Motion adopting findings to reverse the determination by the Planning Department that the proposed project at 2675 Geary Boulevard is exempt from further environmental review.

WHEREAS, On September 11, 2020, the Planning Department issued a CEQA determination for the proposed project located at 2675 Geary Boulevard (“Project”) under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), the CEQA Guidelines, and San Francisco Administrative Code, Chapter 31, finding that the Project is subject to the Common Sense Exemption; and

WHEREAS, The project site is a vacant 49,780-square-foot retail space within an existing 250,843-square-foot shopping center, the “City Center”, located at the southeast corner of Masonic Avenue and Geary Boulevard, in the Western Addition Neighborhood of San Francisco (Assessor's Parcel Block No. 1094, Lot No. 001); the City Center shopping center, constructed in 1951, occupies the block bounded by Geary Boulevard to the north, Masonic Avenue to the west, O'Farrell Street to the south and Lyon Street to the east; the southern portion of the 288,297-square-foot City Center parcel (along O'Farrell Street) is generally upward sloping between Masonic Avenue and just east of Anza Vista Avenue, and then downward sloping from just east of Anza Vista Avenue to Lyon Street; the northern portion of the City Center parcel along Geary Boulevard is generally downward sloping between Masonic Avenue and Lyon Street; as a result, the 250,843 square feet of retail space in City Center is located on four levels with six separate parking lots (Lots A -F), each with independent access from O'Farrell Street, Geary Boulevard or Masonic Avenue; the City Center retail buildings are generally clustered along the northern portion of the City Center.
parcel adjacent to Geary Boulevard and the northern portion of the Masonic Avenue
frontages; the parking lots fan out from the City Center retail buildings to the south, southwest,
east and southeast; and

WHEREAS, The proposed Project is a new grocery store, restaurant, and coffee bar
use within an existing vacant retail space; the proposed project would include a 49,780-
square-foot grocery store (Whole Foods), with a 3,320-square-foot restaurant, and a 1,190-
square-foot coffee shop; the existing on-site parking “Lot C”, with 117 parking spaces, would
be available for parking for Whole Foods customers; loading and deliveries would occur from
an existing 3,528-square-foot on-site loading dock, accessed from O'Farrell Street just east of
Anza Vista Avenue, via “Lot F;” no changes to vehicle parking, bicycle parking, loading,
driveway access, or on-site circulation are proposed; in addition, no changes are proposed to
the public right-of-way; the project is limited to interior renovation; the project does not include
exterior construction and would not require excavation; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, the Planning Department issued a
Common Sense Exemption for the project on September 11, 2020, finding that the proposed
project is exempt from further review under CEQA; and

WHEREAS, On September 18, 2020, M.R. Wolfe & Associates, P.C., on behalf of Julie
Fisher and Tony Vargas, and United Food & Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Local 5,
and its members who live and/or work in San Francisco (collectively, “Appellants”), filed an
appeal of the CEQA determination; and

WHEREAS, By memorandum to the Clerk of the Board dated September 29, 2020, the
Planning Department’s Environmental Review Officer determined that the appeal was timely
filed; and

WHEREAS, On November 17, 2020, this Board held a duly noticed public hearing to
consider the appeal of the exemption determination filed by Appellants; and
WHEREAS, The Board considered, among other issues, Appellants’ argument that the Project would result in air quality impacts from emissions from delivery vehicles that could potentially expose sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the site to significant levels of toxic air contaminants; and

WHEREAS, Under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b)(2), the Common Sense Exemption applies only “when it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment;” and

WHEREAS, Appellants’ claims raise serious concerns about the use of the Common Sense exemption in this instance, particularly in light of the conflicting information in the record regarding potential air quality impacts; and

WHEREAS, In reviewing the appeal of the exemption determination, this Board reviewed and considered the exemption determination, the appeal letter, the responses to the appeal documents that the Planning Department prepared, the other written records before the Board of Supervisors and all of the public testimony made in support of and opposed to the exemption determination appeal; and

WHEREAS, Following the conclusion of the public hearing, in Motion No. M20-0175 the Board of Supervisors conditionally reversed the exemption determination for the Project subject to the adoption of written findings of the Board in support of such determination based on the written record before the Board of Supervisors as well as all of the testimony at the public hearing in support of and opposed to the appeal; and

WHEREAS, The written record and oral testimony in support of and opposed to the appeal and deliberation of the oral and written testimony at the public hearing before the Board of Supervisors by all parties and the public in support of and opposed to the appeal of the exemption determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No.
201127 and is incorporated in this motion as though set forth in its entirety; now, therefore, be it

MOVED, That the Board of Supervisors reverses the determination by the Planning Department that the Project is exempt from CEQA under the Common Sense Exemption; and, be it

FURTHER MOVED, That the Board directs the Planning Department to further analyze the potential air quality impacts of the Project to sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the Project site; and, be it

FURTHER MOVED, That as to all other issues, the Board finds the Common Sense Exemption conforms to the requirements of CEQA and is adequate, accurate, and objective, the record does not include substantial evidence to support a fair argument that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, and no further analysis is required.
Motion adopting findings to reverse the determination by the Planning Department that the proposed project at 2675 Geary Boulevard is exempt from further environmental review.

March 16, 2021 Board of Supervisors - APPROVED
Ayes: 11 - Chan, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

File No. 210266

I hereby certify that the foregoing Motion was APPROVED on 3/16/2021 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board