



126-0062026-002

Agenda Item **No. 5(c)**
Meeting of May 19, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Investment and Infrastructure Commissioners

FROM: Thor Kaslofsky, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Approving a Sixth Amendment to the Mission Bay South Signage Master Plan increasing character heights and flexibility of Awning Signs for Mixed Use Retail uses and for the Event Center Sign Program at the Golden State Warriors Event Center and Mixed-Use Development on Blocks 29-32 in Mission Bay South; Mission Bay South Redevelopment Project Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Mission Bay South Signage Master Plan (“Signage Master Plan”) is to provide a framework for the provision of visual information that assists, directs, informs, and identifies businesses and land uses in order to serve residents, visitors, and tenants in the Mission Bay South Redevelopment Project Area (“Project Area”). The Signage Master Plan provides standards for the type, placement, size, height, and content for the signs in the Project Area.

The Mixed Use Retail signage controls of the Signage Master Plan apply to all ground floor commercial businesses throughout the Project Area, including within the multi-purpose Chase Center premises at Blocks 29-32 (the “Event Center”). As such, all mixed-use retail sign permits are required to comply with these controls.

On June 5, 2018, the Commission approved amendments to the Mission Bay South Design for Development (“Design for Development”) and the Signage Master Plan to establish a comprehensive signage program unique to the Event Center (“Event Center Sign Program”).

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Over the course of reviewing many mixed-use signage permits over awnings (“Awning Signs”), OCII staff have observed that certain sign controls are overly restrictive. After analyzing tenant signage needs, and observing numerous existing Awning Signs with potential conformance challenges, and evaluating the overall signage aesthetic with the urban design of buildings and retail districts in the Project Area and within the Event Center, staff recommends a sixth amendment to the Signage Master Plan to increase maximum text heights on future Awning Signs from 12 inches to 18 inches outside of the Event Center; and up to 26 inches high within the Event Center. Additionally, a new awning sign zone designation over the doors to the business where no physical awning is present, (“Awning Zone”) would streamline the review of future signage permits.

Staff recommends the Commission approve the proposed Sixth Amendment to the Mission Bay South Signage Master Plan.

DISCUSSION

The current standards for awning signage set a 12-inch maximum text height constraint, a constraint not present in the San Francisco Planning Code. Although occupant/company names and logos are exempt from accessibility requirements, a good metric for establishing viewing distance for signs is the 2025 California Building Code (“CBC”) Table 11B-703.5.5 which shows that a sign with 12-inch characters is viewable by most from 93 feet away. This can be problematic for the Project Area given some streets exceed 93 feet in width so signs can be difficult for some to read head on from across the street, not to mention from an oblique angle.

Throughout the Project Area’s mixed-use retail districts, such as along 3rd and 4th Streets, a pattern of horizontal metal-framed awning-like projections supporting signage over ground floor business storefronts has been established. Whereas the San Francisco Planning Department limits awning signs to 20-40 square feet depending on the zone, the current standards for awning signage at Mission Bay South also set an area limitation based on the vertical face of the awning. Since the horizontal type awnings have a relatively minimal vertical face, the sign area is often excessively limited, not even allowing the 12-inch minimum text height.

Additionally, Staff frequently receive signage proposals that show text heights up to 18 inches for Awning Signs area-wide and larger signs within the Event Center. Applicants mention visibility and conformance to identical business signs at other locations as justification for these larger sizes. Furthermore, some existing Awning Signs in Mission Bay South, if reviewed stringently, would likely be determined to be nonconforming based on a staff review of 2025 Street View data, in that their characters appear larger than 12 inches and likely approximately 18 inches tall.



