embarcadero south of the Ferry Building, up to six double-sided panels at 2nd and King Streets, and up to four double-sided panels at 4th and King Streets; up to two double-sided panels not exceeding 24 square feet in area on each low-level boarding platform at the following E-Line stops: Folsom Street and The Embarcadero, Brannan Street and The Embarcadero, 2nd and King Streets, and 4th and King Streets; and a total of 71 double-sided General Advertising Signs each not exceeding 24 square feet in area on or adjacent to transit shelters on 28 publicly owned high level Municipal Railway boarding platforms serving the Third Street Light Rail Line. Each advertising sign on a low-level or high-level boarding platform shall be designed and sited in such a manner as to minimize obstruction of public views from pedestrian walkways and/or public open space.

Notwithstanding the above, no Sign shall be placed on any transit shelter or associated advertising kiosk located on any sidewalk which shares a common boundary with any property under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Commission, with the exception of Justin Herman Plaza; on any sidewalk on Zoo Road; on Skyline Boulevard between Sloat Boulevard and John Muir Drive; on John Muir Drive between Skyline Boulevard and Lake Merced Boulevard; or on Lake Merced Boulevard on the side of Harding Park Municipal Golf Course, or on any sidewalk on Sunset Boulevard between Lincoln Way and Lake Merced Boulevard; on any sidewalk on Legion of Honor Drive; or in the Civic Center Special Sign Districts as established in Section [608.3](#) of this Code.

The provisions of this subsection (c) shall be subject to the authority of the Port Commission under Sections [4.114](#) and [B3.581](#) of the City Charter and under State law.

(d) Two General Advertising Signs each not exceeding 52 square feet in area on a public service kiosk furnished by contract with the Department of Public Works which contract also provides for the installation and maintenance of automatic public toilets. Each such public service kiosk shall be divided into three sections, one of which shall provide a public service,

such as a newsstand, newsrack, map, public telephone, vending machine, display of public service information, or interactive video terminal.

(e) Advertising placed on fixed pedestal newsrack units in accordance with Section [184.12](#) of the Public Works Code.

(f) To the extent not otherwise exempted pursuant to subsection (a) of this Section [610](#)¹, any Historic Movie Theater Projecting Sign or Historic Movie Theater Marquee when preserved, rehabilitated, restored, or reconstructed pursuant to Section [188\(e\)](#) of the Planning Code.

(Amended by Ord. 77-85, App. 2/19/85; Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; Ord. 114-89, App. 4/14/89; Ord. 115-90, App. 4/6/90; Ord. 262-94, App. 7/15/94; Ord. 285-94, App. 8/2/94; Ord. 32-97, App. 2/7/97; Ord. 340-98, App. 11/13/98; Ord. 278-06, File No. 061210, App. 11/17/2006; Ord. 72-08, File No. 071157, App. 4/3/2008; Ord. 242-08, File No. 071431, App. 10/30/2008; Ord. 298-08, File No. 081153, App. 12/19/2008; Ord. [228-12](#), File No. 120220, App. 11/14/2012, Eff. 12/14/2012; amended by Ord. [218-16](#), File No. 160553, App. 11/10/2016; Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Division (k) amended; Ord. [228-12](#), Eff. 12/14/2012. Divisions (h), (i), (k), and (l) deleted; divisions (a), (a)(7), and (a)(8) added; former divisions (a)–(f) amended and redesignated as divisions (a)(1)–(a)(6); former divisions (g), (j), and (m)–(o) amended and redesignated as divisions (b)–(f); Ord. [218-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

CODIFICATION NOTE

1. So in Ord. 218-16.

SEC. 604. PERMITS AND CONFORMITY REQUIRED.

(a) **Approval of Application.** An application for a permit for a sign that conforms to the provisions of this Code shall be approved by the Planning Department without modification or disapproval by the Planning Department or the Planning Commission, pursuant to the authority vested in them by Section [26](#) of the Business and Tax Regulations Code or any other provision of said Municipal Code; provided, however, that applications pertaining to (a) signs subject to the regulations set forth in [Article 10](#) of the Planning Code, Preservation of Historical, Architectural and Aesthetic Landmarks, [Article 11](#), Preservation of Buildings and Districts of Architectural, Historical and Aesthetic Importance in the C-3 Districts and

Sections [602.9](#) and [608.14](#) may be disapproved pursuant to the relevant provisions thereof, and

(b) preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of Historic Movie Theater Projecting Signs or Historic Movie Theater Marquees as set forth in Section [188\(e\)](#) may be modified or disapproved subject to applicable sections of the General Plan, this Code, relevant design guidelines, Department or Commission policy, or the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. No sign, other than those signs exempted by Section [603](#) of this Code, shall be erected, placed, replaced, reconstructed or relocated on any property, intensified in illumination or other aspect, or expanded in area or in any dimension except in conformity with [Article 6](#) of this Code. No such erection, placement, replacement, reconstruction, relocation, intensification, or expansion shall be undertaken without a permit having been duly issued therefor, except as specifically provided otherwise in this Section [604](#).

(b) **Applicability of Section.** The provisions of this Section [604](#) shall apply to work of the above types on all signs unless specifically exempted by this Code, whether or not a permit for such sign is required under the San Francisco [Building Code](#). In cases in which permits are not required under the [Building Code](#), applications for permits shall be filed with the Central Permit Bureau of the Department of Building Inspection on forms prescribed by the Planning Department, together with a permit fee of \$5.00 for each sign, and the permit number shall appear on the completed sign in the same manner as required by the [Building Code](#).

(c) **Sign Painted on Door or Window.** No permit shall be required under this Code for a sign painted or repainted directly on a door or window except for such signs in P and Residential Districts. Repainting of any painted sign that does require a permit shall be deemed to be a replacement of the sign, except as provided in Subsection (f) below.

(d) **Ordinary Maintenance and Repairs.** Except as provided in Subsection (c) above, no permit shall be required under this Code for ordinary maintenance and minor repairs which do not involve replacement, alteration, reconstruction, relocation, intensification or expansion of the sign.

(e) **Temporary Sale or Lease Signs.** No permit shall be required under this Code for temporary sale or lease signs, temporary signs of persons and firms connected with work on buildings under actual construction or alteration, and temporary business signs, to the extent that such signs are permitted by this Code.

(f) **Change of Copy.** A mere change of copy on a sign the customary use of which involves frequent and periodic changes of copy shall not be subject to the provisions of this Section [604](#), except that a change from general advertising to nongeneral advertising sign copy or from nongeneral advertising to general advertising sign copy or an increase in area including, but not limited to, any extensions in the form of writing, representation, emblem or any figure of similar character shall in itself constitute a new sign subject to the provisions of this Section [604](#). In the case of signs the customary use of which does not involve frequent and periodic changes of copy, a change of copy shall in itself constitute a new sign subject to the provisions of this Section [604](#) if the new copy concerns a different person, firm, group, organization, place, commodity, product, service, business, profession, enterprise or industry.

(g) **Scaled Drawing.** Each application for a permit for a sign shall be accompanied by a scaled drawing of the sign, including the location of the sign on the building or other structure or on the lot, and including (except in the case of a sign the customary use of which involves frequent and periodic changes of copy) such designation of the copy as is needed to determine that the location, area and other provisions of this Code are met.

(h) **Nonconforming Signs; Replacement, Alteration, Reconstruction, Relocation, Intensification, or Expansion.** Unless otherwise provided in this Code or in other Codes or regulations, a lawfully existing sign which fails to conform to the provisions of this [Article 6](#) shall be brought into conformity when the activity for which the sign has been posted ceases operation or moves to another location, when a new building is constructed, or at the end of the sign's normal life. Such sign may not, however, be replaced, altered, reconstructed, relocated, intensified or expanded in area or in any dimension except in conformity with the provisions of this Code, including Subsection (i) below. Ordinary maintenance and minor repairs shall be permitted, but such maintenance and repairs shall not include replacement, alteration, reconstruction, relocation, intensification or expansion of the sign; provided, however, that alterations of a structural nature required to reinforce a part or parts of a lawfully existing sign to meet the standards of seismic loads and forces of the [Building Code](#), to replace a damaged or weathered signboard, to ensure safe use and maintenance of that sign, to remediate hazardous materials, or any combination of the above alterations shall be considered ordinary maintenance and shall be allowed. A sign which is damaged or destroyed by fire or other calamity shall be governed by the provisions of Sections [181](#)(d) and [188](#)(b) of this Code.

A sign which is voluntarily destroyed or removed by its owner or which is required by law to be removed may be restored only in full conformity with the provisions of this Code, except as authorized in Subsection (i) below. A general advertising sign that has been removed shall not be reinstalled, replaced, or reconstructed at the same location, and the erection, construction, and/or installation of a general advertising sign at that location to replace the previously existing sign shall be deemed to be a new sign in violation of Section [611](#)(a) of this Code; provided, however, that such reinstallation, replacement, or reconstruction pursuant to a permit duly issued prior to

the effective date of this requirement shall not be deemed a violation of Section [611\(a\)](#) and shall be considered a lawfully existing nonconforming general advertising sign; and further provided that this prohibition shall not prevent a general advertising sign from being relocated to that location pursuant to a Relocation Agreement and conditional use authorization under Sections [611](#) and [303\(k\)](#) of this Code and Section [2.21](#) of the San Francisco Administrative Code.

(i) **Business Signs.** When the activity for which a business sign has been posted has ceased operation for more than 90 days, all signs pertaining to that business activity shall be removed after that time. A lawfully existing business that is relocating to a new location within 300 feet of its existing location within the North Beach Neighborhood Commercial District described in Sections [702.1](#) and [722.1](#) of this Code may move to the new location within said North Beach Neighborhood Commercial District one existing business sign together with its associated sign structure, whether or not the sign is nonconforming in its new location; provided, however, that the sign is not intensified or expanded in area or in any dimension except in conformity with the provisions of this Code. With the approval of the Zoning Administrator, however, the sign structure may be modified to the extent mandated by the [Building Code](#). In no event may a painted sign or a sign with flashing, blinking, fluctuating or other animated light be relocated unless in conformity with current code requirements applicable to its new location. In addition, the provisions of [Articles 10](#) and [11](#) of this Code shall apply to the relocation of any sign to a location regulated by the provisions of said Articles.

(j) Nothing in this [Article 6](#) shall be deemed to permit any use of property that is otherwise prohibited by this Code, or to permit any sign that is prohibited by the regulations of any special sign district or the standards or procedures of any Redevelopment Plan or any other Code or legal restriction.

(k) **Public Areas.** No sign shall be placed upon any public street, alley, sidewalk, public plaza or right-of-way, or in any portion of a transit system, except such projecting signs as are otherwise permitted by this Code and signs, structures, and features as are specifically approved by the appropriate public authorities under applicable laws and regulations and under such conditions as may be imposed by such authorities.

(l) **Maintenance.** Every sign shall be adequately maintained in its appearance. When the activity for which a business sign has been posted has ceased operation for more than 90 days, all signs pertaining to that business activity shall be removed after that time.

(Amended by Ord. 414-85, App. 9/17/85; Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; Ord. 172-97, App. 5/9/97; Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98; Ord. 140-06, File No. 052921, App. 6/22/2006; Ord. 242-08, File No. 071431, App. 10/30/2008; Ord. [235-14](#), File No. 140844, App. 11/26/2014, Eff. 12/26/2014; Ord. [20-15](#), File No. 110548, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015; Ord. [188-15](#), File No. 150871, App. 11/4/2015, Eff. 12/4/2015)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Reference amended in division (h); Ord. [235-14](#), Eff. 12/26/2014. Divisions (a)-(i) amended; divisions (k) and (l) added; Ord. [20-15](#), Eff. 3/22/2015. Division (c) amended; Ord. [188-15](#), Eff. 12/4/2015.

SEC. 604.1. INFORMATION REQUIRED ON ADVERTISING SIGNS.

(a) **Information Required on General Advertising Signs.** Each general advertising sign authorized by this Code shall bear the following information:

- (1) an imprint identifying the name of the sign company;
- (2) the permit number; and
- (3) the permitted sign dimensions.

This information shall be imprinted and maintained on the face or edge of the sign. Electric signs may have an approved metal tag attached to them instead of imprinted characters. See also requirements specified in Section 3102F.2 of the San Francisco [Building Code](#).

The required text size shall be:

(i) a minimum of 2 inches in height for general advertising signs of 100 square feet or less;

(ii) a minimum of 4 inches in height for general advertising signs of 101 square feet to 500 square feet; and

(iii) a minimum of 8 inches in height for general advertising signs of over 500 square feet.

(b) **New Signs; When Required.** The information required by Subsection (a) shall be provided on each new general advertising sign or whenever a new permit is required, and must be kept accurate and maintained regardless of change of text or graphics.

(c) **Existing Signs; When Required.** The information required by Subsection (a) shall be included on each existing general advertising sign within twelve months of the effective date of this legislation. If no permit can be located within the 12-month period, the Director of Planning shall grant one six-month extension to allow the owner of the sign to apply for and obtain the in-lieu identifying number referred to below in this Subsection (c).

Where no permit can be located for a general advertising sign but the Director of the Planning Department concludes, based on evidence submitted to or possessed by the Planning Department, that the sign likely was legally authorized at the time it was installed at its current location, the Department shall issue an identifying number in lieu of a permit number and the sign shall be considered a lawful nonconforming use under Section [604\(h\)](#) of this Code. This identifying number shall be imprinted and maintained on the sign in lieu of the permit number required by Subsection [604.1\(a\)](#) above. The Director's conclusion concerning the legality or illegality of the sign and the rationale supporting that conclusion shall be set forth in writing and mailed to the applicant.

(d) **Violations; Additional Penalty.** Failure to comply with these requirements shall be deemed to be a violation of [Article 6](#) and subject to the penalties for violation set forth in this [Article 6](#) or elsewhere in this Code. If the Director of Planning determines that the information provided on the sign, as required by Subsection (a), is knowingly false, inaccurate or misleading, an additional penalty of \$1,000.00 a day may be imposed by the Director on the sign company in addition to the other penalties set forth in this [Article 6](#) or elsewhere in this Code. (Added by Ord. 73-01, File No. 002196, App. 5/18/2001; amended by Ord. 232-02, File No. 021727, App. 12/20/2002)

SEC. 604.2. GENERAL ADVERTISING SIGN INVENTORIES.

(a) **Submission of Initial Sign Inventory.** Within 60 days of the effective date of this Section, any general advertising sign company that owns a general advertising sign located in the City shall submit to the Department a current, accurate, and complete inventory of its general advertising signs together with the inventory processing fee required by subsection (f) below. Any general advertising company that commences ownership of one or more general advertising signs located in the City after the effective date of this Section shall submit an inventory together with the inventory processing fee within 60 days after its commences such ownership whether or not the signs on the inventory have previously been reviewed by the Department in its review of the inventory of a previous owner.

(b) **All Signs to be Included in the Inventory; Inclusion Not Evidence of Legality.** The inventory shall identify all general advertising signs located within the City that the general advertising company owns and/or operates under a lease, license or other agreement whether or

not those signs can be proved to be lawfully existing. Inclusion of a sign on the inventory shall not be considered evidence that a sign is lawfully existing.

For purposes of this Section, a "general advertising sign company" shall mean an entity that owns a general advertising sign structure, as distinguished from the person or entity that owns the property on which the sign is located.

(c) The initial sign inventory required by subsection (a) above shall include a site map that shows the location of all signs identified in the inventory, and shall provide the following information for each sign:

(1) The location of the sign by street address, by block and lot, and by nearest intersection;

(2) A photograph of the sign in its existing location on the lot, specifically identifying the sign;

(3) The date of original erection or installation of the sign, if known;

(4) The permit number or in-lieu identifying number issued by the Department pursuant to Section [604.1\(c\)](#) of this Code;

(5) The approved and existing area, dimensions, height, and any other special features of the sign such as illumination or movement;

(6) The type of sign, as defined in Section [602](#) of this Code;

(7) Evidence that the sign has not been removed and still exists at the authorized location, and that the sign company is the owner of the sign structure;

(8) Permit number and, in the case of subsequent modifications of the sign, including, but not limited to, illumination, permit application number or permit number;

(9) Evidence that the sign still is in use for general advertising; and

(10) Information, if known, whether the sign had a prior use as a non-general advertising sign, including, but not limited to, a business sign or exempt sign, and the duration of such prior use.

