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NOVEMBER 3, 2026 ELECTION

The SPUR Voter Guide is here!

spurvoterguide.org







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Voter Guide Purpose & Process

The SPUR Voter Guide offers objective analysis and advises voters on which measures will deliver real solutions.



Proposition A

Departments and Commission | Charter Amendment

Eliminates or modifies certain duties, procedures, and requirements for several departments, commissions, and advisory bodies. Institutionalizes a task force to recommend changes to city commissions and advisory bodies every 10 years.

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What Prop A Would Do

- Simplify the City's commission and advisory board structure.
- Streamline some department procedural requirements that live in the charter.
- Allow the Board of Supervisors to amend certain voter-adopted laws.
- Require a taskforce to make recommendations on the City's commissions and advisory board every ten years.

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Backstory

- One of four proposals on the November ballot that together mark the most significant package of reforms to the charter since its last comprehensive update in 1995. It has been amended more than 100 times since then.
- SF voters created a taskforce to recommend changes to the city's commission structure in November 2024. Many of those recommendations have been adopted by ordinance. This measure would adopt others that are contained in the charter.
- Does not propose other more controversial or aggressive proposals - to eliminate certain commissions or a more wholesale shift of procedural requirements to code.

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Backstory

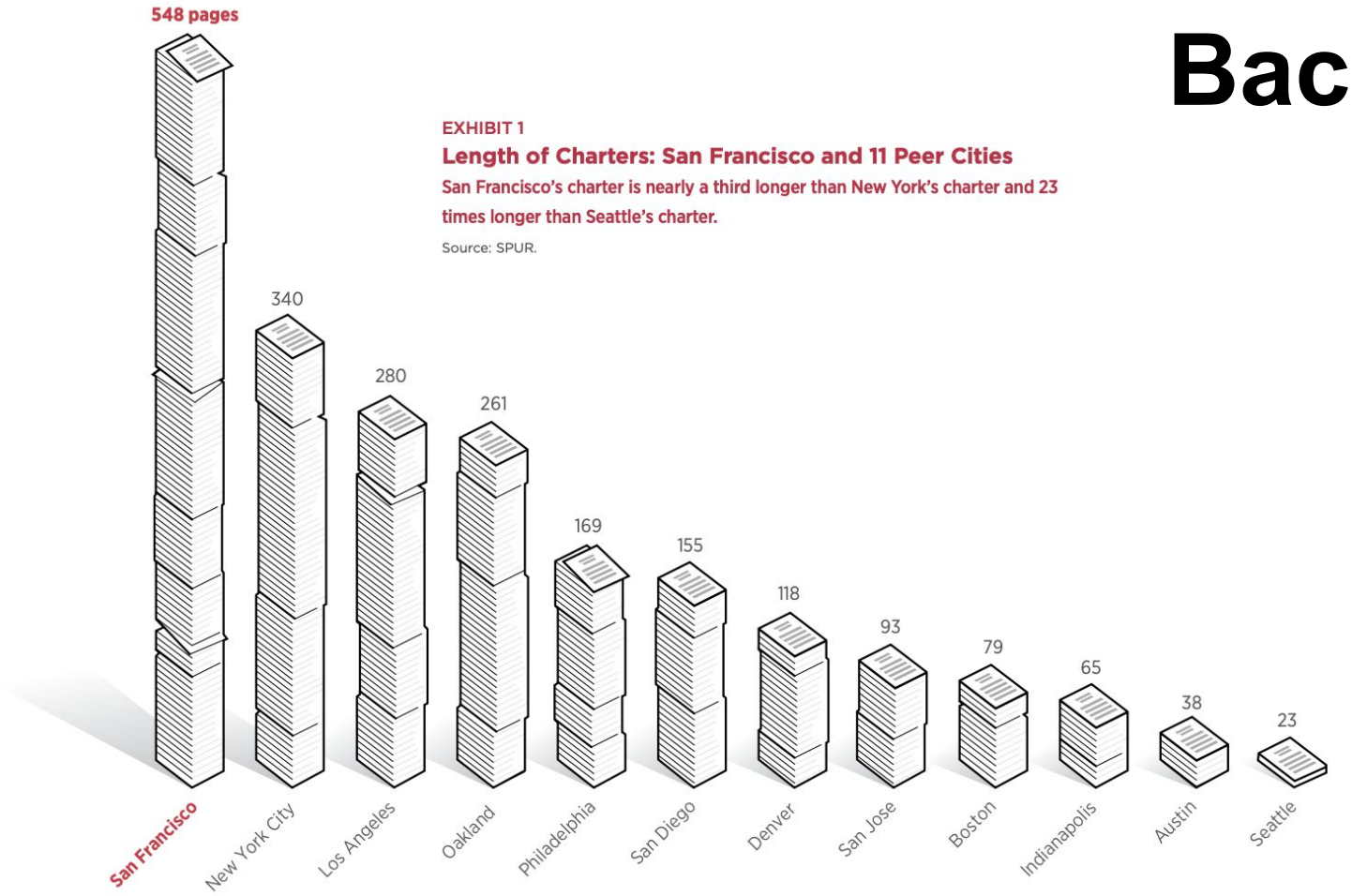


EXHIBIT 1

Length of Charters: San Francisco and 11 Peer Cities

San Francisco's charter is nearly a third longer than New York's charter and 23 times longer than Seattle's charter.

Source: SPUR.

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Pros

- Together with changes already adopted, simplifies the City's commission structure.
- Modest but meaningful progress to update or remove outdated procedural requirements.
- Will permit elected officials to change certain procedural or organizational requirements without an election, improving the city's adaptability.

Cons

- Changes to the city's commission system do not include several changes recommended by the streamlining taskforce - could have gone further.

SPUR's Recommendation

Voters have passed more than 100 amendments to the charter in the 30 years since its last comprehensive cleanup. Although the proposed measure contains many individual amendments, nearly all are technical, administrative, or housekeeping changes that simplify and modernize the charter without materially changing city policy. Consistent with SPUR's *Charter for Change* recommendations, the measure would reduce unnecessary charter detail, modernize many outdated provisions, simplify the city's commission and advisory board structure, and shift certain functions and bodies to the administrative code so they can be amended in the future without voter approval. While the final package avoids more controversial but needed reforms, it nonetheless reflects a worthwhile housekeeping package worthy of voters' support.