Mixed use retail Awning Sign at 4th Street



Mixed use retail Awning Sign at 4th Street

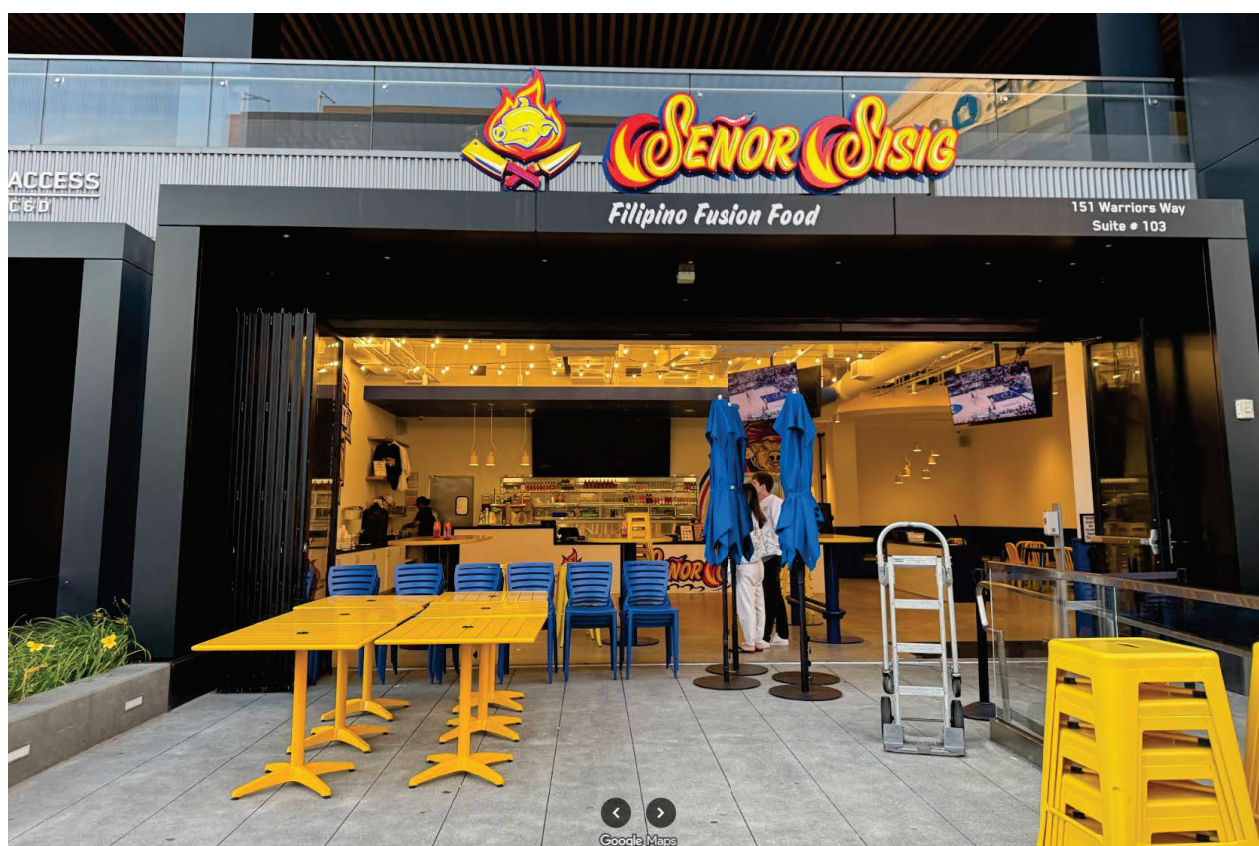
Taking into consideration recent proposed signage, as well as existing signage on top of the awning-like structures throughout the Project Area and within the Event Center that exceed the current limits, staff have come to the conclusion that increasing heights of Awning Sign text from 12 inches to 18 inches throughout the Project Area would be appropriate, would accommodate existing Awning Signs, and would not diminish the urban design of the Project Area. From a community- and business-development perspective, the increased sign size would add flexibility and attract greater attention to businesses that may be struggling from lack of visibility. However, awning signage within the Event

Center merits a special consideration, given the unique urban design and placemaking features of the Event Center blocks, as is already reflected in the Event Center Sign Program.

Event Center Signage

Due to the increased scale, unique character, and festive nature of the concentration of entertainment uses located within the Event Center, staff believe that allowing taller Awning Signs for businesses located within the Event Center is appropriate.

Also, as seen in the example below, certain Awning Signs within the Event Center have been permitted at heights that are larger than allowed.