(d) **Affidavit.** The general advertising sign company shall submit with the inventory an affidavit signed under penalty of perjury by a duly authorized officer or owner of the sign company stating that:

(1) The sign inventory and site map are current, accurate, and complete to the best of his or her knowledge;

(2) The officer or owner believes, after the exercise of reasonable and prudent inquiry, that all signs on the inventory have been erected or installed with an appropriate City permit or have an in-lieu identifying number granted by the Director of Planning;

(3) The general advertising sign company is the owner of all sign structures listed on the inventory.

(e) **Inventory Update.** Any general advertising sign company that has submitted an initial sign inventory pursuant to subsection (a) above shall be responsible for keeping its inventory updated by reporting in writing to the Department the sale or removal of any general advertising sign identified in the inventory, the purchase of a sign from another sign company or owner, or the relocation of a sign pursuant to a Relocation Agreement and conditional use authorization. Such reporting to the Department shall be made within 30 days of the actual sale, removal, purchase, or relocation of the sign. The fee charged to a sign company for an update to its initial sign inventory shall be the fee per sign structure set forth in Section [358](#) of this Code.

(f) **Inventory Processing Fee.** With the submission of the initial sign inventory required by subsection (a) above, the general advertising sign company shall pay the inventory processing fee set forth in Section [358](#) of this Code. After payment of this initial inventory processing fee,

the general advertising sign company shall annually pay an inventory maintenance fee as set forth in Section [358](#). The Department shall use the inventory processing fee solely for the following purposes:

(1) To compensate the Department for its costs in verifying that the signs identified in the corresponding inventory are lawfully existing;

(2) To obtain removal, through abatement actions or other Code enforcement activities, of any signs included on the inventory that the Department determines to be existing illegally.

(g) **Departmental Notification of Failure to Submit Complete Inventories.** The Department shall notify in writing those sign companies that have not submitted or have submitted incomplete sign inventories, or have not timely submitted an inventory update.

(1) Within 30 days of the date of notification provided under Subsection (g), the sign company shall submit a complete inventory with the inventory processing fee and a penalty of \$580.00 per sign for those signs that were not identified or those improperly identified.

(2) If the sign company fails to submit the complete inventory with the processing fee and full penalty amount provided in Subsection (g)(1), then, within 60 days of the date of notification provided under Subsection (g), the penalty will increase to \$1,160.00 per sign for those signs that were not identified or those improperly identified.

(3) Any penalties assessed pursuant to Subsections (g)(1) and (2) above, are appealable to the Board of Appeals.

(4) The Board of Appeals, in reviewing the appeal of the penalty assessed may reduce the amount of the penalty if the Board of Appeals finds that the sign owner: (i) was not properly notified or (ii) had previously submitted a sign inventory that included the signs for which the penalty was assessed. The Board of Appeals also may reduce the amount of the penalty if it finds that any action on the part of the Department resulted an improper assessment of the penalty charge.

(5) If the sign company fails to submit the full penalty amount assessed pursuant to Subsections (g)(1) and (2) or as modified by the Board of Appeals pursuant to Subsections (g)(3) and (4), the Planning Department shall request the City's Treasurer/Tax Collector to pursue the outstanding penalties after 90 days of the date of notification provided under Subsection (g).

(6) All penalty revenues received shall be deposited in the Code Enforcement Fund.

(h) The Department shall submit to the Commission and the Board of Supervisors an annual report that includes: (i) annual revenues from the inventory processing fee, annual inventory maintenance fee, in-lieu application fee, and the relocation agreement application fee, (ii) annual expenditures for the sign inventory program, and (iii) a progress report on the number of general advertising signs verified in the sign inventory; in-lieu requests; and Code enforcement actions for general advertising signs processing, backlog, and abatement actions.

(Added by Ord. 140-06, File 052921, App. 6/22/2006; Ord. 200-06, File No. 060849, App. 7/21/2006)

SEC. 605. PUBLIC USE DISTRICTS.

Business signs in P Districts shall be subject to the controls of this [Article 6](#) for the zoning district nearest the location of the proposed sign, other than Public Districts or Residential Districts. No general advertising sign, other than those signs exempted by Section [603](#) of this Code, shall be permitted.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 285-94, App. 8/2/94; Ord. [80-14](#), File No. 140062, App. 6/13/2014, Eff. 7/13/2014)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section amended; Ord. [80-14](#), Eff. 7/13/2014.

📌 **SEC. 606. RESIDENTIAL AND RESIDENTIAL ENCLAVE DISTRICTS.**

Signs in Residential and Residential Enclave Districts, other than those signs exempted by Section [603](#) of this Code, shall conform to the following provisions:

(a) **General Provisions for All Signs.**

(1) No sign shall project beyond a street property line or legislated setback line, or into a required front setback area.

(2) No sign shall have or consist of any moving, rotating or otherwise animated part, or (if permitted to be illuminated) any flashing, blinking, fluctuating or otherwise animated light.

(3) No roof sign, wind sign, or general advertising sign shall be permitted.

(4) No sign shall extend above the roofline of a building to which it is attached, or above a height of 12 feet, except as permitted below.

(b) **Signs for Uses Permitted in Residential and Residential Enclave Districts.** The following types of signs, subject to the limitations prescribed for them, shall be the only signs permitted for uses authorized as principal or conditional uses in R and RED Districts, except that signs for any commercial establishments shall be subject to the limitations of Paragraph (c) below.

(1) One nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated nameplate for each street frontage of the lot, not exceeding a height of 12 feet, and having an area not exceeding one square foot in RH Districts or two square feet in RM or RED Districts.

(2) One identifying sign for each street frontage of the lot, not exceeding a height of 12 feet, and meeting the following additional requirements:

(A) In RH Districts: nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated only; maximum area 12 square feet;

(B) In RM, RTO or RED Districts: maximum area eight square feet if directly illuminated, and 20 square feet if nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated.

(3) **Sale or Lease Signs.** One temporary nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated sale or lease sign for each street frontage of the total parcel involved, not exceeding a height of 24 feet if freestanding and not above the roofline if attached to a building, and having an area not exceeding six square feet for each lot or for each 3,000 square feet in such total parcel, whichever ratio permits the larger area, provided that no such sign shall exceed 50 square feet in area and any such sign exceeding 18 square feet in area shall be set back at least 25 feet from all street property lines. Any sale or lease sign shall be removed within seven days following removal of the property from the market.

(4) **Construction Signs.** Temporary nonilluminated signs of persons and firms connected with work on buildings under actual construction or alteration, giving their names and information pertinent to the project, not exceeding a height of 12 feet, with the combined area of all such signs not to exceed 10 square feet for each street frontage of the project.

(c) **Business Signs for Limited Commercial Uses.** For Limited Commercial Uses, as described in Section [186](#) of this Code, and for Limited Corner Commercial Uses, as permitted by Section [231](#), the following controls shall apply:

(1) **Wall Signs.** One wall sign is permitted for each street frontage occupied by the use, placed flat against the wall that faces such street and not located above the ground floor. Such sign shall not exceed an area of one square foot for each linear foot of street frontage occupied by the building or part thereof that is devoted to the commercial use or 50 square feet per street frontage, whichever is less. Any such sign may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated.

(2) **Window Signs.** Window signs, limited to signs painted or similarly applied directly on the surface of the window glass, are permitted. The total area of all window signs, as defined in Section [602.1\(b\)](#), shall not exceed one-quarter the area of the window on which the signs are located. Such signs may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated.

(3) **Projecting Signs.** The number of projecting signs shall not exceed one per business. The area of such sign, as defined in Section [602.1\(a\)](#), shall not exceed six square feet. The height of such sign shall not exceed 14 feet, or the height of the lowest residential windowsill above the commercial use, whichever is lower. No part of the sign shall project more than 75 percent of the horizontal distance from the street property line to the curblineline, or four feet, whichever is less. Any such sign may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated.

(4) **Signs on Awnings.** Sign copy may be located on permitted awnings in lieu of wall signs and projecting signs. The area of such sign copy as defined in Section [602.1\(c\)](#) shall not exceed 20 square feet per business. Such sign copy may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated.

(5) **Illumination.** Any illumination permitted for signs covered by this Subsection (c) shall be extinguished at all times when the commercial use is not open for business.

(d) **Signs for Other Nonconforming Uses.** Any illumination permitted for signs covered by this Subsection (d) shall be extinguished at all times when the nonconforming use is not open for business.

(1) **Automobile Service Stations.** The following business signs are permitted for an automobile service station. Any such signs may be nonilluminated or indirectly or directly illuminated. Directly illuminated signs may be illuminated only during open business hours.

(A) A maximum of two oil company signs, which shall not extend above the roofline if attached to a building, or exceed a height of 24 feet if freestanding. The area of any such sign shall not exceed 180 square feet, and along each street frontage all parts of such a sign or signs that are within 10 feet of the street property line shall not exceed 80 square feet in area. The areas of other permanent and temporary signs as covered in Subparagraph [606\(d\)\(1\)\(B\)](#) below shall not be included in the calculation of the areas specified in this Subparagraph.

(B) **Other Permanent and Temporary Signs Customarily Incidental to the Service Station Business.** No such sign shall extend above the roofline if attached to a building, or exceed a height of 12 feet if freestanding. The area of such signs shall not exceed 20 square feet for each such sign or a total of 80 square feet for all such signs on the premises.

(2) **Open Land Uses.** If there is no building with more than 50 square feet of floor area involved in the use, one business sign is permitted for each street frontage occupied by such use, not exceeding a height of 12 feet and having an area not exceeding one square foot for each foot of such street frontage. The total area of all signs for such a use shall not exceed 50 square feet. Any such sign may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated.

(3) **Other Uses.** For a use not listed in Subsections [606\(c\)](#) or [606\(d\)](#) above, one business sign is permitted for each street frontage occupied by the use, placed flat against the wall that faces such street and not located above the ground floor. Such sign shall not exceed an area of one square foot for each foot of street frontage occupied by the building or part thereof that is devoted to the nonconforming use. The total area of all signs for such a use shall not exceed 100 square feet. Any such sign may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated.

(Amended by Ord. 443-78, App. 10/6/78; Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; Ord. 115-90, App. 4/6/90; Ord. 72-08, File No. 071157, App. 4/3/2008; Ord. [56-13](#), File No. 130062, App. 3/28/2013, Eff. 4/27/2013; Ord. [22-15](#), File No. 141253, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015; Ord. [188-15](#), File No. 150871, App. 11/4/2015, Eff. 12/4/2015)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Division (b)(2)(B) amended; Ord. [56-13](#), Eff. 4/27/2013. Introductory paragraph and divisions (b) and (b)(2)(B) amended; former division (b)(2)(C) deleted; divisions (b)(3) and (b)(4) amended; new division (c) added and former division (c) redesignated as (d) and amended; divisions (d)(1), (d)(1)(A), and (d)(3) amended; Ord. [22-15](#), Eff. 3/22/2015. Section header and division (a)(4) amended; Ord. [188-15](#), Eff. 12/4/2015.

SEC. 607. COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS.

Signs in C, M, and PDR Districts, other than those Signs exempted by Section 603 of this Code, shall conform to the following provisions:

(a) **General Advertising Signs.** No General Advertising Sign shall be permitted in any C, M, or PDR District.

(b) **Roof Signs.** Except for Historic Signs and Vintage Signs, Roof Signs are not permitted in C, M, and PDR Districts.

(c) **Wind Signs.** No Wind Sign shall be permitted in any C, M, or PDR District.

(d) **Window Signs.** The total Area of all Window Signs shall not exceed one-third the area of the window or clear door on or in which the Signs are located. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

(e) **Moving Parts.** No Sign shall have or consist of any moving, rotating, or otherwise physically animated part (as distinguished from lights that give the appearance of animation by flashing, blinking or fluctuating), except as follows:

(1) Moving or rotating or otherwise physically animated parts may be used for the rotation of barber poles and the indication of time of day and temperature.

(2) Notwithstanding the type of Signs permissible under subsection (e), a Video Sign is prohibited.

(f) **Illumination.** Any Sign may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly or Directly Illuminated. Signs in PDR, C-3, and M-2 Districts shall not be limited in any manner as to type of illumination, but no Sign in a C-2 or M-1 District shall have or consist of any flashing, blinking, fluctuating or otherwise animated light except as specifically designated as “Special Districts for Sign Illumination” on Sectional Map SSD of the Zoning Map of the City and County of San Francisco, described in Section [608](#) of this Code, in the C-2 area consisting of five blocks in the vicinity of Fisherman’s Wharf. Notwithstanding the type of Signs permissible under subsection (f), a Video Sign is prohibited in the district.

(g) **Projection.** Except for Historic Signs, Vintage Signs, Historic Theater Marquees, and Historic Theater Projecting Signs, no Sign shall project more than 75% of the horizontal distance from the Street Property Line to the curbline and in no case shall a Sign project more than six feet beyond the Street Property Line or building setback line.

(h) **Height and Extension Above Roofline.**

(1) **Signs Attached to Buildings.** Except as provided in Section [260](#) for Historic Signs, in Section [608.14](#) for Vintage Signs, and in Section [188](#)(e) for Historic Movie Theater Marquees and Historic Movie Theater Projecting Signs, no Sign Attached to a Building shall extend or be located above the Roofline of the building to which it is attached. In addition, no Sign Attached to a Building shall under any circumstances exceed a maximum height of:

In C-3: 100 feet;

In all other C, M, and PDR Districts: 60 feet.

Such Signs may contain letters, numbers, a logo, service mark and/or trademark and may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated.

(2) **Freestanding Signs.** The maximum height for Freestanding Signs shall be as follows:

In C-2: 36 feet;

In all other C, M, and PDR Districts: 40 feet.

(i) **Special Standards for Automotive Service Stations.** For Automotive Service Stations, only the following Signs are permitted, subject to the standards in this subsection (i) and to all other standards in this Section [607](#).

(1) A maximum of two oil company Signs, which shall not extend above the Roofline if Attached to a building, or exceed the maximum height permitted for Freestanding Signs in the same district if Freestanding. The Area of any such Sign shall not exceed 180 square feet, and along each street frontage all parts of such a Sign or Signs that are within 10 feet of the street property line shall not exceed 80 square feet in area. No such Sign shall project more than five feet beyond any Street Property Line or building setback line. The areas of other permanent and temporary Signs as covered in subsection (i)(2) below shall not be included in the calculation of the areas specified in this subsection (i)(1).

(2) Other permanent and temporary Business Signs, not to exceed 30 square feet in Area for each such Sign or a total of 180 square feet for all such Signs on the premises. No such Sign shall extend above the Roofline if Attached to a building, or in any case project beyond any Street Property Line or building setback line.

