

NEW PERMITTING REFORMS IN SAN FRANCISCO

PermitSF is an initiative spearheaded by Mayor Daniel Lurie that aims to streamline San Francisco's permitting system by removing burdensome requirements and modernizing outdated processes. Some reforms are already in place, while others are still moving through the legislative process. **This policy brief highlights the most relevant changes for BOMA SF members**, and we will continue to share updates as the initiative evolves.

[CLICK HERE to visit the PermitSF website for more information](#)

Legislative Reforms

Below are key reforms most relevant to BOMA SF members. A full list of reforms is available [online](#).

Encroachment Permits for Routine Tenant Improvements

- Effective August 16, 2025
- The legislation would **eliminate the permit requirement for certain minor sidewalk encroachments**, including:
 - Door actuators and wheelchair lifts, or other elements constructed for compliance with accessibility standards, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - Utility fixtures, water spouts, standpipes, out-swinging doors, and security gates – which are affixed to a building.
 - Any element affixed to a building extending no more than four inches into the public right-of-way.

Temporary Uses

- Effective August 16, 2025
- The legislation will **simplify and clarify the duration of allowable temporary uses**.
- Currently, there are 19 different types of temporary use categories. The Planning Code will be amended to clarify and expand the definition of "Retail Pop Up" uses, which are most common; expand the time under which certain uses can be in operation under a Temporary Use Authorization; clarify renewal periods and maximum duration; and allow seasonal campaign offices.

Downtown Uses

- Effective August 31, 2025
- The legislation will principally **permit certain non-retail sales and service uses on the ground floor in the Downtown Commercial (C-3) Districts**, including office, business services, and trade offices, through December 31, 2030.
- The legislation will ease the filling of non-ground floor vacancies within Residential-Commercial (RC) Districts by principally permitting retail sales and service uses on all floors and principally permitting non-retail sales and service uses at the second floor and above.

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CUSTOMER SERVICE & TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS

- New performance targets for complex projects.
- Extended Permit Center service hours.
- Created a single online permitting hub at sf.gov/permitting.
- Merged customer service inquiries across DBI, Planning, Public Works, and Fire.
- Piloting centralized application intake tools.

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Business Signs

- Effective August 31, 2025
- The legislation would simplify business sign requirements by **removing the permit requirement and fees for the most common business signs.**

Storefront Transparency

- Effective August 31, 2025
- Currently, ground-floor uses must have at least 60% of the windows and doorways transparent, allowing visibility to the inside of the building.
- The legislation would **exempt certain critical uses from the City's storefront transparency requirements.**

Conversion of Office to Housing - Impact Fees

- Effective August 31, 2025
- The legislation will **clarify that impact fees for waivers of conversion** of non-residential uses to residential uses in the Downtown Commercial (C-3) Districts **encompass all non-residential uses.**

Awnings | Signs | Security Gates

- Effective August 16, 2025
- The legislation **adds security gates as part of the City's existing amnesty program** for awnings and signs.

Priority Permit Processing for Commercial Permits

- Effective August 16, 2025
- The legislation will **consolidate two similar priority permit processing programs** under the Planning Commission and Planning Department.
- Currently, the Planning Commission has its version of a priority permit processing program, called the Community Benefit Priority Permit Processing Program (CB3P). The Planning Department also manages a similar codified version. The two programs would be merged into one that is codified.
- The key benefit of the priority permit processing programs, which will remain, is to **guarantee that a business needing a Conditional Use Authorization from the Planning Commission will have certainty over timing of their hearing** – guaranteed to be held within 90 days of a completed and accepted application.

NEXT STEPS

PermitSF is an ongoing initiative. Several proposed reforms are currently advancing through the legislative process, with additional measures slated for future implementation.

BOMA SF will provide ongoing updates on the most important developments related to this initiative for the CRE industry.

GET INVOLVED

For questions about the initiative, suggestions for permit reform, or opportunities to get involved, please contact Maddie Campbell, BOMA SF's Manager of Government Affairs.

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