

TEXT OF PROPOSED INITIATIVE ORDINANCE

PROPOSITION G

Initiative Ordinance adding Section 611 to the Planning Code and amending Section 602.7 of the Planning Code to prohibit all new general advertising signs, and to provide for appropriate general advertising sign relocation agreements.

Note: Additions are single-underline italics Times Roman

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

Section 1. Findings Preserving the City's Unique Character

(a) General advertising is currently in, adjacent to, and visible from public and historically significant civic spaces including parks, public plazas, historic buildings and the waterfront.

(b) City officials have received complaints from the public about the proliferation of general advertising signs in the City, about the commercialization of the City's public space, the increased size of vinyl signs which cover entire sides of buildings, as well as about general advertising signs placed on architecturally and historically significant buildings, all of which affect the quality of life in San Francisco, adding blight and clutter.

(c) The City currently contains an ample supply of legally permitted general advertising signs.

(d) The number of general advertising signs is increasing all over the City. Many areas of the City are saturated with general advertising signs. In these areas the general advertising signs are obtrusive, out of scale, and contribute to visual pollution and blight. As population, traffic and building trends grow and shift within the City, it is difficult to assess which areas of the City will be inundated with general advertising signs next.

(e) Tourism, San Francisco's largest revenue generating industry, benefits from the preservation of the City's unique character, architecture and vistas. As general advertising signs become more and more a part of the City's landscape, its distinctive appearance is hidden and the character that tourists visit the City to experience is lost.

Safety

(f) City officials and the public have expressed concern over the impact of the increasing volume of general advertising signs on traffic and pedestrian safety.

(g) Signs identifying local services and businesses are often blocked or obscured by general advertising signs, a practice that confuses and distracts the public from finding those services and businesses.

(h) Planning Code Section 601 identifies the

need to reduce hazards such as signs which can distract motorists and pedestrians traveling on the public right of way and increase the potential for accidents, especially in congested parts of the City.

Existing Law

(i) Planning Code Section 601 cites as among the special purposes for adopting sign regulation: safeguarding and enhancing of property values in residential, commercial and industrial areas, protecting the public investment in and the character and dignity of public buildings, open spaces and thoroughfares, and protecting the distinctive appearance of San Francisco produced by its unique geography, topography, street patterns, skyline and architectural features.

(j) Furthermore, the controls on general advertising signs in Planning Code Article 6 are more than thirty-five years old and no longer adequately reflect the City's concerns regarding both visual clutter and traffic safety.

(k) Objective 4, Policy 14, of the Urban Design Element of the City's General Plan recognizes that signs are a leading cause of street clutter and that the signs often are unrelated to the physical qualities of the buildings on which they are placed.

(l) Objective 4, Policy 14, further states that where signs are large, garish and clashing, they lose their value as identification or advertising signs and merely offend the viewer and that while signs have an important place in an urban environment, they should be controlled in their size and location.

(m) This ordinance does not require the removal of any lawfully erected general advertising signs. The City may also enter into agreements providing for the comparable relocation of existing lawfully erected general advertising signs to other locations where those signs could have been erected pursuant to the zoning laws in effect before the effective date of this ordinance.

(n) The City recognizes the value of non-commercial signs as a means of providing the public with information and also acknowledges the need for appropriate recognition for organizations which support non-commercial signs. This ordinance is not intended to regulate non-commercial signs.

Section 2. The San Francisco Planning Code is hereby amended by adding Section 611, to read as follows:

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.

(Continued on next page)

LEGAL TEXT OF PROPOSITION G (CONTINUED)

Section 3. The San Francisco Planning Code is hereby amended by amending Section 602.7, to read as follows:

602.7 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 sign is located, or to which it is affixed, and which is sold, offered or conducted on such premises only incidentally if at all.

Section 4. Severability

If any provision of this ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid or unconstitutional provision or application. To this end, the provisions of this ordinance shall be deemed severable.