(Amended by Ord. 64-77, App. 2/18/77; Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; Ord. 537-88, App. 12/16/88; Ord. 219-94, App. 6/3/94; Ord. 134-97, App. 4/25/97; Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98; Ord. 28-02, File No. 011962, App. 3/15/2002; Ord. 298-08, File No. 081153, App. 12/19/2008; Ord. [56-13](#), File No. 130062, App. 3/28/2013, Eff. 4/27/2013; Ord. [20-15](#), File No. 110548, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015; Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Divisions (b), (d)(2), and (g)(1) amended; Ord. [56-13](#), Eff. 4/27/2013. Divisions (a), (b), (c), (d)(2), and (e) amended; former divisions (e)(1) and (e)(4) merged into division (e) and amended; former divisions (e)(2) and (e)(3) deleted; divisions (f), (g)(1), (g)(2), and (h)(1) amended; Ord. [20-15](#), Eff. 3/22/2015. Divisions (a), (b), and (c) amended; former divisions (b)(1), (b)(2), (b)(3), (d)(2), (d)(4), and (h)(3) deleted; division (d) added; former divisions (d), (d)(1), and (d)(3) amended and redesignated as divisions (e), (e)(1), and (e)(2); former divisions (e)–(h)(2) amended and redesignated as divisions (f)–(i)(2); Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

SEC. 607.1. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL-COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

Signs located in Neighborhood Commercial Districts shall be regulated as provided herein, except for those signs which are exempted by Section [603](#) of this Code or as more specifically regulated in a Special Sign District under Sections [608](#) *et seq.* In the event of conflict between the provisions of Section [607.1](#) and other provisions of [Article 6](#), the provisions of Section [607.1](#) shall prevail in Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts.

In each such Special Sign District, signs, other than those signs exempted by Section [603](#) of this Code, shall be subject to the special controls in Sections [608.1](#) through [608.16](#), respectively, in addition to all other or, if so expressly specified in those Sections, in lieu of other applicable sign provisions of this Code. In the event of inconsistency with any other provision of [Article 6](#), the most restrictive provision shall prevail unless this Code specifically provides otherwise.

(a) **Purposes and Findings.** In addition to the purposes stated in Sections [101](#) and [601](#) of this Code, the following purposes apply to Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts. These purposes constitute findings that form a basis for regulations and provide guidance for their application.

(1) As Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts change, they need to maintain their attractiveness to residents, customers and potential new businesses alike. Physical amenities and a pleasant appearance will profit both existing and new enterprises.

(2) The character of signs and other features projecting from buildings is an important part of the visual appeal of a street and the general quality and economic stability of the area. Opportunities exist to relate these signs and projections more effectively to street design and

building design. These regulations establish a framework that will contribute toward a coherent appearance of Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts.

(3) Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts are typically mixed use areas with commercial units on the ground or lower stories and residential uses on upper stories. Although signs are essential to a vital commercial district, they should not be allowed to interfere with or diminish the livability of residential units within a Neighborhood Commercial District or in adjacent residential districts.

(4) The scale of most Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts as characterized by building height, bulk, and appearance, and the width of streets and sidewalks differs from that of other commercial and industrial districts. Sign sizes should relate and be compatible with the surrounding district scale.

(b) **Signs or Sign Features Not Permitted in NC and RC Districts.** Roof Signs as defined in Section [602](#), Wind Signs as defined in Section [602](#), and Signs on Canopies, as defined in Section [136.1\(b\)](#) of this Code, are not permitted in NC and RC Districts. 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.

(c) **Identifying Signs.** Identifying Signs, as defined in Section [602](#), shall be permitted in all Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts subject to the limits set forth below.

(1) One Sign per lot shall be permitted and such Sign shall not exceed 20 square feet in area. The sign may be a Freestanding sSign,¹ if the building is recessed from the Street Property Line, or may be a Wall Sign or a projecting Sign. The existence of a Freestanding Identifying Sign shall preclude the erection of a Freestanding Business Sign on the same lot. A Wall Sign or projecting Sign shall be mounted on the first-story level; a Freestanding Sign shall not exceed 15 feet in height. Such Sign may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

(2) One Sign identifying a shopping center or shopping mall shall be permitted subject to the conditions in subsection (c)(1), but shall not exceed 30 square feet in area. Any sign identifying a permitted Commercial Use in an NC District shall be considered a Business Sign and subject to Section [607.1\(f\)](#) of this Code. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated during the hours of operation of the businesses in the shopping center or shopping mall.

(d) **Nameplates.** One Nameplate, as defined in Section [602](#), not exceeding an area of two square feet, shall be permitted for each noncommercial use in NC Districts.

(e) **General Advertising Signs.** General Advertising Signs, as defined in Section [602](#), are not permitted in Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts.

(f) **Business Signs.** Business Signs, as defined in Section [602](#) shall be permitted in all Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts subject to the limits set forth below.


(1) **NC-1 and NCT-1 Districts.**

(A) **Window Signs.** The total Area of all Window Signs, as defined in Section [602](#), shall not exceed one-third the area of the window on or in which the Signs are located. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

(B) **Wall Signs.** The Area of all Wall Signs shall not exceed one square foot per square foot of street frontage occupied by the business measured along the wall to which the Signs are

attached, or 50 square feet for each street frontage, whichever is less. The Height of any Wall Sign shall not exceed 15 feet or the height of the wall to which it is attached. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated; or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.

(C) **Projecting Signs.** The number of projecting Signs shall not exceed one per business. The Area of such Sign, as defined in Section [602](#), shall not exceed 24 square feet. The Height of such Sign shall not exceed 15 feet or the height of the wall to which it is attached. No part of the Sign shall project more than 75% of the horizontal distance from the Street Property Line to the curbline, or six feet six inches, whichever is less. The Sign may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated, or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.

 (D) **Signs on Awnings.** Sign copy may be located on permitted Awnings in lieu of Wall Signs and projecting signs¹. The Area of such sign copy as defined in Section [602](#) shall not exceed 20 square feet. Such sign copy may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated.

(2) **RC, NC-2, NCT-2, NC-S, Broadway, Castro Street, Inner Clement Street, Outer Clement Street, Divisadero Street, Excelsior Outer Mission Street, Fillmore Street, Upper Fillmore Street, Folsom Street, Glen Park, Inner Sunset, Irving Street, Haight Street, Hayes-Gough, Japantown, Judah Street, Upper Market Street, Noriega Street, North Beach, Ocean Avenue, Pacific Avenue, Polk Street, Regional Commercial District, Sacramento Street, SoMa, Taraval Street, Union Street, Valencia Street, 24th Street-Mission, 24th Street-Noe Valley, and West Portal Avenue Neighborhood Commercial Districts.**

(A) **Window Signs.** The total Area of all Window Signs, as defined in Section [602](#), shall not exceed one-third the area of the window on or in which the Signs are located. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

(B) **Wall Signs.** 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. 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.

(C) **Projecting Signs.**

(i) The number of projecting Signs shall not exceed one per business.

(ii) No part of the Sign shall project more than 75% of the horizontal distance from the Street Property Line to the curbline, or six feet six inches, whichever is less.

(iii) Except as provided for in subsection (v) below, such Signs may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated; or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.

(iv) Except as provided for in subsection (v) below, the Area of such Sign, as defined in Section [602](#), shall not exceed 24 square feet. The Height of such 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 lowest.

(v) Within the Fillmore Street Neighborhood Commercial Transit District, one projecting Business Sign per building may exceed the size and height limits specified in subsection (iv) above, provided all of the following criteria are met:

a. The Area of the Sign, as defined in Section [602](#), does not exceed 125 square feet.

b. The Height of the Sign does not exceed the lowest of the following:

1. 60 feet;

2. the height of the wall to which it is attached;

3. the height of the lowest residential windowsill on the wall to which it is attached;
- or
4. the lowest portion of any architectural feature located along the roofline, such as a cornice.
- c. The sign is for the primary occupant of the building.
 - d. The sign employs a remote transformer.
 - e. The sign is designed with a minimum profile to be as narrow as is structurally feasible.
 - f. Any illumination of the sign is indirect, such as by the use of halo-lit lettering, and such illumination is used only during business hours.
 - g. The lettering or other inscription is arranged in a vertical manner.
 - h. The sign does not alter, cover, or obscure any architectural features of the subject building, such as cornice lines or belt courses.
 - i. The sign is attached in a reversible manner, such that no damage or destruction to any exterior features or cladding materials shall occur as part of the sign's installation or removal.

(D) **Signs on Awnings and Marquees.** Sign copy may be located on permitted Awnings or Marquees in lieu of projecting Signs. The Area of such sign copy as defined in Section [602](#) shall not exceed 30 square feet. Such sign copy may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated; except that sign copy on Marquees for Movie Theaters or places of Entertainment may be directly illuminated during business hours.

(E) **Freestanding Signs and Sign Towers.** With the exception of Automotive Service Stations, which are regulated under Section [607.1](#)(f)(4), one Freestanding Sign or Sign Tower per lot shall be permitted in lieu of a projecting Sign, if the building or buildings are recessed from the Street Property Line. The existence of a Freestanding Business Sign shall preclude the erection of a Freestanding Identifying Sign on the same lot. The Area of such Freestanding Sign or Sign Tower, as defined in Section [602](#), shall not exceed 20 square feet nor shall the Height of the Sign exceed 24 feet. No part of the Sign shall project more than 75% of the horizontal distance from the Street Property Line to the curblin, or six feet, whichever is less. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated; or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.

(3) **Mission Street NCT, NC-3, and NCT-3 Neighborhood Commercial Districts.**

(A) **Window Signs.** The total area of all Window Signs, as defined in Section [602](#), shall not exceed one-third the area of the window on or in which the Signs are located. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

(B) **Wall Signs.** The area of all Wall Signs shall not exceed three square feet per foot of street frontage occupied by the use measured along the wall to which the Signs are attached, or 150 square feet for each street frontage, whichever is less. 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.

(C) **Projecting Signs.** The number of projecting Signs shall not exceed one per business. The Area of such Sign, as defined in Section [602](#), shall not exceed 32 square feet. The Height of the 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. No part of the Sign shall project more than 75% of the horizontal distance from the Street

Property Line to the curblineline, or six feet six inches, whichever is less. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

(D) **Sign Copy on Awnings and Marquees.** Sign copy may be located on permitted Awnings or Marquees in lieu of projecting Signs. The Area of such Sign copy, as defined in Section [602](#), shall not exceed 40 square feet. Such sign copy may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated; except that sign copy on Marquees for Movie Theaters or places of Entertainment may be directly illuminated during business hours.

(E) **Freestanding Signs and Sign Towers.** With the exception of Automotive Service Stations, which are regulated under Section [607.1](#)(f)(4) of this Code, one Freestanding Sign or Sign Tower per lot shall be permitted in lieu of a projecting Sign if the building or buildings are recessed from the Street Property Line. The existence of a Freestanding Business Sign shall preclude the erection of a Freestanding Identifying Sign on the same lot. The Area of such Freestanding Sign or Sign Tower, as defined in Section [602](#), shall not exceed 30 square feet nor shall the Height of the Sign exceed 24 feet. No part of the Sign shall project more than 75% of the horizontal distance from the Street Property Line to the curblineline, or six feet, whichever is less. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated, or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.

(4) **Special Standards for Automotive Service Stations.** For Automotive Service Stations in Neighborhood Commercial Districts, only the following Signs are permitted, subject to the standards in this subsection (f)(4) and to all other standards in this Section [607.1](#).

(A) A maximum of two oil company signs, which shall not extend above the Roofline if attached to a building, or exceed the maximum height permitted for Freestanding Signs in the same district if Freestanding. The Area of any such Sign shall not exceed 180 square feet, and along each street frontage, all parts of such a Sign or Signs that are within 10 feet of the Street Property Line shall not exceed 80 square feet in area. No such Sign shall project more than five feet beyond any Street Property Line. The areas of other permanent and temporary Signs as covered in paragraph (B) below shall not be included in the calculation of the areas specified in this paragraph A.

(B) Other permanent and temporary Business Signs, not to exceed 30 square feet in Area for each such Sign or a total of 180 square feet for all such Signs on the premises. No such Sign shall extend above the Roofline if attached to a building, or in any case project beyond any Street Property Line or building setback line.

(g) **Temporary Signs.** One temporary nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated sale or lease sign or nonilluminated sign of persons and firms connected with work on buildings under actual construction or alteration, giving their names and information pertinent to the project per lot, shall be permitted. Such sign shall not exceed 50 square feet and shall conform to all regulations of Subsection [607.1](#)(f) for business signs in the respective NC District in which the sign is to be located. All temporary signs shall be promptly removed upon completion of the activity to which they pertain.

(h) **Special Sign Districts.** Additional controls apply to certain Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts that are designated as Special Sign Districts. Special Sign Districts are described within Sections [608.1](#) through [608.16](#) of this Code and with the exception of Sections [608.1](#), [608.2](#) and [608.11](#), their designations, locations and boundaries are provided on Sectional Map SSD of the Zoning Map of the City and County of San Francisco.

(i) **Restrictions on Illumination.** Signs in Neighborhood Commercial and Residential-Commercial Districts shall not have nor consist of any flashing, blinking, fluctuating or

otherwise animated light except those moving or rotating or otherwise physically animated parts used for rotation of barber poles and the indication of time of day and temperature, and in the following special districts, all specifically designated as “Special Districts for Sign Illumination” on Sectional Map SSD of the Zoning Map of the City and County of San Francisco.

(1) **Broadway Neighborhood Commercial District.** Along the main commercial frontage of Broadway between west of Columbus Avenue and Osgood Place.

(2) **NC-3.** NC-3 District along Lombard Street from Van Ness Avenue to Broderick Street.


(3) Notwithstanding the type of signs permissible under subparagraph (i), a video sign is prohibited in the districts described in subparagraphs (1) and (2).

(Added by Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; amended by Ord. 445-87, App. 11/12/87; Ord. 219-94, App. 6/3/94; Ord. 262-00, File No. 001426, App. 11/17/2000; Ord. 28-02, File No. 011962, App. 3/15/2002; Ord. 298-08, File No. 081153, App. 12/19/2008; Ord. 61-09, File No. 090181, App. 4/17/2009; Ord. [140-11](#), File No. 110482, App. 7/5/2011, Eff. 8/4/2011; Ord. [195-11](#), File No. 110448, App. 10/4/2011, Eff. 11/3/2011; Ord. [35-12](#), File No. 111305, App. 2/21/2012, Eff. 3/22/2012; Ord. [42-13](#), File No. 130002, App. 3/28/2013, Eff. 4/27/2013; Ord. [261-13](#), File No. 130084, App. 11/27/2013, Eff. 12/27/2013; Ord. [227-14](#), File No. 120796, App. 11/13/2014, Eff. 12/13/2014; Ord. [228-14](#), File No. 120814, App. 11/13/2014, Eff. 12/13/2014; Ord. [22-15](#), File No. 141253, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015; Ord. [229-15](#), File No. 151126, App. 12/22/2015, Eff. 1/21/2016; Ord. [30-16](#), File No. 151004, App. 3/11/2016, Eff. 4/10/2016; Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016; Ord. [129-17](#), File No. 170203, App. 6/30/2017, Eff. 7/30/2017)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Division (f)(2) amended; Ord. [140-11](#), Eff. 8/4/2011. Undesignated introductory material and division (h) amended; Ord. [195-11](#), Eff. 11/3/2011. Division (f)(2) amended; Ord. [35-12](#), Eff. 3/22/2012. Division (f)(2) amended; Ord. [42-13](#), Eff. 4/27/2013. Section header and divisions (f), (f)(2), and (f)(4)(A) amended; Ord. [261-13](#), Eff. 12/27/2013. Divisions (e), [former] (e)(1), [former] (e)(2), and (f)(2) amended; Ord. [227-14](#), Eff. 12/13/2014. Divisions (e), [former] (e)(1), [former] (e)(2), and (f)(2) amended; Ord. [228-14](#), Eff. 12/13/2014. Undesignated introductory material and divisions (a), (a)(1)-(4), (b), (c), and (e) amended; former divisions (e)(1) and (e)(2) deleted; divisions (h), (i), and (j) amended; former divisions (j)(1) and (j)(2) deleted and former divisions (j)(3) and (j)(4) redesignated as (j)(1) and (j)(2); Ord. [22-15](#), Eff. 3/22/2015. Division (f)(2) amended; Ord. [229-15](#), Eff. 1/21/2016. Division (f)(2)(C) amended and divided into subdivisions (i)-(iii); new divisions (f)(2)(C)(iv) and (v) added; Ord. [30-16](#), Eff. 4/10/2016. Divisions (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) amended; former divisions (j)-(j)(2) deleted; Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016. Division (c)(2) amended; Ord. [129-17](#), Eff. 7/30/2017.

