



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

New Planning Code Change Summary: Amendments Relating to Allowing a Five-Foot Height Bonus for Active Ground Floor Uses for Certain Parcels along Mission Street and Minor Revisions to Section 263.20

Code Change: Allowing a Five Foot Height Bonus Per Section 263.20
Case Number: Board File No. 08-1100 (0321-08 adopted Ordinance)
Initiated By: Supervisor Sandoval, August 18, 2008
Effective Date: January 19, 2009

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The Way It Was:

San Francisco's commercial height districts tend to be base 10 numbers such as 40, 50, etc. These base 10 districts may lead to buildings that are similar in height to the neighboring buildings but are lesser in human comfort when compared to buildings of similar scale built prior to the City's height limits. Recent community planning efforts have highlighted some failings of these base 10 height districts. The recently adopted Market & Octavia Plan and Eastern Neighborhoods Plans recognize that the existing height limits in neighborhood commercial districts often encourage inferior architecture. For this reason, both of these plans seek to encourage more active and attractive ground floor space by giving a five-foot height bonus to buildings which meet the definition of "active ground floor" use. This five-foot increase must be used for adding space to the ground floor where the most public uses tend to locate. This bonus was previously limited to the first 70' of the lot depth. This bonus was previously not available to any districts outside of the above rezoning efforts.

The Way It Is Now:

The proposed Ordinance would:

1. extend this incentive for active and attractive ground floor uses to parcels zoned either NC-2 and NC-3 that also front on Mission Street south of Silver Avenue. The Ordinance would amend Section 263.20 "Special Height Exception: Additional Five Feet Height For Ground Floor Uses" to include the above Mission Street parcels.
2. Require demonstration that the additional 5' increment allowed through Section 263.20 would not add new shadow to any public open spaces. (This requirement extends only to non-NCT parcels; and
3. Remove the 70-lot depth limitation for the added height; and
4. Add a control only allowing the height bonus IF the commercial space or active use occupies at least 50% of the project's ground floor area.

Note: This increase, like the previous NCT height bonus, is predicated on the provision of active ground floor use as defined by Planning Code Section 145.1(e). Section 145.1(e) generally defines active uses as those that are oriented to public access and walk-up pedestrian activity. While active uses are generally commercial uses, residential uses can be considered active if any above-grade parking is set back at least 25 feet from the street frontage and the majority of the street frontage at ground level features dwelling units with direct pedestrian access to the sidewalk or street.

Board File No. o81100	Ord. No. 0321- 08	Amendment to Health Code - Article 38, Requiring Air Quality Assessment and Ventilation for Certain Urban Infill Residential Developments. Full text available at: http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/ordinances08/o0321-08.pdf
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