



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Executive Summary Planning Code Text Amendment Initiation

INITIATION HEARING DATE: MAY 24, 2018

Project Name: **Obstructions in Required Setbacks, Yards, and Usable Open Space**
Case Number: **2018-001876PCA**
Staff Contact: Audrey Butkus, Legislative Affairs
audrey.butkus@sfgov.org, (415) 575-9129
Reviewed by: Aaron Starr, Manager of Legislative Affairs
aaron.starr@sfgov.org, 415-558-6362
Recommendation: **Initiate and Schedule for Adoption on or After June 13, 2018**

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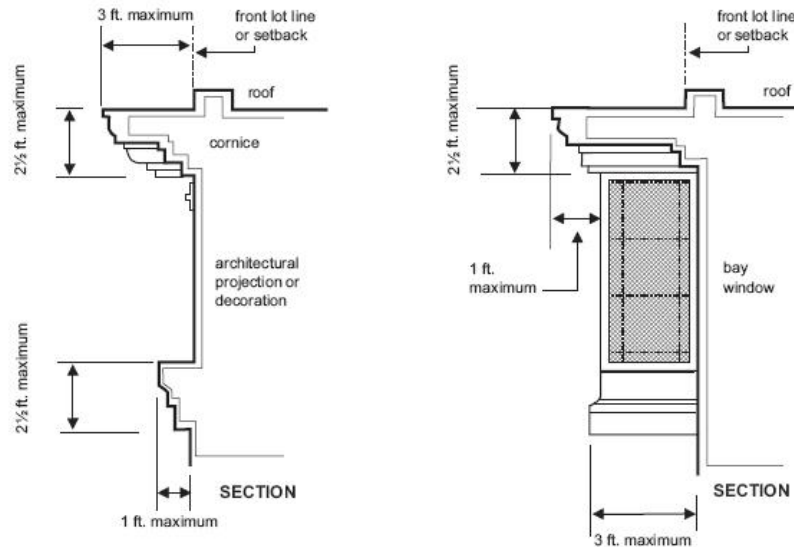
The action before this Commission is initiation of the code amendments described below. Initiation does not involve a decision on the substance of the amendments; it merely begins the required 20-day notice period, after which the Commission may hold a hearing and take action on the proposed Code amendments.

PLANNING CODE AMENDMENT

The proposed Ordinance would amend the Planning Code to permit some obstructions in Section 136, and to allow bay windows that do not meet the standards of Section 136 to apply for a Zoning Administrator waiver. Section 136 outlines the types of obstructions that may be permitted over streets and alleys, in required setbacks, yards, and usable open spaces.

The Way It Is Now:

1. Section 136(c) describes the types of overhead projections that are allowed as a permitted obstruction. Currently, permitted overhead projections must be (*diagram on page 2*):
 - a. Horizontal in nature, with a vertical projection of no more than 2 ½ feet (such as cornices, sills, and beltcourses)
 - b. At roof level, extend no more than 3 feet over streets, alleys, or setbacks
 - c. At every other level, extend no more than 1 foot over streets, alleys, or setbacks
 - d. Extend no more than 3 feet into yards and usable open space, or no more than 1/6 of the required minimum dimensions of the open area (whichever is less)
 - e. May not increase the floor area ratio or volume of space enclosed by the building
 - f. Must have at least 7 ½ feet of headroom/clearance



2. Proposed bay windows that do not meet the standards of a permitted obstruction under Section 136 must seek a Variance.

The Way It Would Be:

1. Section 136(c) would be amended to create more flexibility in the types of overhead projections allowed as permitted obstructions. Specifically:
 - a. Projections may be horizontal, vertical or otherwise configured with no stated maximum on the allowable dimensions
 - b. No stated maximum dimensions at roof level.
 - c. No stated maximum dimensions at all over levels
 - d. No stated maximum dimensions into yards and usable open space
 - e. May not increase the floor area ratio or volume of space enclosed by the building
 - f. Must have at least 7 1/2 feet of headroom/clearance
2. Proposed bay windows that do not meet the standards of a permitted obstruction under Section 136 but otherwise meet the massing standards of permitted bay windows may seek a Zoning Administrator Letter for partial or full relief.

ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

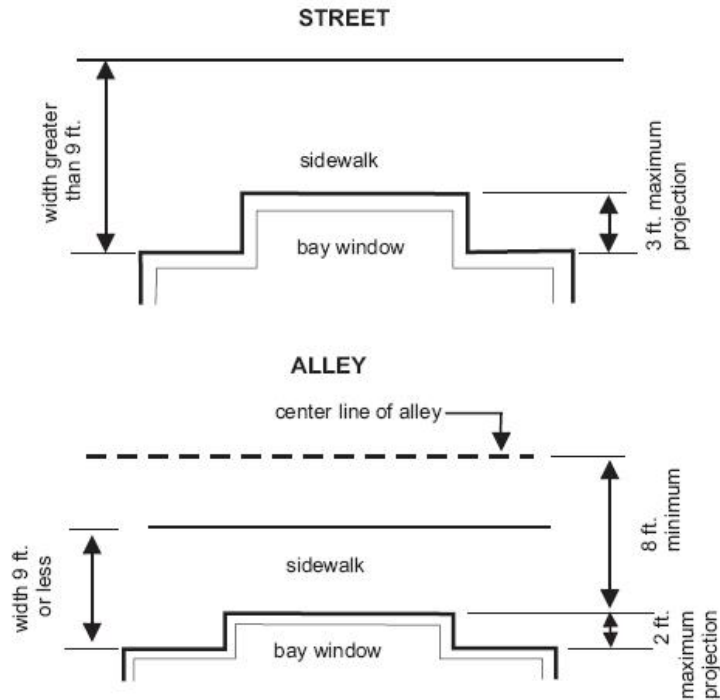
The Progress of Architectural Design

Over the last several years, Current Planning staff have encountered an increasing number of proposed architectural designs that are innovative and desirable; however, under the current Code, most of these architectural features are not allowed. The intention of this legislation is to allow for more flexibility in architectural projections that enhance a building's design. Any proposed obstruction would still be required to undergo all applicable design review processes and meet all required design standards.

Variance Requirement for Bay Windows

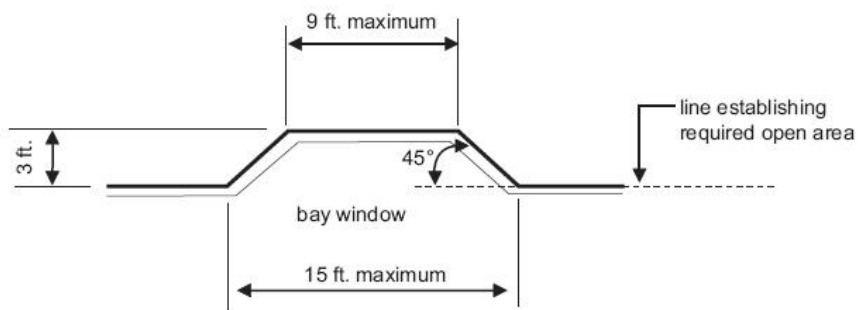
Under current Code, a proposed bay window must meet the following standards to qualify as a permitted obstruction under Sec. 136. Generally these standards include:

-Projection into the required open area is limited to 3 feet (2 feet over narrow sidewalks and alleys);

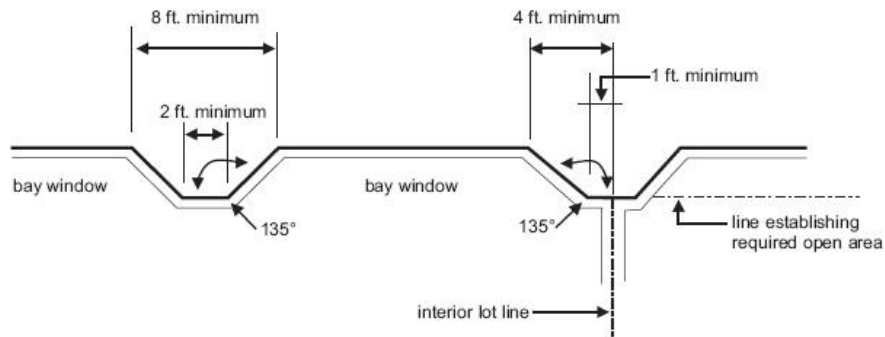


-Glass must cover at least 50% of the total bay and glass must be present on each of the bay's three sides;