Awning Sign at Event Center



Event Center Awning Sign Dimensioned Drawing



Event Center Plaza showing Awning Signs

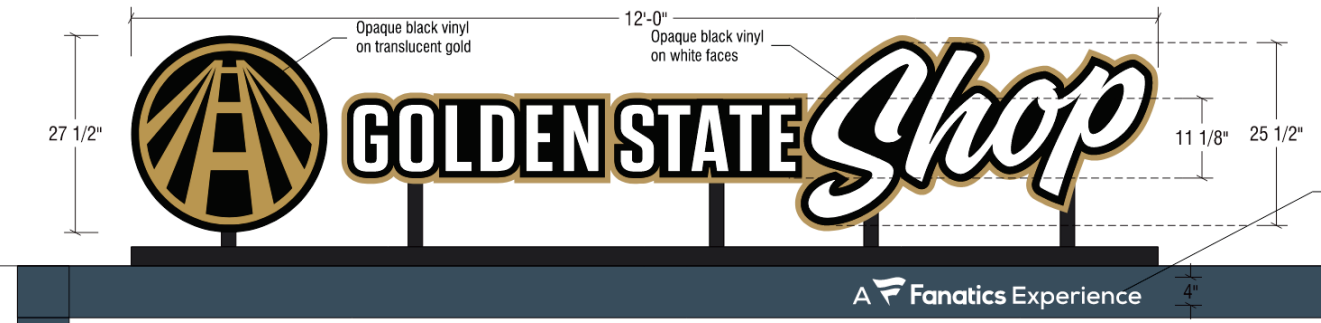
Amending the Event Center Sign Program chapter within the Signage Master Plan to allow for higher awning Sign text heights within the Event Center would accommodate the existing business signs in the Mission Bay South sign controls and allow future, festive signs consistent with the existing Event Center ambiance.

Proposed Signage Master Plan Amendments

For mixed Use Retail uses in the entire Project Area, the amendment would also expand the definition of Awnings Sign, which originally was geared to canvas awnings, to include contemporary awning types as pictured in the first four photos of the discussion section above, reinforcing the aforementioned changes. It is also proposed to limit the total area of the sign to 40 square feet, which is in keeping with the San Francisco Planning Department's controls for awning signs in similar land use districts.

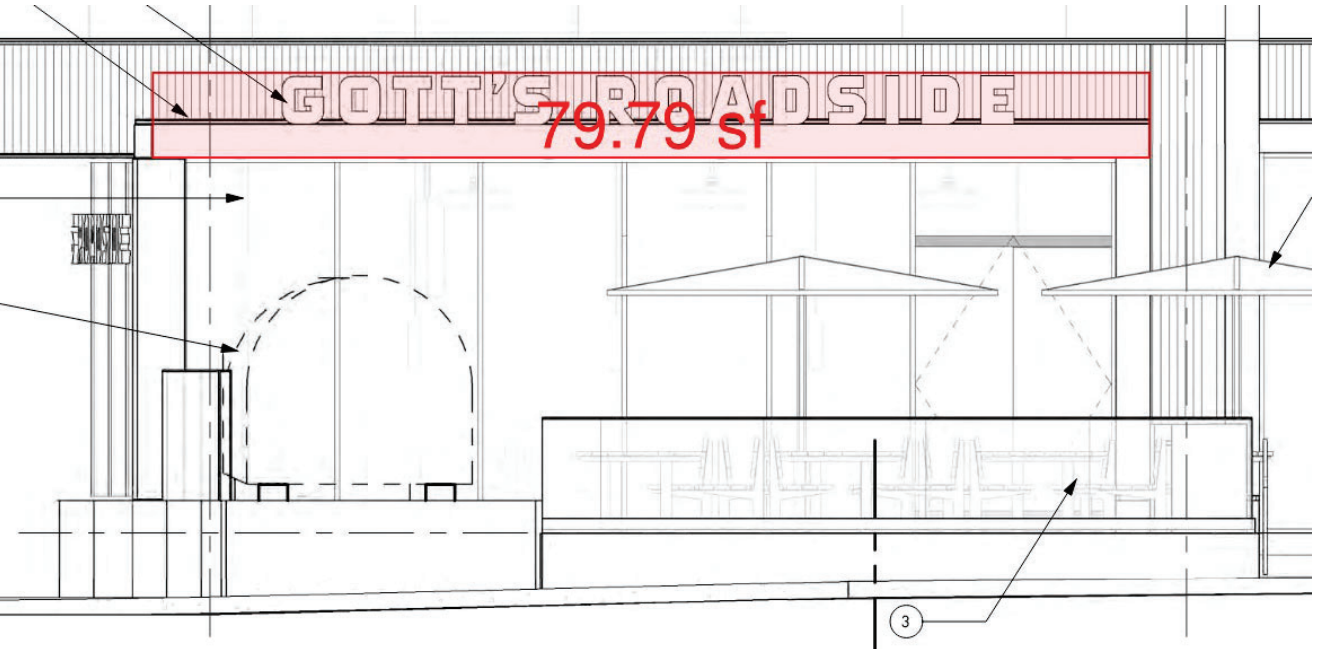
For Mixed Use Retail signs outside of the Event Center, to allow future awning signs to have greater visibility and to bring previously approved signs with characters taller than 12 inches into conformance with the Signage Master Plan, the proposed Signage Master Plan amendments include increasing the limit on character height on awning and awning-like signs from a maximum of 12 inches to a maximum of 18 inches. An 18-inch-tall sign is viewable from 141 feet away (according to the CBC) which allows for most businesses on a given block to be viewable from the midpoint of the block across the street.

