

December 3, 2019

Ballot Simplification Committee
Barbara Carr
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 48
San Francisco, CA 94102

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL TO: Barbara.Carr@sfgov.org

Re: Appeal of Approved Digest for Voter Approval of “Limits on Office Development” – March 2020 Ballot

Dear Members of the Ballot Simplification Committee:

Thank you for your robust discussion of the “Limits on Office Development” initiative measure (“Measure”) that will appear on the March 3, 2020 ballot. On November 27, 2019, we provided proposed edits to the draft digest published on November 25, 2019 and attended the Ballot Simplification Committee meeting on December 2, 2019 to voice our comments. We appreciate the long hours spent by the Committee to simplify the ballot digest; however, we are concerned that a complicated program and a complicated ballot measure have been overly simplified. We believe voters need to understand the broader details of the existing Office Limit Allocation Program (“Program”) to fully evaluate the Measure’s proposed changes to the Program.

We request the following additions to the digest:

- (1) **Including language to establish how the current Program works.** The Program makes 875,000 square feet of office available for allocation to large projects every year. Any unallocated office space rolls over to future years and is available for future allocation. *This is crucial to establish as the Measure proposes not only limiting future allocations but also forever eliminating lost office space that is removed due to lack of affordable housing production.*
- (2) **Including language clarifying that the state-established Affordable Housing goals are actually established as cumulative goals for an 8-year period.** The Measure would newly create an annualized goal and use it to determine the available office allotment in individual years. *This is valid for voters to understand as the Affordable Housing goals are set on an 8-year cycle to account for development economic cycles and annualizing them as the Measure does disrupts this cycle with ongoing implications to the amount of available office allocation.*



- (3) **Including language clarifying that the measure would permanently deduct office allocation that cannot be returned to the Program regardless of subsequent years' production of affordable housing relative to the Goals.** This is notable because the Goals established by the State are intended to be measured and achieved by a city over a full 8-year period.

The permanent loss of available annual office allotment is a significant policy shift and should be communicated to voters.

We appreciate the Committee's efforts to simplify this complicated measure, but we believe it would do a great disservice to voters to omit these crucial details from the Digest.

Attached to this letter please find our proposed specific language effectuating the corrections and clarifications addressed in this letter.

Thank you for your consideration of this appeal request.

Sincerely,


Joaquín Torres

Attachment: Proposed Edits to the Ballot Digest for "Limits on Office Development" Measure



Limits on Office Development*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Approved Digest
On: Monday, December 2, 2019
Members: Packard, Anderson, Girardin, Patterson

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: 4:15 p.m. on Tuesday, December 3

The Way It Is Now: In 1986, San Francisco voters approved limits on the development of projects with at least 25,000 square feet of office space. An annual allotment of 875,000 square feet is available to be allocated to approved projects. Any unused portion of this allocation is rolled over to the following year.

When deciding whether to approve these projects, the City must consider a range of factors.

The City has not met housing goals set by the State for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households (Affordable Housing Goals). These goals are set on an 8-year cycle.

In 2018, the City approved a plan that allows the development of several office projects in the part of the South of Market neighborhood known as Central SoMa.

The Proposal: Proposition would tie the City's annual allotment for office space projects that are at least 50,000 square feet (Large Office Projects) to whether the City is meeting its Affordable Housing Goals, and sets a minimum Affordable Housing Goal of 2,042 units per year for this purpose.

If the City does not meet its Affordable Housing Goals, annualized from an 8-year cycle, the subsequent year's square-footage allotment for Large Office Projects would go down by the same percentage as the housing shortfall. The reduction in office space allocation would be lost forever.

Proposition would allow the City to borrow square footage from future office space allotments for:

- Large Office Projects that meet certain affordable housing requirements; and
- Large Office Projects in Central SoMa that were submitted for approval before September 11, 2019, and meet specific criteria.

After January 1, 2019, no more than a total of 6 million square feet of Large Office Projects in Central SoMa can be approved until at least 15,000 new housing units are built in the wider SoMa neighborhood.

Proposition would change the criteria the City must consider in approving office projects of at least 25,000 square feet.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to tie the City's annual square-footage allotment for certain Large Office Projects to whether the City is meeting its Affordable Housing Goals, and you want to change the criteria for approving certain office projects.

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.*