

Words You Need To Know

Affordable Housing: Housing is defined as affordable for households at certain low- and, in some cases, moderate-income levels. The rents or prices of this housing generally aim for the household to pay approximately 30% of their income toward housing costs. (Changes to Transfer Tax)

Area Median Income: An income level published by the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development for San Francisco based, in part, on all incomes earned within the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Metro Fair Market Rent Area that contains San Francisco, and is adjusted based on historical income growth trends for San Francisco. In 2026, the median income for the following percentages and family size is as follows:

	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person
30% of Median Income (Extremely Low-Income)	\$34,050	\$38,900	\$43,750	\$48,650
50% of Median Income (Very Low-Income)	\$56,750	\$64,850	\$72,950	\$81,050
80% of Median Income (Lower-Income)	\$90,750	\$103,750	\$116,700	\$129,700
120% of Median Income (Moderate-Income)	\$136,150	\$155,650	\$175,100	\$194,500

Arts Departments: The charitable trust departments set forth in San Francisco Charter Section 5.101, including The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center. (City Administrator Authority)

Board or Commission: A policy body that is created and authorized by Charter or ordinance to perform certain government functions and whose members are typically appointed. Some of these bodies are advisory. (Charter Reforms & Mayoral authority)

California Coastal Act: A State law that governs the use of land in the coastal zone, which includes both land and water areas along the California coastline. (Great Highway)

Base Rent: The fixed amount of rent payable by a tenant to a landlord under a lease. (SFMTA Parcel Tax)

Charter: The Charter is the City's Constitution adopted by the voters of San Francisco, establishing how the City is governed. The Charter can be changed only by a majority of the votes cast in San Francisco. (general)

Charter Amendment: A change to the City's Charter. The Charter is the City's Constitution. The Charter can be changed only by a majority of the votes cast. (general)

City Administrator: A person appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Board of Supervisors to a five-year term overseeing more than 25 departments and programs. (Commissions task force)

Environmental Justice: To protect people from disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects and hazards, including efforts to ensure environmental protections for historically disenfranchised neighborhoods and communities. (Public bank)

Exempt Departments: Should Proposition __ Pass, the Mayor's new authority to independently hire or fire department heads will not apply to several departments, including: Controller, Port, Department of Police

Accountability, Board of Appeals, San Francisco Employees Retirement System, Civil Service Commission, Department of Elections, Ethics Commission, Health Service System, Sheriff's Inspector General, Fine Arts Museums, Asian Art Museum, Department of Human Resources, City Administrator (and underlying departments), Adult Probation, and departments headed by other elected officials. (Mayoral authority)

Fair Market Value: the price something would sell for on the open market when a buyer and a seller both know all relevant facts and enter the transaction willingly. (Eliminating Transfer Tax Foreclosure Exemption)

Fiscal Year: The City's 12-month budget period, starting July 1 and ending June 30 of the following calendar year. (general)

General Fund: The part of the City's budget that can be used for any City purpose. Money for the General Fund comes from taxes and fees on properties, businesses, sales and other sources. (general)

Initiative: A proposition placed on the ballot by voters. Any voter may place an initiative on the ballot by gathering the required number of signatures of registered voters on a petition. (general)

Local Business Utilization: The use of certain economically disadvantaged independent licensed businesses continuously operating within the City. (City Administrator Authority)

Municipal Railway (Muni): A Division of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). SFMTA is the City Department responsible for the management of all ground transportation in San Francisco, including the Muni, parking and traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and the regulation of taxis. (SFMTA Parcel Tax)

Obsolete: No longer in use or no longer useful. (Charter Reforms)

Ordinance: A local law passed by the Board of Supervisors or by the voters. (general)

Parcel Tax: A tax that is based on a flat fee for each unit of real estate property. (SFMTA Parcel Tax)

Policy: A high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures of a government body. (Ballot Reform)

Procurement: The process by which the City acquires goods, services, or construction, including the planning, solicitation, evaluation, negotiation, and award of contracts, as well as the administration of those contracts. (City Administrator Authority)

Property Tax: A tax assessed by the City on buildings and land. (general)

Proposition: A measure that is submitted to the voters for approval or disapproval. (general)