Vote YES 

Proposition D

Ballot Measure Process | Charter Amendment

Changes how local ballot measures qualify for the ballot by eliminating the ability of the mayor or just 4 of 11 members of the Board of Supervisors to place measures directly on the ballot, increasing signature requirements for voter initiatives, and allowing initiative proponents to withdraw measures before an election.

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What Prop D Would Do

Change how certain measure get to the ballot:

- Eliminate the ability of the mayor alone or a minority of the Board to place measures on the ballot.
- Raise the signature threshold to place non-charter measures from 2% to 8% of registered voters.
- Allow proponents of a signature measure to withdraw the measure before an election.

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Backstory

- San Francisco makes it easier to place measures on the ballot than any other city in the state:
    - No other jurisdiction we've researched allows the executive or a minority of the legislative branch to directly place measures.
    - Signature requirement of 2% is lower than the standard of 10% for almost all cities in the state.
- This results in long ballots, including many issues that could be resolved by City Hall without the need for an election: 30% of all measures in the last 20 years.

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Pros

- Incentivizes broad political consensus while discouraging elected officials from punting issues to the voters.
- Shorter ballots would decrease voter fatigue and increase voter comprehension.
- Would encourage often complicated measures to work through the legislative process, which includes public review and comment, fiscal review, and opportunities for change.

Cons

- Would raise barriers for grassroots initiatives and independent reform efforts.
- Would advantage those groups with financial resources to qualify measures.
- Would make passage of dedicated taxes for public services harder, given lower voter threshold for measures brought by signature.

SPUR’s Recommendation

The city’s current processes for placing measures on the ballot are more permissive than those elsewhere in California. By allowing a mayor alone or a minority of the Board of Supervisors to bypass standard public processes, these processes discourage elected leaders from building consensus to solve an identified problem and reduce opportunities for the public to participate in crafting legislative proposals. Prop. D raises barriers to qualifying voter signature initiatives, reducing grassroots and community groups' ability to qualify measures for the ballot at a time when the federal government and states, including California, are limiting voting rights and access. But the measure’s proposed signature thresholds would remain lower than those of most California cities. On balance, SPUR believes the measure's benefits outweigh its downsides and will lead to more effective policies and greater voter engagement.