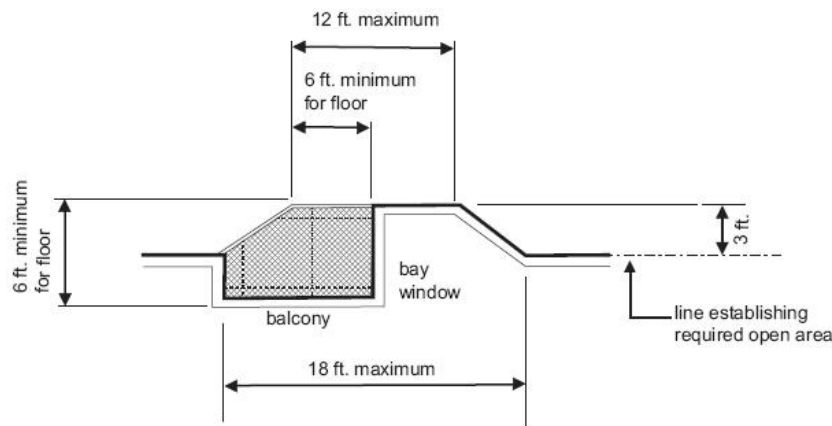
-The maximum length of each bay window shall generally be no more than 15 feet long at the building wall, tapering to 9 feet at the end of the 3 foot projection;



-There shall be a minimum of 2 feet between each bay window from the beginning of one side panel to the beginning of the adjacent window's side panel;



- The aggregate length of all bay windows and balconies projecting into the required open area shall be no more than 2/3 the buildable width of the lot along a rear building wall, 2/3 the buildable length of a street side building wall, or 1/3 the length of all open areas along the buildable length of an interior side lot line.



If a proposed bay window's design does not fit within the limitations outlined in Section 136, the applicant's only other option, besides redesigning the project, is to seek a Variance from Section 136. Planning Code Section 305(c) outlines the five criteria that must be met in order for the Zoning Administrator to grant a variance. The Section 305(c) criteria are as follows:

1. That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances applying to the property involved or to the intended use of the property that do not apply generally to other property or uses in the same class of district;
2. That owing to such exceptional or extraordinary circumstances the literal enforcement of specified provisions of this Code would result in practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship not created by or attributable to the applicant or the owner of the property;
3. That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the subject property, possessed by other property in the same class of district;
4. That the granting of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or materially injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity; and

5. That the granting of such variance will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this Code and will not adversely affect the Master Plan.

The required findings for a Variance are difficult to meet for bay windows seeking an exception from one or more of the standards in Sec. 136. Generally, a bay window's unique design is not the result of an exceptional or extraordinary circumstance applying to the property, but rather a product of architectural design. The Zoning Administrator has expressed a desire to develop an alternative to Variances for bay window designs that do not meet the standards of Sec. 136, but *are* considered desirable due to their high caliber design.

Zoning Administrative Review

Section 307(h) provides an administrative channel through which certain standards (identified within the Section), can seek administrative review from the Zoning Administrator. The Zoning Administrator may grant partial or complete relieve from the standard being appealed so long as the partial or complete relief of said standard would continue to accomplish the overall goals of the section. Under the proposed legislation, this administrative process would allow proposed bay windows that do not meet a standard of Sec. 136, but still meet the massing requirements to be evaluated on its architectural integrity, rather than if the design is the result of an exceptional or extraordinary circumstance. Additionally, this administrative review process would require any proposed bay window design to seeking the waiver, to meet all applicable Department design standards.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends that the Commission approve the resolution to initiate the Planning Code amendments on or after June 13, 2018.

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends that the Commission initiate the proposed ordinance because it will create an opportunity for innovate, and original architectural features to exist in San Francisco. Many of these designs additionally assist in increasing the environmental sustainability of buildings (as is the case with sunshades and some projecting fins). The design review process and all Department design guidelines will continue to be enforced, ensuring that only projections and bay windows of the highest caliber design will be allowed. This ordinance will help to advance interesting architectural design in the city, further enhancing the City's physical surroundings.

REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTION

The proposed Ordinance is before the Commission so that it may initiate the proposed Ordinance and schedule a time for the ordinance to be heard for adoption.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Department determined that this Ordinance will not impact our current implementation procedures.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Staff anticipates that the proposed ordinance will not be considered a project under CEQA. A formal CEQA determination will be conducted prior to the Commission's final action.

PUBLIC COMMENT

As of the date of this report, the Planning Department has not received any public comment regarding the proposed Ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION: Initiate and Consider Adoption on or after June 13, 2018
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Attachments:

- Exhibit A: Draft Planning Commission Resolution
- Exhibit B: Board of Supervisors File No. TBD



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Planning Commission Draft Resolution

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INITIATING AMENDMENTS TO THE PLANNING CODE TO ALLOW IN REQUIRED SETBACKS, YARDS, AND USABLE OPEN SPACE ALL PROJECTIONS OF AN ARCHITECTURAL NATURE IF THEY MEET THE SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS AND TO ALLOW BAY WINDOWS THAT DO NOT MEET THE SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY FOR A ZONING ADMINISTRATOR WAIVER; ADOPTING FINDINGS, INCLUDING ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS, PLANNING CODE SECTION 302 FINDINGS, AND FINDINGS OF CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN AND PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1.

