

FILE NO.

RESOLUTION NO.

[Urging the establishment of the Sensible Density Working Group]

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1 **Resolution urging the establishment of the Sensible Density Working Group, urging the**
2 **Fire Marshall, Department of Building Inspection and Planning Department to convene**
3 **a working group to study how to safely allow single-stair building typologies on four,**
4 **five and six story buildings, and make recommendations for the promulgation of local**
5 **building code equivalencies.**

6
7 WHEREAS, San Francisco is required by state housing element law to rezone for an
8 additional 36,000 units in order to have the zoned capacity to accommodate 82,000 additional
9 housing units, 46,000 of them affordable to low and moderate income households, by 2032,
10 and

11 WHEREAS, San Francisco is required to rezone in higher resourced neighborhoods
12 which are substantially built out with few large sites available for development, and

13 WHEREAS, Assembly of large sites in dense neighborhoods is neither easy nor
14 desirable because it increases land value and is disruptive to the fine grain character of San
15 Francisco neighborhoods, and

16 WHEREAS, Both state and local building code requires the construction of two
17 staircases for buildings over three stories.

18 WHEREAS, Adding two stairs to a four to six story building on a standard 25' wide lot in
19 San Francisco takes up a large amount of a floorplan and makes medium density projects
20 infeasible.

21 WHEREAS, San Francisco has ended single family zoning, and significantly increased
22 its zoned capacity, by allowing fourplexes in every single-family zoned parcel in the city, and
23 sixplexes on corner lots, however very few fourplexes have been built, in large part because
24 of the infeasibility of the requirement for two staircases above three stories, and

1 WHEREAS, San Francisco's fourplex ordinance alone doubled, tripled or quadrupled
2 the zoned capacity of 120,000 parcels formerly zoned for single family homes, however very
3 few developers have chosen to use to use this option, in part because the infeasibility of the
4 two-stair requirement.

5 WHEREAS, Most other countries in the world allow single-stair buildings, alternatively
6 called "Point Access Blocks"

7 WHEREAS, Seattle modified it's building code to allow single-stair buildings up to six
8 stories, since 1977 without any major safety concerns, with similarly dense residential
9 neighborhoods and hilly topography

10 WHEREAS, Single-stair buildings can achieve the same or greater level of safety
11 through decreased travel distance to a fire-rated stairwell, in sprinklered buildings, compared
12 to a large floorplate building with double-loaded corridors.

13 WHEREAS, Single-stair buildings allow more light and cross-ventilation, by allowing
14 living space to be pushed to the exterior, and can allow new development to protect rear yards
15 and open space, and

16 WHEREAS, Single-stair buildings lower the cost of construction by saving space on
17 stairs and corridors, and

18 WHEREAS, Safely allowing single-stair buildings can facilitate modest infill
19 development on small sites around the city that more closely matches our development
20 patterns, and

21 WHEREAS, Single-stair buildings allow affordable housing developers to build smaller
22 scale projects, more likely to result in mixed income neighborhoods, and so be it

23 RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors urges the creation of a Sensible Density
24 Working Group comprised of members of the Department of Building Inspection, the Fire
25 Department, and the Planning Department, with legal support from the City Attorney's Office,

1 for the purpose of studying how to safely allow single-stair building typologies on four, five and
2 six story buildings, and be it

3 RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Sensible Density Working Group to develop
4 recommendations to inform a bulletin on building code equivalencies to allow single-stair
5 buildings of four, five or six stories and recommended planning code changes, and be it

6 RESOLVED, that the Board urges the Sensible Density Working Group to produce a
7 written report to the Board within 60 days of the Resolution passing the Board on its efforts to
8 create a bulletin with building code equivalencies, make any necessary planning code
9 changes or otherwise how to safely allow single-stair building typologies on four, five and six
10 story buildings, and be it,

11 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board shall transmit a copy of this
12 Resolution to the City Attorney, Planning Director, Fire Marshal and Director of Building
13 Inspections.