Vote YES 

Proposition E

City Administrator Duties | Charter Amendment

Expands the city administrator's authority to oversee and set rules governing city purchasing activities, extends the administrator's term to 10 years, and increases the dollar thresholds at which the Board of Supervisors must approve contracts.

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What Prop E Would Do

- Give the City Administrator the sole authority to propose changes to the city's purchasing rules, subject to rejection by the Board. Expand their oversight to several departments that currently operate independently.
- Increases the City Administrator's authority to set standards and coordinate other business functions: technology, real estate, capital project delivery.
- Extends the City Administrator's term from 5 to 10 years.
- Adjusts the threshold for certain contracts that require Board approval for inflation since they were last established in the charter.

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Backstory

- The City purchases $6 billion of goods or services annually governed by a dense of web of purchasing rules, regulations, and procedures. Responsibility for rule-setting and oversight is divided among more than a dozen city officials and departments. Similar fragmentation is inherent in other business functions.
- This complexity costs the city time, money, and participation: Longer to secure needed goods and services, lower participation by vendors unable to navigate the process, and higher prices given smaller bidder pools.
- The measure aims to improve this by empowering the City Administrator to serve as the city's chief operating officer, responsible for business services all departments rely on to deliver city services.

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Pros

- Empowers the City Administrator to professionalize the city's byzantine purchasing rules and other support functions.
- Over time, these changes are expected to improve the quality and efficiency of city services.
- Adjusts thresholds for certain Board approvals given inflation since their last update.

Cons

- Would reduce the ability of the Mayor and Board to establish purchasing laws designed to achieve broader policy goals.
- Would limit the independence of certain departments - including the PUC and MTA - to independently manage their own support functions.

SPUR's Recommendation

San Francisco's procurement system has become so fragmented that no single official has the authority to ensure that purchasing processes operate efficiently, consistently, and accountably. The measure proposes changes recommended by SPUR to increase the city administrator's responsibility for city procurement and certain other business functions. These changes would clarify accountability while maintaining reasonable oversight by elected officials. We believe they would reduce duplicative reviews, shorten contracting timelines, improve service delivery, lower administrative costs, and make it easier for businesses and nonprofits to work with the city — critical improvements as the city faces persistent fiscal pressures and growing public service demands.

Vote YES 

Proposition F

Executive Branch Management | Charter Amendment

Increases the mayor's authority to directly appoint and remove most department heads, delegate supervision to deputy mayors or others, reorganize some functions among departments, and allow most appointed commissioners to be removed without cause by their appointing authorities.

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What Prop F Would Do

- Give the mayor sole authority over executive branch department head appointment and removal.
- Loosen charter restrictions on the organization of the Mayor’s Office.
- Permit broader reorganization of departments and functions detailed in the charter.
- Permit certain removal of commissioners by their appointing authorities without the for-cause process detailed in the charter.