WHEREAS, The Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider initiation of the proposed Ordinance on May 24, 2018; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments would amend the Planning Code to allow in required setbacks, yards, and usable open space all projections of an architectural nature if they meet the specified requirements and to allow bay windows that do not meet the specified requirements to apply for a Zoning Administrator waiver; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Review will be completed prior to the Commission taking action on this Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of Department staff and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, all pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the custodian of records, at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has reviewed the proposed Ordinance; and

MOVED, that pursuant to Planning Code Section 302(b), the Commission adopts a Resolution to initiate amendments to the Planning Code;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to Planning Code Section 306.3, the Commission authorizes the Department to provide appropriate notice for a public hearing to consider the above referenced Planning Code amendments contained in the draft ordinance, approved as to form by the City Attorney in Exhibit A, to be considered at a publicly noticed hearing on or after **June 13, 2018**.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on May 24, 2018.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED:

1 [Planning Code - Obstructions in Required Setbacks, Yards, and Usable Open Space]

2
3 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to allow in required setbacks, yards, and**
4 **usable open space all projections of an architectural nature if they meet the specified**
5 **requirements and to allow bay windows that do not meet the specified requirements to**
6 **apply for a Zoning Administrator waiver; affirming the Planning Department's**
7 **determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; making findings of**
8 **consistency with the General Plan and the eight priority policies of Planning Code,**
9 **Section 101.1; and adopting findings of public necessity, convenience, and general**
10 **welfare under Planning Code, Section 302.**

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

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

20 Section 1. Environmental and Land Use Findings.

21 (a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this
22 ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources
23 Code Sections 21000 et seq.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of
24 Supervisors in File No. _____ and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board
25 affirms this determination.

(b) On _____, the Planning Commission, in Resolution No. _____, adopted findings that the actions contemplated in this ordinance are consistent, on balance, with the City's General Plan and eight priority policies of Planning Code Section 101.1. The Board adopts these findings as its own. A copy of said Resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____, and is incorporated herein by reference.

(c) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board finds that this Planning Code amendment will serve the public necessity, convenience, and welfare for the reasons set forth in Planning Commission Resolution No. _____, and the Board incorporates such reasons herein by reference.

Section 2. The Planning Code is hereby amended by revising Sections 136 and 307, to read as follows:

SEC. 136. OBSTRUCTIONS OVER STREETS AND ALLEYS AND IN REQUIRED SETBACKS, YARDS, AND USABLE OPEN SPACE.

Streets and Alleys	Set-backs	Yards	Usable Open Space	
				<p>(a) The following obstructions shall be permitted, in the manner specified, as indicated by the symbol "X" in the columns at the left, within the required open areas listed herein:</p> <p>(1) Projections from a building or structure extending over a <u>s</u>Street or <u>a</u>Alley as defined <i>in Section 102 of</i> this Code. Every portion of such projections over a <u>s</u>Street or <u>a</u>Alley shall provide a minimum of 7½ feet of vertical</p>