CODIFICATION NOTE

 1. So in Ord. [217-16](#).

SEC. 607.2. MIXED USE DISTRICTS.

Signs located in Mixed Use Districts shall be regulated as provided herein, except for signs in Residential Enclave Districts, which are regulated by Section [606](#), and those signs which are exempted by Section [603](#). Signs not specifically regulated in this Section [607.2](#) shall be prohibited. In the event of conflict between the provisions of Section [607.2](#) and other provisions of [Article 6](#), the provisions of Section [607.2](#) shall prevail in Mixed Use Districts.

(a) **Purposes and Findings.** In addition to the purposes stated in Sections [101](#) and [601](#) of this Code, the following purposes apply to Mixed Use Districts. These purposes constitute findings that form a basis for regulations and provide guidance for their application.

(1) As Mixed Use Districts change, they need to maintain their attractiveness to customers and potential new businesses alike. Physical amenities and a pleasant appearance will profit both existing and new enterprises.

(2) The character of signs and other features projecting from buildings is an important part of the visual appeal of a street and the general quality and economic stability of the area. Opportunities exist to relate these signs and projections more effectively to street design and building design. These regulations establish a framework that will contribute toward a coherent appearance of Mixed Use Districts.

(3) Mixed Use Districts are typically mixed use areas with commercial units on the ground or lower stories and residential uses on upper stories or have housing and commercial and industrial activities interspersed. Although signs and other advertising devices are essential to a

vital commercial district, they should not be allowed to interfere with or diminish the livability of residential units within a Mixed Use District or in adjacent residential districts.

(4) The scale of most Mixed Use Districts as characterized by building height, bulk, and appearance, and the width of streets and sidewalks differs from that of other commercial and industrial districts. Sign sizes should relate and be compatible with the surrounding district scale.

(b) **Signs or Sign Features Not Permitted in Mixed Use Districts.** General Advertising Signs are not permitted in Mixed Use districts. Roof Signs as defined in Section [602](#), Wind Signs as defined in Section [602](#), and Signs on Canopies, as defined in Section [136.1\(b\)](#) of this Code, are not permitted in Mixed Use Districts. 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. In addition, all Signs or sign features not otherwise specifically regulated in this Section [607.2](#) shall be prohibited.

(c) **Identifying Signs.** Identifying Signs, as defined in Section [602](#), shall be permitted in all Mixed Use Districts subject to the limits set forth below.

(1) One Sign per lot shall be permitted and such Sign shall not exceed 20 square feet in area. The Sign may be a Freestanding Sign, if the building is recessed from the Street Property Line, or may be a Wall Sign or a projecting Sign. The existence of a Freestanding Identifying Sign shall preclude the erection of a Freestanding Business Sign on the same lot. A Wall Sign or projecting Sign shall be mounted on the first-story level; a Freestanding Sign shall not exceed 15 feet in height. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

(2) One Sign identifying a shopping center or shopping mall shall be permitted subject to the conditions in subsection (c)(1), but shall not exceed 30 square feet in area. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated during the hours of operation of the businesses in the shopping center or shopping mall.

(d) **Nameplate.** One nonilluminated or directly illuminated Nameplate, as defined in Section [602](#) of this Code, not exceeding an area of two square feet, shall be permitted for each noncommercial use in Mixed Use Districts.

(e) **General Advertising Signs.** General Advertising Signs, as defined in Section [602](#), are not permitted in Mixed Use Districts.

(f) **Business Signs.** Business Signs, as defined in Section [602](#) shall be permitted in all Mixed Use Districts subject to the limits set forth below.

(1) **Chinatown Residential Neighborhood Commercial District.**

(A) **Window Signs.** 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. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

(B) **Wall Signs.** The Area of all Wall Signs shall not exceed one square foot per foot of street frontage occupied by the business measured along the wall to which the Signs are attached, or 50 square feet for each street frontage, whichever is less; provided, however, that in no case shall the Wall Sign or combination of Wall Signs cover more than 75% of the surface of any wall, excluding openings. The Height of any Wall Sign shall not exceed 15 feet or the height of the wall to which it is attached. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated; or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.


(C) **Projecting Signs.** The number of projecting Signs shall not exceed one per business. The Area of such Sign shall not exceed 24 square feet. The Height of such Sign shall not exceed 15 feet or the height of the wall to which it is attached. No part of the Sign shall project more

than 75% of the horizontal distance from the Street Property Line to the curbline, or six feet six inches, whichever is less. The Sign may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated, or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.

(D) **Signs on Awnings.** Sign copy may be located on permitted Awnings in lieu of Wall Signs and projecting Signs. The area of such sign copy shall not exceed 20 square feet. Such sign copy may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated.

(2) **Chinatown Visitor Retail District.**

(A) **Window Signs.** 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. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

 (B) **Wall Signs.** 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. 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 I¹, or Directly Illuminated.

(C) **Projecting Signs.** The number of projecting Signs shall not exceed one per business. The Area of such Sign shall not exceed 24 square feet. The Height of such 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. No part of the Sign shall project more than 75² of the horizontal distance from the Street Property Line to the curbline, or six feet six inches, whichever is less. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated; or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.

(D) **Signs on Awnings and Marquees.** Sign copy may be located on permitted Awnings or Marquees in lieu of projecting Signs. The area of such sign copy shall not exceed 30 square feet. Such sign copy may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated, except that sign copy on Marquees for Movie Theaters or places of Entertainment may be directly illuminated during business hours.

(E) **Freestanding Signs and Sign Towers.** One Freestanding Sign or Sign Tower per lot shall be permitted in lieu of a projecting Sign, if the building or buildings are recessed from the Street Property Line. The existence of a Freestanding Business Sign shall preclude the erection of a Freestanding Identifying Sign on the same lot. The area of such Freestanding Sign or Sign Tower shall not exceed 20 square feet nor shall the Height of the Sign exceed 24 feet. No part of the Sign shall project more than 75² of the horizontal distance from the Street Property Line to the curbline, or six feet, whichever is less. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated; or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.

(3) **Chinatown Community Business District, Eastern Neighborhoods, South of Market Mixed Use Mixed Use Districts, and the Downtown Residential Districts.**

(A) **Window Signs.** 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. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

(B) **Wall Signs.**


(i) **In districts other than the Urban Mixed Use District.** The Area of all Wall Signs shall not exceed three square feet per foot of street frontage occupied by the use measured along the wall to which the Signs are attached, or 150 square feet for each street frontage, whichever is less; provided, however, that in no case shall the Wall Sign or combination of Wall Signs cover

more than 75% of the surface of any wall, excluding openings. 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.

(ii) **In the Urban Mixed Use District.** The Area of all Wall Signs shall not exceed three square feet per foot of street frontage occupied by the use measured along the wall to which the Signs are attached for up to 50 feet of street frontage, and an additional one square foot per foot of street frontage thereafter; provided, however, that in no case shall the Wall Sign or combination of Wall Signs cover more than 75% of the surface of any wall, excluding openings. The Height of any Wall Sign shall not exceed 60 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.

(C) **Projecting Signs.** The number of projecting Signs shall not exceed one per business. The Area of such sign or Signs combined when there are multiple Signs shall not exceed 32 square feet. The Height of the 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. No part of the Sign shall project more than 75% of the horizontal distance from the Street Property Line to the curblin, or six feet six inches, whichever is less. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated, Indirectly Illuminated, or Directly Illuminated.

(D) **Sign Copy on Awnings and Marquees.** Sign copy may be located on permitted Awnings or Marquees in lieu of projecting Signs. The area of such sign copy shall not exceed 40 square feet. Such sign copy may be nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated; except that sign copy on Marquees for Movie Theaters or places of Entertainment may be directly illuminated during business hours.

 (E) **Freestanding Signs and Sign Towers.** One Freestanding Sign or Sign Tower per lot shall be permitted in lieu of a projecting sign if the building or buildings are recessed from the Street Property Line. The existence of a Freestanding Business Sign shall preclude the erection of a Freestanding Identifying Sign on the same lot. The Area of such Freestanding Sign or Sign Tower shall not exceed 30 square feet nor shall the Height of the Sign exceed 24 feet. No part of the Sign shall project more than 75% of the horizontal distance from the Street Property Line to the curblin, or six feet, whichever is less. Such Signs may be Nonilluminated or Indirectly Illuminated, or during business hours, may be Directly Illuminated.

(g) **Special Sign Districts.** Additional controls apply within certain Mixed Use Districts that are designated as Special Sign Districts. The designations, locations, and boundaries of these Special Sign Districts are provided on Sectional Map SSD of the Zoning Map of the City and County of San Francisco, and are described within Sections [608.1](#) through [608.10](#) of this Code.

(h) **Other Sign Requirements.** Within Mixed Use Districts, the following additional requirements shall apply:

(1) **Temporary Signs.** The provisions of Section [607.1\(g\)](#) of this Code shall apply.

(2) **Special Standards for Automotive Gas and Service Stations.** The provisions of Section [607.1\(f\)\(4\)](#) of this Code shall apply.

(Added by Ord. 131-87, App. 4/24/87; amended by Ord. 115-90, App. 4/6/90; Ord. 219-94, App. 6/3/94; Ord. 74-01, File No. 002218, App. 5/18/2001; Ord. 298-08, File No. 081153, App. 12/19/2008; Ord. [196-11](#), File No. 110786, App. 10/4/2011, Eff. 11/3/2011; Ord. [20-15](#), File No. 110548, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015; Ord. [188-15](#), File No. 150871, App. 11/4/2015, Eff. 12/4/2015; Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Divisions (e) and (f)(3) amended; former division (f)(3)(B) redesignated as (f)(3)(B)(i) and header added; division (f)(3)(B)(ii) added; Ord. [196-11](#), Eff. 11/3/2011. Introductory material amended; former divisions (h), (i)(1), and (i)(2) deleted and former divisions (i), (i)(3), and (i)(4) redesignated as (h), (h)(1), and (h)(2) respectively; Ord. [20-15](#), Eff. 3/22/2015. Divisions (d) and (f)(1)(C) amended; Ord. [188-15](#), Eff. 12/4/2015. Divisions (d) and (f)(1)(C) amended; Ord. 188-15, Eff. 12/4/2015. Divisions (b), (c)-(c)(2), (d), (e), and (f)-(f)(3)(E) amended; former divisions (e)(1)-(e)(3) deleted; Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

CODIFICATION NOTES

1. So in Ord. [217-16](#), which added a capital letter to a word not present in the code.
2. So in Ord. [217-16](#), which deleted “percent” here but did not add “%” in its place.

SEC. 607.3. [REPEALED.]

(Added by Ord. 537-88, App. 12/16/88; amended by Ord. 79-89, App. 3/24/89; Ord. 327-96, App. 8/21/96; repealed by Ord. [22-15](#), File No. 141253, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015)

SEC. 607.4. [REPEALED.]

(Added by Ord. 345-87, App. 8/21/87; repealed by Ord. [22-15](#), File No. 141253, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015)

SEC. 608. SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICTS AND SIGNS IN SPECIAL USE DISTRICTS.

In addition to the zoning districts that are established under other Articles of this Code, there shall also be in the City such Special Sign Districts as are established in this [Article 6](#) and certain Special Use Districts with sign controls established in [Article 2](#) in order to carry out further the purposes of this Code. In the event of inconsistency with any other provision of [Article 6](#), the most restrictive provision shall prevail unless this Code specifically provides otherwise.

(a) **Special Sign Districts.** The designations, locations and boundaries of these Special Sign Districts shall be as provided in this Article and as shown on the [Zoning Map](#) referred to in Section [105](#), subject to the provisions of Section [105](#). The original of the sectional map of the [Zoning Map](#) for Special Sign Districts (numbered SSD) referred to in this Article is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File No. 138-62. In each such Special Sign District, signs, other than those signs exempted by Section [603](#) of this Code, shall be subject to the special controls in Sections [608.1](#) through [608.16](#), respectively, in addition to all other, or, if so expressly specified in those Sections, in lieu of other, applicable sign provisions of this Code.

(b) **Signs in Special Use Districts.** The following Special Use Districts have sign controls specific to the district:

(1) Sec. [249.64](#). Parkmerced Special Use District, as promulgated in the Parkmerced Design Standards and Guidelines.

(2) Sec. [249.21](#). California Street and Presidio Avenue - Community Center Special Use District.

(Amended by Ord. 64-77, App. 2/18/77; Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; Ord. 285-94, App. 8/2/94; Ord. 59-08, File No. 031034, App. 4/10/2008; Ord. [195-11](#), File No. 110448, App. 10/4/2011, Eff. 11/3/2011; Ord. [188-15](#), File No. 150871, App. 11/4/2015, Eff. 12/4/2015)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section amended; Ord. [195-11](#), Eff. 11/3/2011. Section header amended; former section amended and divided into introductory paragraph and new division (a); division (b) added; Ord. [188-15](#), Eff. 12/4/2015.

SEC. 608.1. NEAR R DISTRICTS.

No general advertising sign, and no other sign exceeding 100 square feet in area, shall be located in an NC, C, M, PDR, Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use District or South of Market Mixed Use District within 100 feet of any R District in such a manner as to be primarily viewed from residentially zoned property or from any street or alley within an R District; any sign of which the face is located parallel to a street property line and lies for its entire width opposite an NC, C, M, PDR, MUR, or South of Market SLR District shall be deemed *prima facie* not to be primarily so viewed. No sign of any size within 100 feet of any R District shall project beyond

the street property line or building setback line of any street or alley leading off the main commercial frontage into the R District.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; Ord. 115-90, App. 4/6/90; Ord. 298-08, File No. 081153, App. 12/19/2008)

SEC. 608.2. NEAR SCHOOLS, PARKS, AND RECREATION FACILITIES.

No general advertising sign, and no other sign exceeding 200 square feet in area, shall be located within 100 feet of any part of the premises of a school, attendance at which satisfies the compulsory education laws of the State of California, in such a way that it is primarily viewed through any part of such premises. No general advertising sign, and no other sign exceeding 200 square feet in area, shall be located within 200 feet of any part of the premises of a park, playground, recreation center or facility, square, avenue or grounds under the jurisdiction and supervision of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission or a park, playground, or recreation center or facility of any other public agency, if the sign is so arranged that it is primarily viewed from or through such premises.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 134-97, App. 4/25/97)

SEC. 608.3. CIVIC CENTER SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICTS.

No General Advertising Sign, and no other Sign exceeding 200 square feet in area, shall be located within the Civic Center Special Sign Districts Numbers 1 and 2, as designated on Sectional Map SSD of the Zoning Map of the City and County of San Francisco. Within such districts, no Sign that is located on publicly owned property, or that is located on a street frontage facing publicly owned property, shall have any moving, rotating or otherwise animated part; or have any flashing, blinking, fluctuating or otherwise animated light; or project beyond any Street Property Line or building setback line; or be Attached to a Building in any manner other than with its entire area flat against a wall of such building that directly faces a street.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section header and section amended; Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

SEC. 608.4. TRANSIT CENTER SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICT.

(a) **General.** There shall be a Special Sign District known as the “Transit Center Special Sign District” in the area bounded by Market Street on the north, Folsom Street on the south, Steuart Street on the east, and between New Montgomery and Third Streets on the west, and in the area bounded by Folsom, Harrison, Essex, and Second Streets, but excluding the planned City Park between Mission, Howard, Second, and Beale Streets and those portions of the Transit Center District Plan Area included in Zone 1 of the Transbay Redevelopment Plan Area, which include portions of land bounded by Spear, Mission, Folsom, and Second Streets, as designated on Sectional Map SSD of the Zoning Map of the City and County of San Francisco. The original copy of said Sectional Map with this Special Sign District indicated thereon is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No 170941.

(b) **Purpose and Findings.** In addition to the purposes stated in Sections 101 and 601 of this Code, the following purposes apply to the Transit Center Special Sign District. These purposes constitute findings that form a basis for these regulations and provide guidance for their application.