Within the Event Center, 50% of characters would be allowed at a maximum height of 26 inches while the remaining characters would be allowed at a maximum height of 18 inches, allowing future tenants greater flexibility in keeping with the Event Center’s unique character, while bringing large signs with mixed fonts and character sizes into conformance as well.



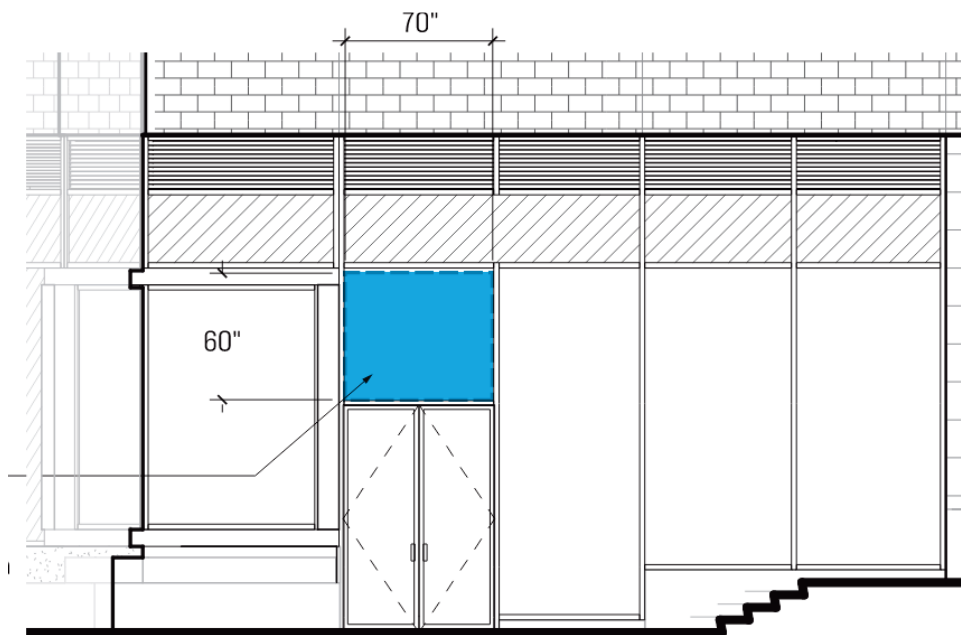
Event Center Current Awning Sign Application

Awning signs at the Event Center are proposed to be further limited to 80 square feet in keeping with the largest nonconforming Awning Sign at the Event Center.





Furthermore, since Window Signs are quite restrictive (signage on glass is limited to 10 square feet per frontage per Window Sign controls), a new zone control (“Awning Zone”) is proposed for all Mixed Use Retail signage, with extents determined by the Agency Executive Director or designee, to allow signage over ground floor doors to businesses throughout the Project Area, where there is no physical awning or projecting surface onto which install signage. This zone would be governed by Awning Sign controls to streamline the review of future signs.



Awning Zone

Lastly, the amendment would also clean up minor typos and other inconsistent inaccuracies.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The proposed Mission Bay South Signage amendments will be presented to the Mission Bay Citizens Advisory Committee at its May 14, 2026 meeting, and its recommendation will be reported to the Commission at its May 19, 2026 meeting.

CALIFORNIA ENVIROMENTAL QUALITY ACT

Approval of the Mission Bay South Signage amendments are categorically exempt from environmental review under California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15311, as it authorizes the construction of minor accessory structures appurtenant to an existing commercial facility.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS

OCII staff recommends approval of the Sixth Amendment to the Mission Bay South Signage Master Plan.

(Originated by Jacek Bialobrodski, Associate Planner)

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Thor Kaslofsky
Executive Director