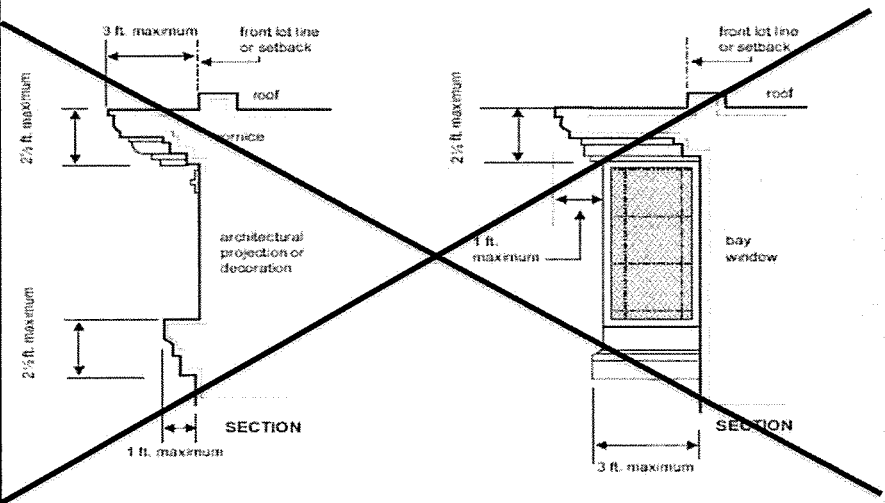
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<p style="text-align: center;">x</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">x</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">x</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">x</p>	<p>clearance from the sidewalk or other surface above which it is situated, or such greater vertical clearance as may be required by the San Francisco Building Code, unless the contrary is stated below. The permit under which any such projection over a sStreet or aAlley is erected over public property shall not be construed to create any perpetual right but is a revocable license;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(2) Obstructions within legislated setback lines and front setback areas, as required by Sections 131 and 132 of this Code;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(3) Obstructions within side yards and rear yards, as required by Sections 133 and 134 of this Code;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(4) Obstructions within usable open space, as required by Section 135 of this Code.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(b) No obstruction shall be constructed, placed, or maintained in any such required open area except as specified in this Section <u>136</u>.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(c) The permitted obstructions shall be as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(1) Overhead horizontal p<u>Projections of an architectural nature that leave (leaving</u> at least 7½ feet of <u>headroom) of a purely architectural or decorative character clearance and do not increase the floor area or the volume of space enclosed by the building,</u> such as cornices, eaves, sills, and belt courses, <u>sunshades, fins, and brise soleils.</u> with a vertical</p>
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1 dimension of no more than two feet six inches, not increasing the
2 floor area or the volume of space enclosed by the building, and not
3 projecting more than:

4 (A) At roof level, three feet over streets and alleys
5 and into setbacks, or to a perimeter in such required open areas
6 parallel to and one foot outside the surfaces of bay windows
7 immediately below such features, whichever is the greater
8 projection;

9 (B) At every other level, one foot over streets and
10 alleys and into setbacks, and



19 (C) Three feet into yards and usable open space, or 1/6
20 of the required minimum dimensions (when specified) of such open
21 areas, whichever is less;

22 * * * *

23 * * * *

24 **SEC. 307. OTHER POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR.**

1 **In addition to those specified in Sections 302 through 306 of this Code, the**
2 **Zoning Administrator shall have the following powers and duties in administration and**
3 **enforcement of this Code.**

4 * * * *

5 **(h) Exceptions from Certain Specific Code Standards through Administrative**
6 **Review.** The Zoning Administrator may allow complete or partial relief from certain standards
7 specifically identified below, in Section 161, or elsewhere in this Code when modification of
8 the standard would result in a project fulfilling the criteria set forth below and in the applicable
9 section.

10 **(1) Applicability.**

11 * * * *

12 **(D) Conversion of Non-conforming Uses to Residential Uses.** The
13 Zoning Administrator may modify or waive dwelling unit exposure requirements, rear yard
14 requirements, open space requirements for inner courts, and the substitution of off-site
15 publicly accessible open space for required residential open space, provided *that*:

16 (i) *That* the ~~r~~Residential ~~u~~Use, whether ~~a~~Dwelling ~~u~~Units,
17 ~~g~~Group ~~h~~Housing, or SRO units, are ~~p~~Primarily ~~p~~Permitted in the district or districts in which
18 the project is located;

19 (ii) *That* the nonconforming use is eliminated by such
20 conversion, provided further that the structure is not enlarged, extended, or moved to another
21 location; and

22 (iii) *That* the requirements of the Building Code, the Housing
23 Code, and other applicable portions of the Municipal Code are met.

1 (E) **Better Roofs; Living Roof Alternative.** For projects subject to
2 Section 149, the Zoning Administrator may waive portions of the applicable requirements as
3 provided in Section 149(e).

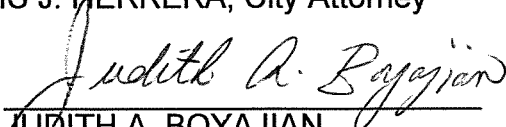
4 (F) *Bay Windows. Bay windows that maintain the same massing as those*
5 *allowed as a permitted obstruction in Planning Code Section 136, but do not otherwise meet the*
6 *requirements of Section 136, may be provided complete or partial relief with the advice of the Planning*
7 *Director that said windows otherwise meet all applicable design guidelines.*

8 * * * *

9
10 Section 3. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after
11 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the
12 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board
13 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

14
15 Section 4 Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors
16 intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles,
17 numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal
18 Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment
19 additions, and Board amendment deletions in accordance with the "Note" that appears under
20 the official title of the ordinance.

21 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
22 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

23 By: 
24 JUDITH A. BOYAJIAN
Deputy City Attorney

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