(1) A new 5.4-acre park called the City Park (which in its early stages of planning was known as the Rooftop Park) is planned to be located atop the Transbay Transit Center, which will be located between Mission and Howard Streets on the north and south, respectively, and between Second and Beale Streets on the west and east, respectively. The City Park will include

an outdoor amphitheater, gardens, trails, open grass areas, a children's play space, a restaurant, and a café, and will be accessible from 10 entry points, including bridges from neighboring buildings and a gondola from a planned ground-level floor of the Transbay Transit Center off Mission Street between the planned Salesforce Tower and Fremont Street, to be known as Mission Square, and the City Park will provide needed open space in an area of the City with few parks.

(2) The Under Ramp Park is a new 4.2-acre neighborhood park planned to be situated primarily under the elevated bus ramp that will provide a direct connection from the new Transbay Transit Center to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, but approximately 25% of the park will be open to the sky. The Under Ramp Park will include a children's play area, cafés, and terraces, a beer garden, and a multilevel pavilion with cultural and retail programs. The area between Folsom, Harrison, Essex, and Second Streets is adjacent to the planned site of the Under Ramp Park.

(3) Illuminated signs and other signs visible from a public park or privately owned public open space (POPOS) may negatively impact the aesthetics of the park or POPOS and the enjoyment of its users by, among other things, interfering with the natural scenery and landscape afforded by the park or POPOS, as well as creating unwanted illumination and glare.

(4) Evening and nighttime illumination of signs in the Plan Area would disturb the sleep of residents in the area and disrupt their general enjoyment of their homes.

(c) Controls.

(1) Illumination for any new sign that is located in the Transit Center Special Sign District, where any part of the face of the sign is over 35 feet in height, as defined in Section [602](#), shall meet the following requirements:

(A) the sign's illumination shall be dimmable; and,

(B) all illumination shall be turned off from 11:00 p.m. each evening until 6:00 a.m. the following morning.

(2) Except as specified in subsection (c)(3) below, a new sign that is within 200 feet of an existing park under the jurisdiction and supervision of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission or any other public agency or planned public park, where a planned park is one that the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission or any other public agency has identified as a site for a park through a public planning process and identified in the Transit Center District Plan, or within 200 feet of a POPOS of 1/4 acre or greater, and that is visible from such a park or POPOS shall be permitted if it is 50 square feet or less and its highest point reaches a height of 35 feet or less, as defined in Section [602](#).

(3) A new Business Sign, as defined in Section [602](#), that is within 200 feet of the City Park and is visible from the City Park shall only be permitted if it meets the following requirements:

(A) If the new Business Sign is located on the façade of a building directly abutting or with a pedestrian connection to the City Park,

(i) the sign shall consist of only metal lettering, painted or unpainted, raised off the façade of the building to which it is attached, with a maximum vertical dimension of 30 inches and a total maximum area of 50 square feet;

(ii) the highest point of the sign shall reach a height of 15 feet or less from the nearest finished ground plane of the City Park; and,

(iii) the sign's illumination shall consist only of indirect illumination, pursuant to Section [602](#) of this Code, including but not limited to halo-style lighting.

(B) If the new Business Sign is not located on the façade of a building directly abutting or with a pedestrian connection to the City Park, the sign shall comply with Section [607](#) of this Code.

(Added by Ord. [234-17](#), File No. 170941, App. 12/8/2017, Eff. 1/7/2018)

(Former Sec. 608.4 added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 360-94, App. 10/19/94; repealed by Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

SEC. 608.4A. [REPEALED.]

(Added by Proposition F, 6/3/97; repealed by Proposition G, 6/3/2008)

SEC. 608.5. NEAR FREEWAYS.

Except for Historic Signs and Vintage Signs designated pursuant to Section [608.14](#) of this Code, no General Advertising Sign, and no other Sign exceeding 200 square feet in area, shall be located after the date of determination and designation of the route of a Freeway so that it is primarily to be viewed by persons traveling on any portion of such Freeway. When located so as to be viewed primarily by persons traveling on any portion of a Freeway, Business Signs not exceeding 200 square feet in area which are permitted by this Section [608.5](#), Historic Signs, and Vintage Signs designated pursuant to Section [608.14](#) which may exceed 200 square feet in area shall, regardless of any other provision of this Code, be limited to Signs which designate the name of the owner or occupant of the premises upon which the Sign is placed, or which identify such premises, or which direct attention to goods manufactured or produced, or services rendered, on the property upon which the Sign is placed.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98; Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

SEC. 608.6. NEAR CERTAIN SCENIC STREETS.

No general advertising sign, and no other sign exceeding 200 square feet in area, shall be located within the areas along the scenic streets that are listed below and designated as special sign districts on Sectional Map SSD of the [Zoning Map](#) of the City and County of San Francisco, if any face of such sign is visible from any such street. These limitations shall apply to any portion of any property that is within 200 feet of any such street, unless a greater depth or area is indicated on said Sectional Map. Historic Signs may exceed the size limit in this section.

- Telegraph Hill Boulevard for its entire length;
- Twin Peaks Boulevard for its entire length;
- The Embarcadero for its entire length;
- Market Street extension east side from Mono Street to Portola Drive;
- Portola Drive for its entire length;
- Roosevelt Way for its entire length;
- El Camino Del Mar for its entire length;
- Point Lobos Avenue from El Camino Del Mar to its intersection with the Great Highway, including the Cliff House and Sutro Baths areas;
- Sunset Boulevard for its entire length;
- Great Highway and Esplanade from Point Lobos Avenue to Sloat Boulevard;
- Great Highway extension south from Sloat Boulevard to its junction with Skyline Boulevard near Harding Boulevard;
- Nineteenth Avenue from Lincoln Way to Junipero Serra Boulevard;
- Sloat Boulevard from the Great Highway to Junipero Serra Boulevard;
- Junipero Serra Boulevard from Sloat Boulevard to the County Line;
- Skyline Boulevard from Sloat Boulevard to the County Line;
- Lake Merced Boulevard for its entire length;

John Muir Drive for its entire length;
Zoo Road for its entire length;
Harding Boulevard for its entire length;
Alemany Boulevard from Mission Street viaduct to Junipero Serra Boulevard;
Marina Boulevard for its entire length;
Lyon Street from Marina Boulevard to Lombard Street;
Baker Street from Marina Boulevard to Lombard Street;
Broderick Street from Marina Boulevard to Lombard Street;
Jefferson Street from Lyon Street to Broderick Street;
Beach Street from Baker Street to Broderick Street;
North Point Street from Baker Street to Broderick Street;
Bay Street from Lyon Street to Broderick Street;
Francisco Street from Lyon Street to Broderick Street;
Chestnut Street from Lyon Street to Broderick Street;
Lombard Street from Broderick Street to Lyon Street;
Richardson Avenue from Lyon Street to Lombard Street.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; amended by Ord. [20-15](#), File No. 110548, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section amended; Ord. [20-15](#), Eff. 3/22/2015.

SEC. 608.7. NEAR RAPID TRANSIT ROUTES.

No general advertising sign, and no other sign exceeding 200 square feet in area, shall be located after the date of determination and designation of the route or portion thereof of the Bay Area Rapid Transit District or other rapid transit line, wherever such route or portion thereof is other than underground, so that the sign is primarily to be viewed by persons traveling on any such route or portion thereof.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 608.8. MARKET STREET SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICT.

There shall be a special sign district known as the "Market Street Special Sign District" in the vicinity of Market Street, from The Embarcadero to Octavia Boulevard as designated on Sectional Map [SS02](#) of the Zoning Map of the City and County of San Francisco. The original copy of said Sectional Map with this Special Sign District indicated thereon is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File No. 112-70. With respect to said Special Sign District, the following regulations shall apply:

(a) **Purpose and Findings.** In addition to the purposes stated in Sections [101](#) and [601](#) of this Code, the following purposes apply to the Market Street Special Sign District. These purposes constitute findings that form a basis for these regulations and provide guidance for their application.

(1) In November 1962, the electorate of San Francisco voted approval of an investment in a City and regional rapid transit system that will run beneath Market Street. In June 1968, the electorate approved a bonded indebtedness of \$24,500,000, including payment for reconstruction and improvement of Market Street from The Embarcadero to the Central Skyway overpass. The street has been completely rebuilt at public expense, with special paving, furnishings, plazas and landscaping. Market Street is the transit spine of the Downtown area, with heavy concentrations of pedestrians, and is a central domain of the people of the City and of the region. It is a purpose of the Market Street Special Sign District to further this public endeavor.

(2) Development and design efforts along Market Street rely upon the promise of a street of high quality. Both existing and new enterprises will be strengthened by the high standards of their environment and by the joint efforts of owners, residents, and business people.

(3) The character of signs along the street and of other features projecting from buildings is especially significant to street appearance and to the general quality and economic stability of the area. Opportunities exist to relate these signs and projections more effectively to the street design and to the design of buildings, and it is a purpose of these regulations to set a framework that will contribute toward those ends.

(4) The standards established by these regulations are reasonable standards related to the unique nature of the Market Street area and to its present and future needs.

(5) The standards established by these regulations are deemed to be minimum requirements, forming a basic framework for development and remodeling. They are not intended in any way to preclude further design refinement or review by individuals or duly constituted organizations which might consider more restrictive requirements as to any aspects limited herein, or as to additional aspects such as materials, color, graphics, types of representation, relationship of signs to one another and to architectural features, or the general quality of design. It is anticipated that private efforts along such lines will and should be made for the further improvement of Market Street.

(b) Controls.

(1) Projection of Signs and Other Features. Within said Special Sign District:

(A) No Projection shall exceed a horizontal distance of six feet beyond any Street Property Line. This limitation shall apply to Signs and to all other features including but not limited to Marquees, Awnings and Canopies, with the sole exception of flagpoles for flags of any nation or political subdivision.

(B) Projecting Signs for each establishment shall be limited to one Sign on each street frontage occupied by the establishment, in addition to any Signs that are placed flat upon or otherwise integrated in the design of Marquees and Awnings.

(2) Height. Within said Special Sign District, all of the following limitations shall apply:

(A) A projecting Sign with lettering or other inscription arranged in a vertical manner shall have a maximum height of 60 feet; except that a greater height shall be permitted, up to a maximum height of 100 feet, provided the Height of the Sign shall remain at least 20 feet below the Roofline of the building as measured directly above the Sign.

(B) Except as provided in Paragraph (D) below, all other Signs shall be located no higher than the windowsill level of the lowest story (if any) that has a window or windows on the building facade on which the Signs are placed, exclusive of the ground story and mezzanine, provided that no such Sign shall in any case exceed a height of 60 feet.

(C) In addition, except as provided in Paragraph (D) below, uniformity of height shall be maintained in both the upper and lower edges of Signs placed flat upon or essentially parallel to each facade of a single building.

(D) As to the requirements of Paragraphs (B) and (C) above, deviation from the requirements may be permitted to the extent an alternative placement of Signs is made necessary by the location of arches, entrances and other architectural features, as determined by the Zoning Administrator, or for the purpose of installing special lighting effects and temporary holiday decorations, or for the purpose of modifying or replacing currently existing noncomplying business Wall Signs as provided by Section [607\(h\)](#).

(3) **Temporary Signs.** With the exception of holiday decorations, no Sign composed of paper or other temporary material shall be placed on the outside of any building or structure or affixed to the glass on the outside or inside of any window, unless such Sign is placed in a frame or on a structure specifically designed for this purpose.

(Added by Ord. 125-70, App. 1/17/70; amended by Ord. 219-94, App. 6/3/94; Ord. [20-15](#), File No. 110548, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015; Ord. [188-15](#), File No. 150871, App. 11/4/2015, Eff. 12/4/2015; Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section header, introductory material, and divisions (a)(1), (a)(2), and (a)(4) amended; former division (c) deleted, former divisions (d)-(f) redesignated as (c)-(e), and internal references adjusted accordingly; current division (d)(1) amended; Ord. [20-15](#), Eff. 3/22/2015. Division (d)(4) amended; Ord. [188-15](#), Eff. 12/4/2015. Division (d)(4) amended; Ord. 188-15, Eff. 12/4/2015. Former divisions (b)(1), (b)(2), (d)(1), (e), (e)(2), and (e)(3) deleted; division (b) amended; former divisions (c)-(c)(2), (d), (d)(2)-(d)(5), and (e)(1) amended and redesignated as (b)(1)-(b)(1)(B), (b)(2), (b)(2)(A)-(b)(2)(D), and (b)(3); Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

SEC. 608.9. JACKSON SQUARE SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICT.

There shall be a special sign district known as the "Jackson Square Special Sign District," as designated on Sectional Map SSD of the [Zoning Map](#) of the City and County of San Francisco. The original copy of said Sectional Map with this Special Sign District indicated thereon is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File No. [Ord. No.] 276-72.

(a) **Purposes and Findings.**

(1) In addition to furthering the purposes stated in Sections [101](#) and [601](#) of this Code, creation of the Jackson Square Special Sign District is intended to further the purposes of the Jackson Square Historic District created pursuant to Ordinance No. 221-72 and to foster the preservation and enhancement of said Historic District.

(2) The standards established by these regulations are deemed to be minimum requirements. They are not intended in any way to preclude further design refinement or review by duly constituted private organizations which might consider more restrictive requirements as to any aspects limited herein, or as to additional aspects such as materials, color, graphics, types of representation, relationship of signs to one another and to architectural features, or the general quality of design.

(b) **Regulations.** Within such Special Sign District:

(1) The Area of all Signs on a building shall not exceed an area of two square feet for each foot of street frontage occupied by the building, and shall in no event exceed a total of 100 square feet on each street frontage.

(2) No Projection shall exceed a horizontal distance of six feet beyond any Street Property Line. This limitation shall apply to Signs and to all other features including but not limited to Marquees and Awnings, with the sole exception of flagpoles for flags of any nation or political subdivision. All Signs, Marquees, Awnings and other features shall be supported entirely by a building; no Canopies shall be permitted.

(3) Projecting Signs for each establishment shall be limited to one Sign on each street frontage occupied by the establishment.

(4) All Signs shall be placed entirely below the level of the lowest cornice or strong horizontal element located above the ground story of the building, but in no event higher than three feet above the top of the ceiling level of the ground story.

(5) No Directly Illuminated Sign shall be permitted.

(Added by Ord. 223-72, App. 8/9/72; amended by Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section header amended; former divisions (b)(1), (b)(3), and (b)(4) deleted; former divisions (b)(2) and (b)(5)-(b)(8) amended and redesignated as (b)(1)-(b)(5); Ord. 217-16, Eff. 12/10/2016.

📌 SEC. 608.10. [REPEALED.]

(Added by Ord. 64-77, App. 2/18/77; repealed by Ord. [22-15](#), File No. 141253, App. 2/20/2015, Eff. 3/22/2015)

📌 SEC. 608.11. HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL CENTERS IN R DISTRICTS ADJACENT TO OR CROSS THE STREET FROM NC, C OR M DISTRICTS.

(a) **Purposes and Findings.** In addition to the purposes stated in Sections [101](#) and [601](#) of this Code, the following purposes apply to this Special Sign District. These purposes constitute the findings that form a basis for these regulations and provide guidance for their application.

(1) Hospitals and medical centers are distinguished from other uses in R Districts in that they provide emergency medical care vital to the health and well-being of the people of the City. Where such facilities are in R Districts and adjacent to or across the street from NC, C or M Districts, their signs are substantially obscured, ineffective, and put to a significant disadvantage by the more intense signage allowed in the NC, C or M Districts nearby, making identification of emergency facilities difficult.

(2) Imposing the standards of Section [607](#) on only those hospitals and medical centers in R Districts adjacent to or across the street from NC, C or M Districts will allow for necessary and desirable signs to the benefit of the people in need of emergency care when such identification is most critical.

