

Neighborhood Commercial Districts and City Permitting*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Draft for Consideration
On: Tuesday, August 4, 2020
Members: Packard, Anderson, Girardin, Patterson

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: TBD

The Way It Is Now: The City Planning Code applies zoning rules to different areas, or districts, of the City. These zoning rules direct whether properties may be used for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes, and within these categories, how the properties may be used, such as for bars and restaurants, offices or retail. Within each zoning district, uses may be either permitted, conditionally permitted or not permitted. Conditionally permitted uses require review and approval by the Planning Commission.

A neighborhood commercial district (NCD) is a type of zoning district. NCDs are typically commercial corridors outside of San Francisco's downtown area, with commercial uses on the ground floor and other uses on upper floors.

A person who applies for building permits to change the use of property in an NCD must notify nearby property owners of the proposed change. The notices must be posted for 30 days, the City may not issue permits during the notice period, and members of the public may ask the Planning Commission to review the permit.

To open a new business in San Francisco, a business owner may need approvals from several different City agencies. For example, the Department of Building Inspection issues permits for construction or remodeling, and the Department of Public Health issues permits for the sale of food.

The Proposal: Proposition ____ would:

- Expand the types of permitted and conditionally permitted uses in most NCDs. For many of these NCDs, the additional permitted uses would include arts activities, community facilities, social services, and restaurants.
- In NCDs, allow restaurants to provide workspace on days when the restaurant is open.
- Within NCDs, expand the use of outdoor areas in connection with certain businesses.
- Eliminate the public notification process for persons who want to start a permitted use in an NCD.
- Require City departments to develop a coordinated and expedited approval process for permitted uses in NCDs.
- Temporarily allow retail uses within bars and entertainment venues for up to four years.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to expand permissible uses in neighborhood commercial districts, eliminate public notification processes for new uses in neighborhood commercial districts, require the development of a coordinated and expedited approval process for permits in neighborhood commercial districts, and temporarily allow retail in bars and entertainment venues.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote "no," you do not want to make these changes.

**Working title, for identification only. The Director of Elections determines the title of each local ballot measure; measure titles are not considered during Ballot Simplification Committee meetings.*