



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
LONDON BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS  
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

June 17, 2021

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board  
City Hall Room 244  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

RE: BOS File No. 210381 - Planning Code - Massage Establishment Zoning Controls

Small Business Commission Recommendation: **Approval**

This motion passed 6 to 0, with 1 absent.

Dear Ms. Calvillo,

On May 24, 2021, the Small Business Commission (SBC) conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting for BOS File No. 210381 - Planning Code - Massage Establishment Zoning Controls introduced by Supervisor Ronen and co-sponsored by Supervisor Mandelman.

These amendments to the Planning Code now properly align Massage Therapy with Health Services as it has become an integral part of today's delivery of healthcare. In addition to pain management and premier athletes utilizing massage to maintain peak performance, massage has also become a critical part of neonatal and cancer recovery care. Many Chiropractic and Acupuncture clinics include massage to increase the recovery and health of their patients.

In 2019, the Office of Small Business issued the [Massage Regulatory Topic Paper](#) to provide the background and justification for needed to revise Massage Establishment zoning controls and to align the classification of Massage Establishment with Health Services.

In 2014, the California legislature passed AB-1147 which fully returned land use controls to local jurisdictions regarding massage establishments. This was responsive to many localities reporting that they were not able to effectively regulate the massage establishments in their respective areas. BOS Ordinance Nos. 73-15 and 72-15 were subsequently passed in 2015 that established the current regulatory structure and amended the Planning Code to significantly restrict the number of zoning districts both General Massage Establishments and Sole Practitioner Establishments could legally operation or approximately ~40% of Commercial Zoning Districts.<sup>1</sup> Of the 91, 62 are on the first story only. All General Massage Establishments must also apply for a permit to operate through the Conditional Use Authorization application process. All Sole Practitioner massage establishments are principally permitted in the same zoning districts where General Massage Establishments are allowed to operate in however, they required to engage in the Neighborhood Notification Process.

The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) estimates in 2021 that nationally, massage therapists are mostly female at an estimated 86% and 81% of massage therapists describe themselves as

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<sup>1</sup> [Opening and Operating Massage Establishments in San Francisco: Issues, Considerations, and Policy Options](#)  
(page 11)

sole practitioners.<sup>2</sup> This is supported by a 2017 report on the Diversity of Healthcare Occupations from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which states that nationally, 82% of all massage therapists are estimated to be female<sup>3</sup>.

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimated in May of 2020 that 1370 massage therapists were employed in the San Francisco, Oakland, Hayward metro area<sup>4</sup>. Using that information, we can estimate that ~1,230 female massage therapists are employed in the San Francisco, Oakland, Hayward metro area. BLS also reported that in 2020, massage therapists earned a yearly median income of \$59,400 in the San Francisco, Oakland, Hayward metropolitan area<sup>20</sup>. Importantly, according to a 2020 report from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, an annual salary of \$97,600 would put a single adult in the low-income bracket<sup>5</sup>.

Noting the demographic make-up of these small businesses, the Small Business Commission determines amending the Planning Code for Massage Therapy is aligned with the goal of Prop H and Save our Small Business ordinance which is to reduce the barriers in opening a business for this industry and this industry is as equally important as the retail, and restaurants industry.

The Small Business Commission expresses its great appreciation to Supervisor Ronen, her aide Paul Monge; Planning staff, Veronica Flores and Aaron Starr; Department of Public Health, Jennifer Callewaert; and City Attorney, Victoria Wong.

Thank you for considering the Commission's recommendation. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Regina Dick-Endrizzi  
Director, Office of Small Business

cc: Hilary Ronen, Member, Board of Supervisors,  
Sophia Kittler, Mayor's Liaison to the Board of Supervisors  
Lisa Pagan, Office of Economic and Workforce Development  
Erica Major, Clerk of the Land Use and Transportation Committee

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.amtamassage.org/publications/massage-industry-fact-sheet/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/data-research/diversity-us-health-occupations.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.bls.gov/oes/#/occGeo/One%20occupation%20for%20multiple%20geographical%20areas>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2020/2020summary.odn>