(3) The City Planning Commission in reviewing applications for signs under this Section [608.11](#) shall consider the needs of pedestrians and drivers approaching the applicant institution and the character and pattern of the immediate neighborhood and those neighborhoods affected by the proposed signs so that only such signs that are required for the identification of the institution, and that are not detrimental to the surrounding neighborhoods and any panoramas or vistas in such areas, are approved.

(b) **Control.** Notwithstanding the provisions of Section [606](#) of this Code, a hospital or medical center in an R District and adjacent to or across the street from an NC, C or M District for a distance of at least 400 feet of total street frontage shall be subject to the provisions of Section [607](#) of this Code that apply to the NC, C or M District adjacent to or across the street upon approval by the City Planning Commission as a conditional use under the procedures and criteria set forth in Section [303](#) of this Code. The Commission, in considering an application under this Section, may permit signs, including signs located on the sides of a penthouse, that exceed the standards of Section [607](#) to the extent necessary to meet community needs for adequately identified medical institutions with the exception of moving parts, flashing lights and wind signs which are prohibited.

(Added by Ord. 30-85, App. 1/17/85; amended by Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87)

📌 SEC. 608.12. [REPEALED.]

(Added by Ord. 64-88, App. 2/18/88; repealed by Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

📌 SEC. 608.13. IN THE RINCON HILL DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL MIXED USE DISTRICT.

Within the boundaries of the Rincon Hill Downtown Residential Mixed Use District set forth in Section 827 and generally bounded by Folsom Street, The Embarcadero, Bryant Street, and Essex Street, notwithstanding any other provisions of this Code, the existing Signs and/or Sign Towers may be changed, modified or replaced provided that all the following criteria are met:

(a) Such changed, modified or replacement sign is in the same general location as the existing signage;

(b) The total area and height of the changed, modified or replacement sign is not increased from the total area and height of the existing sign or sign tower;

(c) Such sign or sign tower may contain letters, numbers, a logo, service mark and/or trademark, and may be nonilluminated, or directly or indirectly illuminated;

(d) Such sign or sign tower may only reflect the identity of the owner or a tenant of the building, including a parent corporation, subsidiary and/or affiliate of the owner or of the tenant.

(Added by Ord. 389-95, App. 12/14/95; amended by Ord. 217-05, File No. 050865, App. 8/19/2005; Ord. [56-13](#), File No. 130062, App. 3/28/2013, Eff. 4/27/2013; Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Undesignated introductory material amended; Ord. [56-13](#), Eff. 4/27/2013. Section header and introductory material amended; Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

SEC. 608.14. VINTAGE SIGNS.

(a) **Restoration and Maintenance.** Notwithstanding the provisions of Section [604](#)(h) of this Code, signs which depict in text or graphic form a particular residential, business, cultural, economic, recreational, or other valued resource which is deemed by the Planning Commission to be a cultural artifact that contributes to the visual identity and historic character of a City neighborhood or the City as a whole shall be considered a vintage sign and allowed to be restored, reconstructed, maintained and technologically improved on a property by Conditional Use authorization of the Planning Commission provided that: (a) the vintage sign to be restored, reconstructed or technologically improved depicts a use, person, place, thing, cultural icon or other valued character or characteristics of the City or a City neighborhood that, at the time of the vintage sign authorization, is at least 40 years old; (b) at least 50 percent of the area of the sign remains legible, (c) the sign does not visually obstruct or significantly impair or detract from, by glare or any other means, a City landmark or public vista; (d) the sign is not larger than the sign that existed prior to the vintage sign authorization and does not appear to be more visually prominent than the sign that existed prior to the vintage sign authorization; and (e) the sign is maintained in good condition, repair and working order. Designation as a vintage sign under this Section does not by itself protect the sign from being obscured or removed by future development projects.

(b) **Application for Vintage Sign Authorization.** Prior to the scheduling of the Conditional Use hearing before the Planning Commission required by subsection (a), the applicant for a vintage sign authorization shall provide to the Department evidence in the form of photographs and/or documents demonstrating that:

(1) the sign proposed for vintage sign authorization is at least 40 years old; and

(2) the sign is a cultural artifact that depicts a particular residential, business, cultural, economic, recreational, or other valued resource of the past that contributes to the visual identity and character of a City neighborhood or the City as a whole.

(c) **Application of Other [Article 6](#) Requirements.** Once a sign is authorized as a vintage sign under this Section, it is subject only to the requirements of this Section [608.14](#) and is exempt from all other provision of [Article 6](#). However, any change of copy from the vintage-copy authorized by the Planning Commission or any enlargement or alteration shall be considered an abandonment of the vintage sign authorization and the sign shall then be considered a new sign subject to all the provisions of this [Article 6](#). The addition of a frame to a painted wall sign shall not be considered an enlargement or alteration under this section.

(d) **Removal of Vintage Sign.** Once designated as a vintage sign under this Section, the sign may not be removed without Conditional Use authorization of the Planning Commission.

(e) **Relocation.** A three-dimensional vintage sign may be relocated to a new location with Conditional Use authorization of the Planning Commission. Relocation of a general advertising sign is subject to the provisions of Section [2.21](#) of the San Francisco Administrative Code and may not be relocated under this Section [608.14](#).

(f) **Referral to Historic Preservation Commission.** If the application for a vintage sign authorization under this Section [608.14](#) is not otherwise required to be referred to the Historic Preservation Commission under the San Francisco Charter or this Code, it is not required to be referred.

(Added by Ord. 276-98, App. 8/28/98; amended by Ord. [160-11](#), File No. 110277, App. 8/1/2011, Eff. 8/31/2011)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section header and section amended; Ord. [160-11](#), Eff. 8/31/2011.

SEC. 608.15. NORTHEAST WATERFRONT SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICT.

There shall be a special sign district known as the "Northeast Waterfront Special Sign District." The boundaries of this special sign district shall be coterminous with the boundaries of the Northeast Waterfront Historic District, as established pursuant to [Article 10](#), Appendix D of this Code by Ordinance No. 171-83, and any amendments thereto. A copy of said Ordinance and materials related thereto are on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 031034.

(a) **Purposes and Findings.**

(1) In addition to furthering the purposes stated in Sections [101](#) and [601](#) of this Code, creation of the Northeast Waterfront Special Sign District is intended to further the purposes of the Northeast Waterfront Historic District created pursuant to Board of Supervisors Ordinance No. 171-83, and any amendments thereto, and to foster the preservation and enhancement of said Historic District.

(2) The standards established by these regulations are deemed to be minimum requirements.

(b) **Regulations within the Special Sign District:**

(1) No Projection shall exceed a horizontal distance of six feet beyond any Street Property Line. This limitation shall apply to Signs and to all other features, including but not limited to, Marquees and Awnings, with the sole exception of flagpoles for flags. All Signs, Marquees, Awnings, and other features shall be supported entirely by a building. No Canopies shall be permitted.

(2) All Signs shall be placed entirely below the level of the lowest cornice or strong horizontal element located above the ground story of the building, and in no event higher than three feet above the top of the ceiling level of the ground story.

(3) No Directly Illuminated Sign, as defined in Section [602](#) of this Code, shall be permitted.

(4) **Principal Signs.** Only one principal sign shall be permitted per establishment per street frontage. In addition, the following provisions shall apply to principal signs:

(A) A projecting sign shall not exceed 10 square feet;

(B) If a flush sign contains lettering, the lettering shall not exceed 18 inches in height; provided, however, that in no event shall lettering exceed a size that can be read from any farther than across the street;

(C) On a brick surfaces, signs shall be mounted with a minimum number of wall penetrations.

(5) **Secondary Signs.** Only one secondary sign shall be permitted per establishment per street frontage. A secondary sign is intended to be viewable close-up. In addition, the following provisions shall apply to secondary signs:

(A) If lettering is placed on a door or window, such lettering may contain only the name and nature of the establishment, hours of operation, and other pertinent information;

(B) A projecting secondary sign shall not exceed two square feet in area if used in conjunction with a principal flush sign.

(6) The total area of all Signs on a building shall not exceed an area of two square feet for each foot of street frontage occupied by the building; however, in no event shall the total area of all signs on a building's street frontage exceed 50 square feet.

(Added by Ord. 59-08, File No. 031034, App. 4/10/2008; amended by Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section header amended; former divisions (b)(1)–(b)(3) deleted; former divisions (b)(4)–(b)(6) and (b)(9) amended and redesignated as (b)(1)–(b)(3) and (b)(6); former divisions (b)(7) and (b)(8) redesignated as (b)(4) and (b)(5); Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

📌 **SEC. 608.16. CITY CENTER SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICT.**

(a) **General.** There shall be a Special Sign District known as the "City Center Special Sign District" in the block bounded by Geary Boulevard on the north, Masonic Avenue on the west, O'Farrell Street on the south and Lyon Street on the east, as designated on Sectional Map SSD of the Zoning Map of the City and County of San Francisco. The original copy of said Sectional Map with this Special Sign District indicated thereon is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File No. 110448. Signs in the City Center Special Sign District shall be subject to the provisions of [Article 6](#) except that the controls as provided in this Section [608.16](#) shall apply in lieu of the sign controls specified in Section [607.1](#). Further, in the event of a conflict between the provisions of Section [608.16](#) that authorize specified signs and other provisions of [Article 6](#), the provisions of Section [608.16](#) shall prevail notwithstanding any provision of the Code to the contrary.

(b) **Purpose and Findings.** In addition to the purposes stated in Sections [101](#) and [601](#) of this Code, the following purposes apply to the City Center Special Sign District. These purposes constitute findings that form a basis for these regulations and provide guidance for their application.

(1) The City Center was built in 1951 as an approximately seven-acre, single-tenant, multilevel Sears department store on a site spanning four city blocks bounded by Geary Boulevard, Masonic Avenue, Lyon Street, and O'Farrell Street. The Sears store historically maintained projecting signs on the north and south elevations of the building, on a centrally located sign tower, in alcoves below the roofline of the building, and above pedestrian entries. The signs were scaled and located to provide visibility from the wide roadways bordering the City Center.

(2) In 1994, the City Center reopened as a multi-tenant shopping center. Signs on the sign towers and in roofline alcoves were removed at that time, limiting the visibility of the City Center and its tenants from Geary Boulevard.

(3) The City Center has experienced significant vacancy in recent years since its conversion to multi-tenant use, resulting in a loss of sales tax revenue to the City. Adequate, well-placed signs on both the building and at parking entrances are necessary to ensure that the City Center remains a viable retail center providing goods and services to residents, while generating sales tax revenue for the City.

(4) The City Center has six separate surface parking lots with separate entrances accessible from Geary Boulevard, Masonic Avenue and O'Farrell Street, which are built at different grades and cannot feasibly be connected. Directional signs at parking lot entrances are necessary to

direct motorists to the lot adjacent to the store they intend to visit and to minimize traffic congestion on surrounding streets.

(5) The City Center has multiple entrances and levels, with commercial units on the lower and upper stories with access to stores from streets or from one of the six separate surface parking lots. Signs and other advertising devices for on-site businesses are essential to the general quality and economic stability of the City Center. Current sign regulations, which are tailored to smaller storefronts typical of the City's neighborhood commercial districts, do not provide sufficient visibility for businesses located in the City Center, a large-scale development with a building height, bulk, appearance and site configuration that differs from that of other neighborhood commercial districts.

(6) Sign sizes, number, height and placement should take into account the configuration of the site development and the adjacent wide streets and an expressway, in order to provide visual relief to the large area of the building, visibility for its businesses and identity for the City Center as a whole.

(7) Additional projecting signs, wall signs, and directional signs at parking lot entrances would improve the visual appeal, identity, and long-term viability of the City Center, while improving access to its parking facilities and minimizing traffic congestion.

(c) **Definitions.** Within the City Center Special Sign District, the following definitions shall apply in addition to the applicable definitions in Sections [602](#) *et seq.*:

(1) **Copy Area.** On a directional sign, projecting sign, or sign tower, copy area shall refer to the entire area within a single continuous rectangular perimeter formed by extending lines around the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, or any figure of similar character.

(2) **Directional Sign.** A directional sign shall mean a sign identifying the location of a parking lot entry and the names of the businesses accessible from such lot. A directional sign may also identify the number of parking spaces available in the adjacent parking lot and the name of the shopping center.

(3) **Internal Wayfinding Signs.** Internal wayfinding signs shall mean signs located entirely on private property which are intended to direct vehicles and pedestrians within the site. Internal wayfinding signs shall be designed to be minimally visible from any public right of way.

(d) **Controls Generally.** The sign controls applicable in the City Center Special Sign District are specified in this Section [608.16](#). All signs or sign features not otherwise specifically authorized in this Section [608.16](#) or exempted in Sections [603](#) or [604](#) shall be prohibited.

(e) **Illumination.** All signs may be non-illuminated, indirectly or directly illuminated. Signs may not be flashing, blinking, fluctuating or otherwise animated light.

(f) **Business Signs.** Business signs, as defined in Section [602.3](#), shall be permitted subject to the limits set forth below.

(1) **Wall Signs.** Wall signs, as defined in Section [602.22](#), shall be permitted as follows:

(A) **Wall Signs Above Pedestrian Entries from a Parking Lot.** For a business occupying 8,000 square feet or more, one wall sign up to 200 square feet in area shall be permitted above each pedestrian entry to the business from a parking lot. For a business occupying less than 8,000 square feet, one wall sign up to 75 square feet in area shall be permitted above each pedestrian entry to the business from a parking lot. The height of any parking lot entry wall sign shall not exceed 28 feet.

(B) **Wall Signs Above Pedestrian Entries from a Public Sidewalk.** The area of all wall signs located above pedestrian entries from a public sidewalk shall not exceed three square feet per foot of street frontage occupied by the use measured along the wall to which the signs are

attached, or 150 feet for each street frontage, whichever is less. The height of any street entry wall sign shall not exceed 24 feet.

(C) **Other Wall Signs.** The following additional wall signs shall be permitted:

(i) Up to three additional wall signs shall be permitted on each of the Masonic Avenue and Geary Boulevard frontages. The area of each sign shall be limited to a maximum of 115 square feet. The height of such wall signs shall not exceed 48 feet.

(ii) At the intersection of Geary Boulevard and Lyon Street, up to 500 square feet of wall signs shall be permitted, provided that no wall sign for a single use shall occupy more than 80 square feet. The height of such wall signs shall not exceed the height of the wall on which they are located.

(iii) One wall sign shall be permitted in each of the two existing sign alcoves located below the roofline of the building on the primary west and east building elevations perpendicular to Geary Boulevard, subject to the following conditions: wall signs shall be no higher than the wall to which they are attached, shall have a maximum area of 170 square feet, and shall be identifying signs, as defined in Section [602.10](#), for the shopping center.

(2) **Window Signs.** The total area of all window signs, as defined in Section [602.1\(b\)](#), shall not exceed 1/3 the area of the window on or in which the signs are located.

(3) **Projecting Signs.** A total of six projecting signs shall be permitted within the Special Sign District, subject to the following limitations, provided, however, that the limits on the number of projecting signs per business and size of projecting signs set forth elsewhere in this Code shall not apply.

(A) Projecting signs may be identifying signs for the shopping center or business signs or may contain seasonal messages.

(B) No projecting sign shall project more than eight feet over the property line or exceed the height of the wall to which it is attached by more than 10 feet.

(C) Five projecting signs shall be permitted on Geary Boulevard, each with up to 2 faces. One such sign shall be permitted to have an area up to 540 square feet per face and a maximum copy area of 240 square feet per face. Four such signs shall be permitted to have an area up to 470 square feet per face, and a maximum copy area of 240 square feet per face. As of the effective date of this ordinance, the building has one existing projecting sign on Geary Boulevard with an area of 540 square feet. The new projecting signs authorized by this section on Geary Boulevard shall be visually distinct from and subordinate to the existing projecting sign.

(D) One projecting sign shall be permitted on the building fronting the parking lot at the intersection of Masonic Avenue and O'Farrell Street. Such sign shall be permitted to have an area up to 752 square feet per face, and a maximum copy area of 240 square feet per face.

(4) **Freestanding Signs and Sign Towers.** Freestanding signs and sign towers shall be permitted as follows:

(A) One freestanding sign shall be permitted near the intersection of Masonic Avenue and O'Farrell Street. Such sign shall be located wholly on private property and shall identify the name of the shopping center and its tenants. Such sign may have up to 2 faces and shall be limited to a height of 35 feet, a total area of 260 square feet per face and a copy area of 140 square feet per face.

(B) One freestanding directional sign with up to 2 faces shall be permitted at each parking lot entry, up to a maximum of seven within the Special Sign District. Directional signs shall not exceed a height of 15 feet. The area of a directional sign tower shall not exceed 50 square feet per face, and the copy area shall not exceed 20 square feet per face.

(C) On the existing central sign tower, located approximately in the center of the property and adjacent to the rooftop penthouse, two signs shall be permitted subject to the following conditions: the copy area shall not exceed 240 square feet per sign, the height shall not exceed the height of the existing central sign tower to which they are attached, and such signs shall be limited to identifying signs for the shopping center.

(g) **Exempt Signs.** In addition to signs exempted under Sections [603](#) and [604](#), internal wayfinding signs shall be exempt in the City Center Special Sign District.

(h) **Temporary Signs.** Signs authorized in Section [607.1\(g\)](#) pertaining to temporary signs shall be authorized in the City Center Special Sign District.

(Added by Ord. [195-11](#), File No. 110448, App. 10/4/2011, Eff. 11/3/2011)

SEC. 609. AMORTIZATION PERIODS.

No lawfully existing sign which fails to conform to the provisions of this [Article 6](#) need be removed or altered to conform to said provisions prior to the end of its normal life as provided in Section [604](#) of this Code, except as specified in Sections [609.1](#) through [609.12](#). Where two or more amortization periods of differing duration apply to the same sign, the most restrictive of such amortization periods shall prevail unless this Code specifically provides otherwise. Where removal or alteration of a sign is required, such requirement shall apply to the sign faces, the sign structure, the supporting framework and all other parts of the sign.

(Amended by Ord. 64-77, App. 2/18/77)

SEC. 609.1. GENERAL ADVERTISING SIGNS LOCATED IN R DISTRICTS.

Any lawfully existing general advertising sign in an R District shall be removed within five years after the effective date of this [Article 6](#) or such later date as the sign becomes nonconforming.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 609.2. [REPEALED.]

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65; repealed by Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

SEC. 609.3. WITHIN CIVIC CENTER SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICTS.

Any lawfully existing sign which does not conform to Section 608.3 of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within the period of time specified below after the effective date of this [Article 6](#) or such later date as the sign becomes nonconforming:

- (a) In Civic Center Special Sign Districts Numbers 1 and 2, one year for painted wall signs;
- (b) In Civic Center Special Sign District No. 1, one year for general advertising signs;
- (c) In Civic Center Special Sign District No. 2, five years for general advertising signs other than painted wall signs.

Provided, however, that within these Special Sign Districts, except as stated otherwise in Section [609.10](#) of this Code, a lawfully existing sign which does not conform to Section [608.3](#) need not be removed or altered to conform therewith prior to the end of its normal life if located on the north side of Market Street and within 60 feet of the north line of Market Street and primarily viewed from Market Street, or if located on the north line of Hayes Street (between Market Street and a point 100 feet east of the east line of Van Ness Avenue) and within 60 feet of the north line of Hayes Street and primarily viewed from Hayes Street.

(Amended by Ord. 125-70, App. 4/17/70)

SEC. 609.4. SIGNS NEAR NONLANDSCAPED FREEWAYS.

Any lawfully existing sign which is now or hereafter near a nonlandscaped portion of a freeway and which does not conform to the provisions of Section [608.5](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within 10 years after the effective date of this [Article 6](#), or within 10 years after such date as the precise route of the freeway has been determined and designated but not before such route has been opened to traffic, whichever date is later; provided, however, that any lawfully existing sign near the James Lick Freeway if located west of Fifth Street, north of Division Street, and east of 10th Street, or near the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge approach east of Fifth Street need not be removed or altered to conform to Section [608.5](#) prior to the end of its normal life if located within the area exempted from the prohibition of freeway signs by Section 4721.D(2) of the San Francisco [Building Code](#) as that Section was in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this [Article 6](#).

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 609.5. SIGNS NEAR LANDSCAPED FREEWAYS.

Any lawfully existing sign which is now or hereafter near a landscaped portion of a freeway and which does not conform to the provisions of Section [608.5](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within three years after the effective date of this [Article 6](#), or three years after the date when the landscaping project has been completed, whichever is later; unless an earlier date for removal or alteration of the sign has been established by Section 4721.C of the San Francisco [Building Code](#), as that Section was in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this [Article 6](#), in which case the date for removal or alteration shall be two years following the date so established by the [Building Code](#).

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 609.6. SIGNS NEAR CERTAIN SCENIC STREETS.

Any lawfully existing sign which does not conform to Section [608.6](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within five years after the effective date of this [Article 6](#) or such later date as the sign becomes nonconforming; unless such sign was made subject to removal or alteration within five years after February 18, 1960, by Section 4722.D of the San Francisco [Building Code](#), as that Section was in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this [Article 6](#), in which case such earlier date shall prevail. Provided, however, that any lawfully existing sign within the Special Sign District along Nineteenth Avenue between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard and on a lot in a C-1 or C-2 District need not be removed or altered to conform to Section [608.6](#) prior to the end of its normal life or until such earlier date, if any, by which it must be removed or altered to qualify said street for designation as a part of the State scenic highway system in accordance with the applicable provisions of State law.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 609.7. WIND SIGNS.

Any lawfully existing wind sign in any zoning district shall be removed within one year after the effective date of this [Article 6](#).

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 609.8. MISCELLANEOUS SERVICE STATION SIGNS IN R DISTRICTS.

Any lawfully existing sign at an automobile service station in an R District (other than those signs covered by Paragraph [606\(d\)\(1\)\(A\)](#) of this Code) which does not conform to Paragraph [606\(d\)\(1\)\(B\)](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within one year after the effective date of this [Article 6](#) or such later date as the sign becomes nonconforming.

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section amended; Ord. [20-15](#), Eff. 3/22/2015.

SEC. 609.9. SIGNS NEAR RAPID TRANSIT ROUTES.

Any lawfully existing sign which is now or hereafter near a rapid transit route or portion thereof and which does not conform to the provisions of Section [608.7](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within five years after the effective date of this [Article 6](#), or within five years after such date as the precise rapid transit route or portion has been determined and designated but not before such route or portion has been opened to traffic, whichever date is later.

(Added by Ord. 263-65, App. 10/22/65)

SEC. 609.10. IN THE MARKET STREET SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICT.

(a) **General Advertising Signs.** Any lawfully existing General Advertising Sign within the Market Street Special Sign District, other than such a Sign located on a wall immediately adjacent to the establishment to which it directs attention, shall be removed within five years after the effective date of said Special Sign District or such later date as the location of such Sign may be designated as part of said Special Sign District; provided, however, that if the public street and plaza improvements within any of the sections of the Market Street Special Sign District listed below have not been substantially completed at the end of said five-year period in accordance with the architectural plans entitled “Market Street Reconstruction,” Transit Task Force File No. 810.00R1 through 810.28R1, dated September 10, 1970, and “Surface Plan - Hallidie Plaza,” Transit Task Force File No. 1000, dated July 15, 1970, including permanent pavement of sidewalk and roadway areas, planting of trees and placement of furnishings, then said General Advertising Signs within any such section need not be removed until 30 days after the date of substantial completion of said improvements in the section in which said Signs are located:

- (1) Between The Embarcadero and the easterly line of Third Street;
- (2) Between the easterly line of Third Street and the easterly line of Powell Street;
- (3) Between the easterly line of Powell Street and the easterly line of Seventh Street;
- (4) Between the easterly line of Seventh Street and the easterly line of Twelfth Street;
- (5) Between the easterly line of Twelfth Street and the Central Skyway overpass.

It is hereby found and declared that as of May 18, 1976, six years after the effective date of the Market Street Special Sign District, the public street and plaza improvements within each and every section of Market Street listed above have been substantially completed in accordance with the plans and other terms set forth above. Accordingly, all general advertising signs specified in this Subsection (a) shall be removed forthwith. This amendment is intended only to clarify existing provisions of law, and thereby to facilitate administration of those provisions.

It is hereby found and declared, further, that a six-year amortization period for general advertising signs throughout the Market Street Special Sign District is more than adequate in view of the express purposes of the Special District, the massive public and private investments that have already taken place, and the new environment created in all sections of the street. In addition, it is noted that the amortization period for general advertising signs originally adopted in this district was three years, which period was extended to five years with the proviso concerning substantial completion, and that the amortization periods for all other signs affected by this Section were only one, two and three years, which periods have in all cases already been

enforced and complied with; the factor, also, demonstrates that a six-year amortization period for general advertising signs is more than adequate.

(b) **Moving Parts.** Any lawfully existing sign within the Market Street Special Sign District that has a moving part or parts legally nonconforming under Subsection [607\(d\)](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within three years after the effective date of said Special Sign District or such later date as the location of such sign may be designated as part of said Special Sign District.

(c) **Temporary Signs.** Any lawfully existing sign within the Market Street Special Sign District which does not conform to the requirements of Paragraph [608.8\(f\)\(1\)](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within one year after the effective date of said Special Sign District or such later date as the location of such sign may be designated as part of said Special Sign District.

(d) **Signs, Structures and Features in Public Areas.** Any lawfully existing sign, structure or feature within the Market Street Special Sign District which does not conform to the requirements of Paragraph [608.8\(f\)\(2\)](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within one year after the effective date of said Special Sign District or such later date as the location of such sign, structure or feature may be designated as part of said Special Sign District, if such sign, structure or feature is within Market Street, within Powell Street, or within any other street area opposite a street property line that abuts Market Street and faces Market Street at an angle of less than 90 degrees. This removal requirement shall, among other things, specifically apply to all canopies now in place in said Special Sign District and located as described herein.

(e) **Projection.** Except as provided herein, any lawfully existing sign or other feature within the Market Street Special Sign District which does not conform to the projection limitations of Paragraph [608.8\(d\)\(1\)](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within two years after the effective date of said Special Sign District if such sign or other feature projects over either street property line of Market Street, either street property line of Powell Street, or any other street property line that abuts Market Street and faces Market Street at an angle of less than 90 degrees. The Zoning Administrator may, in specific cases, permit the retention or alteration of an existing sign or other feature which projects more than six feet but in no event and under no circumstances more than eight feet, if the Zoning Administrator determines (1) that the sign or feature is of high quality, in scale with its surroundings, not detrimental to other properties, and not so located that it will conflict with trees or other features in the street area, and (2) that unusual circumstances apply concerning the nature of the sign or feature or concerning the building that would make adherence to the six-foot limitation impractical without offsetting public advantages.

(f) **Revocation of Permits.** Any permit issued for erection or alteration of a sign, structure or feature required to be removed or altered under Subsection [609.10\(d\)](#) or (e) above is hereby revoked as of the date on which such removal or alteration is required. The permit for any sign erected or altered pursuant to Section 4653(b) of the Building Code, enacted by Ordinance No. 325-69, pertaining to signs for new businesses or organizations and change in name of business or organizations, pending adoption of permanent standards for signs in the Market Street area, shall be automatically revoked upon adoption of this present ordinance, if the sign authorized by such permit does not conform to all such permanent standards made applicable hereby to the property on which the sign is located.

(Amended by Ord. 64-77, App. 2/18/77; Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section header and division (a) amended; Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

SEC. 609.11. IN THE JACKSON SQUARE SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICT.

Any lawfully existing Sign which does not conform to Section [608.9](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within five years after the effective date of said Section or such later date as the Sign becomes nonconforming.

(Added by Ord. 223-72, App. 8/9/72; amended by Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section header and section amended; Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

SEC. 609.12. ON AND NEAR MARKET STREET FROM THE CENTRAL SKYWAY OVERPASS TO DIAMOND STREET.

(a) **General Advertising Signs.** Any lawfully existing general advertising sign within the Upper Market Special Sign District, other than such a sign located on a wall immediately adjacent to the establishment to which it directs attention, shall be removed within five years after the effective date of said Special Sign District or such later date as the location of such sign may be designated as part of said Special Sign District.

(b) **Roof Signs.** Any lawfully existing roof sign within the Upper Market Special Sign District shall be removed within five years after the effective date of such Special Sign District or such later date as the location of such sign may be designated as part of said Special Sign District.

(c) **Freestanding Signs.** Any existing free standing sign within the Upper Market Special Sign District that lawfully exceeds a height of 24 feet shall be removed or altered to conform with such height limit within five years after the effective date of such Special Sign District or such later date as the location of such sign may be designated as part of said Special Sign District.

(d) **Moving Parts.** Any lawfully existing sign within the Upper Market Special Sign District that has a moving part or parts legally nonconforming under Subsection [607\(d\)](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within three years after the effective date of said Special Sign District or such later date as the location of such sign may be designated as part of said Special Sign District.

(e) **Flashing Lights.** Any lawfully existing sign within the Upper Market Special Sign District that has or consists of one or more flashing, blinking, fluctuating or otherwise animated lights legally nonconforming under Subsection [607\(e\)](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform therewith within three years after the effective date of said Special Sign District or such later date as the location of such sign may be designated as part of said Special Sign District.

(f) Not less than six months prior to the termination of the amortization period set forth in Section [609.12\(a\)](#), the City Planning Commission shall conduct a hearing regarding general compliance with all the removal and conformity requirements of Section [609.12](#). The City Planning Commission shall send a report thereon to the Board of Supervisors, which shall conduct a hearing on said report.

(Added by Ord. 64-77, App. 2/18/77)

SEC. 609.13. NONCONFORMING GENERAL ADVERTISING SIGNS IN NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

If state and/or federal statutes, as applicable, which currently required local governments to pay monetary compensation to the owners of nonconforming Signs as a condition of requiring removal of such Signs is/are repealed, or amended so as to eliminate that requirement, then any lawfully existing General Advertising Sign within a Neighborhood Commercial District shall be

removed within five years of the effective date of the repeal of the amendment of said state and/or federal legislation, as applicable.

(Added by Ord. 69-87, App. 3/13/87; amended by Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section header and section amended; Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

SEC. 609.14. IN THE NORTHEAST WATERFRONT SPECIAL SIGN DISTRICT.

Any lawfully existing Sign that does not conform to Section [608.15](#) of this Code shall be removed or altered to conform to that Section within five years after the effective date of Section [608.15](#) or such later date as the sign becomes nonconforming.

(Added by Ord. 59-08, File No. 031034, App. 4/10/2008; amended by Ord. [217-16](#), File No. 160424, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Section header and section amended; Ord. [217-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

SEC. 610. VIOLATION OF GENERAL ADVERTISING SIGN REQUIREMENTS.

(a) **General.** The penalties and methods of enforcement set forth in this Section [610](#) are in addition to those set forth in Section [176](#) of this Code and any other penalties or methods of enforcement authorized by law. In light of the findings of Proposition G, approved by the voters in March of 2002, a violation of the Code's general advertising sign requirements is deemed to be a public nuisance.

(b) **Administrative Penalties.** The Director of Planning may impose administrative penalties for violations of the regulations governing General Advertising Signs set forth in this [Article 6](#). These administrative penalties are cumulative to and do not foreclose any criminal or civil penalties that may apply under state or local law. Administrative penalties shall be imposed in accordance with the following procedures:

(1) **Notice of Violation.**

(A) Upon the Planning Department's determination pursuant to Section [176](#) of this Code that a general advertising sign has been erected, installed, expanded, intensified, relocated, or otherwise operated in violation of the requirements of this Code or has been denied an in-lieu identifying number pursuant to Section [604.1\(c\)](#) of this Code, the Director shall send a written notice of violation to the Responsible Party for delivery by first class mail, hand-delivery, or electronic mail. The notice of violation shall describe the violation(s), state that the Responsible Party has five calendar days from the date postmarked on the notice or three calendar days from the date of hand-delivery or electronic mail delivery of the notice to: (i) file an application for a permit to remove the general advertising sign; (ii) correct the violation(s) pursuant to subsection (c); or (iii) request reconsideration pursuant to subsection (d). An electronic mail message shall be considered delivered on the same day that it is sent.

(B) **Responsible Party.** For the purposes of this Section [610](#), "Responsible Party" shall mean the owner(s) of the real property on which the general advertising sign is located, as listed in the Assessor's record, and the current leaseholder(s) or owner(s) of the general advertising sign, if different from the owner(s) of the real property. If the identity of the person or business entity that installed or operates the general advertising sign is unknown, the notice of violation shall be posted as close as practicable to the location of the sign; once the identity of the person or business entity is known, notice of violation shall be sent to such person or business entity without any such delay affecting the time limits, fees, or penalties imposed by this Section [610](#).

(2) **Penalties.**

(A) **Accrual of Penalties.** If a Responsible Party fails to respond to the notice of violation as outlined in Subsection (b)(1)(A), penalties shall accrue under this Section [610](#) at the daily rate set forth in Subsection (b)(2)(B) beginning on the Accrual Date, which is defined as the sixth day after the date postmarked on a notice delivered by first class mail, or on the fourth day after hand-delivery or electronic mail delivery of a notice, and the Director shall refer the matter to the City Attorney for further action. If the Responsible Party responds after the Accrual Date, but before the Director has referred the matter to the City Attorney, the Responsible Party shall be assessed a penalty based on the number of days that have passed beginning on the Accrual Date until the date the Responsible Party responded. Once the matter has been referred to the City Attorney for further proceedings, it shall be within the discretion of the City Attorney, in consultation with the Director, whether to allow the Responsible Party to request a reconsideration of the notice of violation or to proceed with other legal action. If the Responsible Party is allowed to request reconsideration, the Responsible Party shall pay a penalty based on the amount accrued beginning on the Accrual Date until the date the Responsible Party responded. The Responsible Party shall pay this penalty within five business days of notice that the Responsible Party will be allowed to request reconsideration.

(B) **Amount of Penalties.**

(i) The administrative penalties that the Director or administrative law judge assesses against the Responsible Party shall be related to the square footage of the General Advertising Sign found to be in violation of the Planning Code, as shown below:

- a. 100 square feet or less - \$100 per day per violation;
- b. 101 - 300 square feet - \$1,000 per day per violation;
- c. 301 - 500 square feet - \$1,750 per day per violation; and
- d. Over 500 square feet - \$2,500 per day per violation.

If the violation for which the administrative penalty is assessed has increased the size of the General Advertising Sign, the penalty shall be based on the actual size of the General Advertising Sign.

(C) **Collection.** The Director may request that the Tax Collector pursue collection of any penalty, from the Responsible Party including imposition of a special assessment lien in accordance with the requirements of Article XX of Chapter 10 of the San Francisco Administrative Code (commencing with Section [10.230](#)). The Director may also request that the City Attorney pursue collection of the penalty against the Responsible Party in a civil action to enforce the provisions of this Code.

(D) **Planning Code Enforcement Fund.** Fees and penalties collected pursuant to this Section [610](#) shall be deposited in the Planning Code Enforcement Fund established in Administrative Code Section [10.100-166](#).

(c) **Building Permit.** A building permit shall be required to remove or modify any general advertising sign when such removal or modification is required pursuant to this Section [610](#).

(1) Additional time and material costs shall be added to the Building Permit fee pursuant to Section [350](#)(c).

(2) The Responsible Party has thirty days from the filing of any required building permit application to remove or modify the general advertising sign to either: (i) obtain a Final Inspection Approval or Certificate of Final Completion from the Department of Building Inspection (DBI); or (ii) remove all advertising copy from the general advertising sign until the required DBI approval is obtained. If the Final Inspection Approval or Certificate of Final Completion has not been obtained or the advertising copy has not been removed within this time

period, penalties shall accrue at the daily rate outlined in Subsection (b)(2)(B) until the advertising copy is removed or the required DBI approval is obtained.

(d) Reconsideration of Notice of Violation or Administrative Penalty.

(1) Reconsideration Hearing.

(A) A Responsible Party may seek reconsideration of the issuance of the notice of violation or any administrative penalty. Any request for reconsideration shall be accompanied by written evidence that demonstrates why the notice of violation was issued in error or why the administrative penalties were assessed in error. Upon receipt of a request for reconsideration within the time limits established by subsection (b)(1)(A) or when allowed under subsection (b)(2)(A), the Planning Department shall schedule a reconsideration hearing before an administrative law judge. Such hearing shall be scheduled for a date no later than 60 days after the request. At least 10 days before the scheduled hearing, the Planning Department shall notify the Responsible Party by mail in writing of the hearing date, time, and location.

(B) The administrative law judge shall hold a hearing to reconsider the Director's notice of violation or administrative penalty. The administrative law judge's decision for a reconsideration of the notice of violation shall be based upon, but not limited to, the Planning Code, any final Zoning Administrator Interpretations, the [Building Code](#), building permits issued by the City, and any final decisions of the Board of Appeals regarding the subject property. The administrative law judge's determination of a request for reconsideration of any administrative penalty shall take into account the validity of accrual dates, accuracy of assessment based upon sign size and whether the Responsible Party was accurately identified. For repeat violations, the administrative law judge shall also take into account the considerations specified in subsection (f)(3) of this Section 610. Within 30 days of the hearing, the administrative law judge shall issue a final written decision, which shall be mailed to the Responsible Party. The final written decision shall not be appealable to the Board of Appeals. All final written decisions shall inform the Responsible Party of its right to seek judicial review pursuant to the timelines set forth in Section 1094.6 of the California Code of Civil Procedure.

(C) If the Planning Department rescinds the notice of violation or penalties prior to the reconsideration hearing, the case shall be considered abated and all accrued penalties shall be rescinded. If penalties or the reconsideration hearing fee set forth in subsection (d)(2), below, have been paid, the Planning Department shall refund in a timely matter any unused portions of the penalties or fee.

If the administrative law judge overturns the notice of violation or penalties, the case shall be abated and all accrued penalties shall be rescinded. If penalties have been paid, the Planning Department shall refund the penalties.

If the Responsible Party withdraws its request for reconsideration of notice of violation or penalties prior to the reconsideration hearing and cures the violation(s) by filing for a building permit under subsection (c), any accrued penalties shall apply in addition to a mandatory ten-day fixed penalty based upon the daily rate outlined in subsection (b)(2)(B). If the request for reconsideration is withdrawn within less than 10 days from the date it was timely made, the Responsible Party may apply to the Director for a reduction in the fixed penalty amount based upon the number of days less than 10 that the reconsideration request was withdrawn. Any such reduction shall be granted or denied at the sole discretion of the Director and is not appealable.

If the administrative law judge upholds the notice of violation or penalties, the Responsible Party shall cure the violation(s) by filing for a building permit pursuant to the procedures and requirements of subsection (c) within fifteen days of the date the decision is mailed to the

Responsible Party. The Responsible Party shall be subject to any accrued penalties, plus a mandatory twenty-day fixed penalty based upon the daily rate outlined in subsection (b)(2)(B). If the reconsideration hearing is held within less than 20 days from the date it was timely requested, the Responsible Party may apply to the Director for a reduction in the fixed penalty amount based upon the number of days less than 20 that the reconsideration hearing was held. Any such reduction shall be granted at the sole discretion of the Director and is not appealable. If the Responsible Party does not file for a building permit within the fifteen-day period, additional penalties shall accrue at the daily rate outlined in subsection (b)(2)(B) and the Director shall refer the case to the City Attorney for further action.

(2) **Reconsideration Hearing Fee.** At the time the Responsible Party requests reconsideration, the Responsible Party shall pay an initial hearing fee of \$3,400.00 to the Planning Department; the Responsible Party shall also be liable for time and materials as set forth in Section [350\(c\)](#). The Planning Department shall increase this fee on an annual basis at a rate equal to that of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The fee shall be waived if the Responsible Party would qualify for a waiver of court fees and costs pursuant to California Government Code Section 68511.3, as amended from time to time. Additionally, if the Responsible Party withdraws its request for reconsideration, any portion of the fee not expended to process the hearing shall be refunded.

(3) **Postponement.** The administrative law judge may grant a postponement of a hearing for Good Cause. Requests for postponement of a hearing shall be made in writing at the earliest date possible, with supporting documentation attached. The party requesting the postponement shall notify any other parties of the request and provide them with copies of the complete request and the supporting documentation.

For the purposes of this Section [610](#), "Good Cause" includes, but is not limited, to the following:

(A) The illness of a party, an attorney or other authorized representative of a party, or a material witness of a party;

(B) Verified travel outside of San Francisco scheduled before the receipt of notice of the hearing; or,

(C) Any other reason which makes it impractical to appear on the scheduled date due to unforeseen circumstances or verified pre-arranged plans that cannot be changed. Mere inconvenience in appearing shall not constitute "good cause."

(e) Failure of the City, including the Director, the Planning Department, or the administrative law judge, to act within any of the timeframes set forth in this Section [610](#) shall not be considered approval of any general advertising sign.

(f) **Repeat Violations.**

(1) The Director of Planning may use the provisions of this subsection (f) to abate and discourage repeated violations of this Section [610](#).

(2) For the purposes of this subsection (f), a repeat violation shall mean any violation of the general advertising provisions of this Article which (A) occurs on a property that was the subject of a notice of violation under [Article 6](#) during the previous five years and (B) is owned by the same entity which owned the property upon which the general advertising was located at the time of the earlier violation. A repeat violation shall not include one based upon a notice of violation that was overturned by an administrative law judge or rescinded by the Planning Department under subsection (d)(1)(C) of this Section [610](#). A Responsible Party may seek reconsideration of a notice of violation for a repeat violation under subsection (d) of this

Section [610](#), provided that the request for reconsideration is filed and all general advertising copy is removed prior to the Accrual Date, as defined in subsection (b)(2)(A) of this Section [610](#).

(3) Penalties for violations under this subsection (f) shall accrue as described in subsection (b)(2) of this Section [610](#), except that the amount of penalties shall be calculated as follows:

(A) **Daily Penalties.** Daily penalties shall accrue as described below, until the date that the General Advertising Sign and any associated sign structure are removed from the site, or, if the City accepts a late request for reconsideration from the Responsible Party pursuant to subsection (b)(2)(A) of this Section [610](#), until the date that all copy is removed from the General Advertising Sign:

(i) On the Accrual Date, which is the first day on which penalties accrue, the daily penalty shall be the amount specified in subsection (b)(2)(B) of this Section [610](#) multiplied by 2.

(ii) On the second day on which penalties accrue, the daily penalty shall be the amount specified in subsection (b)(2)(B) of this Section [610](#) multiplied by 3.

(iii) On the third day on which penalties accrue, the daily penalty shall be the amount specified in subsection (b)(2)(B) of this Section [610](#) multiplied by 4.

(iv) On the fourth day on which penalties accrue and for each day thereafter for which penalties accrue, the daily penalty shall be the amount specified in subsection (b)(2)(B) of this Section [610](#) multiplied by 5.

(B) **Alternative Penalty.** As an alternative to the daily penalties described in subsection (f)(3)(A) of this Section [610](#), all Responsible Parties may jointly opt to pay an alternative penalty, which consists of (i) the income earned by the Responsible Parties for the display of the illegal General Advertising Sign, including but not limited to revenue earned by the Sign owner or operator from advertisers or advertisement placement firms and revenue earned by the property owner or lessee from the lease or sublease of the property to the Sign owner or operator; plus (ii) an additional 20% of that total income amount. The income amount shall be calculated beginning on the Accrual Date, as defined in subsection (b)(2)(A) of this Section [610](#), until the date that the General Advertising Sign and any associated sign structure are removed from the site, or, if the City accepts a late request for reconsideration from the Responsible Party pursuant to subsection (b)(2)(A) of this Section [610](#), until the date that all copy is removed from the General Advertising Sign.

To calculate this alternative penalty, the Planning Department may require that all Responsible Parties provide evidence of their income, such as a lease between the property owner and the Sign operator or Sign owner, and any agreements between the Sign owner or operator and advertisers or advertisement placement firms who have contracted to have their advertisements displayed on the Sign during the relevant time period.

(C) **Standard of Review.** Pursuant to subsection (d) of this Section [610](#), a Responsible Party may request reconsideration of a notice of violation for a repeat violation by an administrative law judge. In any such proceeding, a rebuttable presumption shall exist that the penalty amount is reasonable. In reviewing a penalty imposed pursuant to subsection (f)(3) of this Section [610](#), the administrative law judge shall give substantial weight to that presumption, but may consider the nature and egregiousness of the violation, the financial resources of the Responsible Party, the need to deter illegal conduct, and the Responsible Party's culpability, to determine if the penalty is excessive.

(g) **Liens.** For any penalties assessed pursuant to this Section [610](#), the Director may initiate proceedings to make the payment amount due and all additional authorized costs and charges, including attorneys' fees, a lien on the property pursuant to [Chapter 100](#) of the Administrative

Code. This subsection (g) does not apply to a notice of violation that has been overturned by an administrative law judge or rescinded by the Planning Department under subsection (d)(1)(C) of this Section [610](#).

(Added by Ord. 71-01, File No. 001391, App. 5/18/2001; Ord. 52-07, File No. 051844, App. 3/9/2007; Ord. 290-08, File No. 081002, App. 12/5/2008; amended by Ord. [218-16](#), File No. 160553, App. 11/10/2016, Eff. 12/10/2016)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Divisions (b), (b)(1)(A), (b)(2), (d)(1), (f)(2), and (f)(3) amended; divisions (f)(3)(A), (f)(3)(A)(i)–(iv), (f)(3)(B), (f)(3)(C), and (g) added; Ord. [218-16](#), Eff. 12/10/2016.

SEC. 611. GENERAL ADVERTISING SIGNS PROHIBITED.

(a) No new general advertising signs shall be permitted at any location within the City as of March 5, 2002, except as provided in Subsection (b) of this ordinance.

(b) Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to prohibit the placement of signs on motor vehicles or in the public right-of-way as permitted by local law.

(c) Relocation Agreements.

(1) Nothing in this ordinance shall preclude the Board of Supervisors, upon recommendation from a department designated by the Board, from entering into agreements with general advertising sign companies to provide for the relocation of existing legally permitted general advertising signs. Any such agreements shall provide that the selection of a new location for an existing legally permitted general advertising sign be subject to the conditional use procedures provided for in [Article 3](#) of the Planning Code.

(2) Locations where general advertising signs could have been lawfully erected pursuant to the zoning laws in effect prior to the effective date of this ordinance may be considered as relocation sites. Future zoning laws may additionally restrict the locations available for the relocation of existing legally permitted general advertising signs.

(d) Pursuant to Subsection (c)(1) of this ordinance, the selection of a relocation site for an existing legally permitted general advertising sign shall be governed by the conditional use procedures of Section [303](#) of the Planning Code.

(e) Nothing in this ordinance shall preclude the Board of Supervisors from otherwise amending [Article 6](#) of the Planning Code.

(f) A prohibition on all new general advertising signs is necessary because:

(1) The increased size and number of general advertising signs in the City can distract motorists and pedestrians traveling on the public right of way creating a public safety hazard.

(2) General advertising signs contribute to blight and visual clutter as well as the commercialization of public spaces within the City.

(3) There is a proliferation of general advertising signs visible from, on, and near historically significant buildings and districts, public buildings and open spaces all over the City.

(4) San Francisco must protect the character and dignity of the City's distinctive appearance, topography, street patterns, open spaces, thoroughfares, skyline and architectural features for both residents and visitors.

(5) There is currently an ample supply of general advertising signs within the City.