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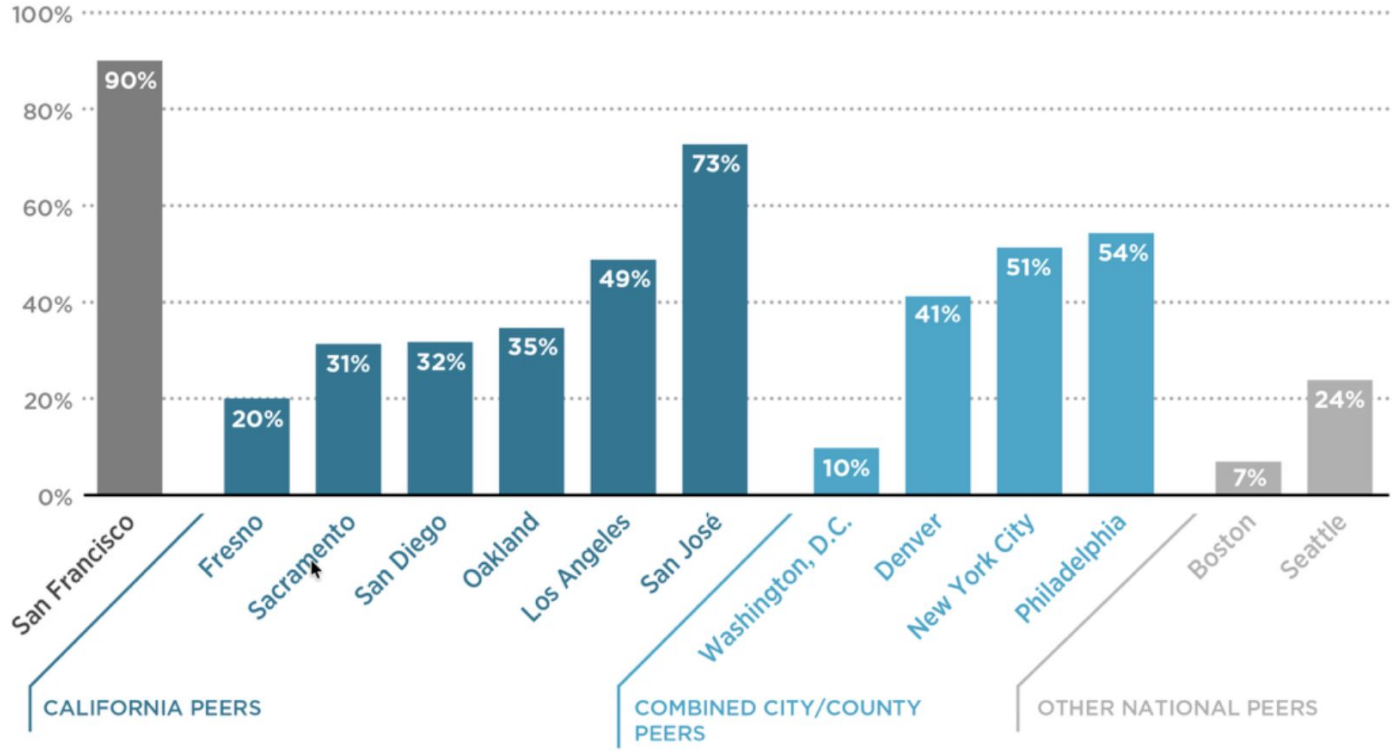
Backstory

- **Department head appointment:** Currently divided between mayor, commissions, Board, and others. A mayor solely controls this process for 6% of departments.
- **Mayor's office organization:** Current charter restrictions apply to the Mayor's Office and not other departments - Prohibits certain job title and supervisory delegation.
- **Reorganization:** The city's charter unusually establishes the city's org chart, requiring an election to shift many functions between departments.

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Backstory

Peer City Comparison: Proportion of Departments in the City Charter



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Pros

- Improves the ability of the city's chief executive to manage a large and complex organization.
- This expanded authority provides the ability of the voters to hold the mayor accountable for executive branch performance.
- Organizational flexibility would improve the city's ability to adapt to new challenges and try structures working in other cities - without a vote each time.

Cons

- Concentrating more authority in the mayor's office would increase the risk of abuse or misuse by an ineffective or unprincipled mayor.
- Mayors could exercise broader organizational authority in ways that some communities or policymakers oppose, with fewer checks on actions.

SPUR's Recommendation

Prop. F would adopt many recommendations SPUR made in recent charter analyses, including strengthening the authority of the mayor, as the city's chief executive officer, to select department heads and hold them accountable for performance. It would remove charter limits on the mayor's ability to structure the Mayor's Office to manage a large and complex government. While the measure would give the mayor greater authority to reorganize charter departments and functions than SPUR envisioned, it would maintain important limits by allowing the Board of Supervisors to reject changes and exempting key independent oversight functions. Taken together, these changes would strengthen the mayor's ability to serve as the city's chief executive and voters' ability to hold the mayor accountable for results.

Vote YES ✔

Proposition C

Housing Trust Fund | Charter Amendment

Amends the city charter to increase and extend mandated annual contributions from the General Fund to the Housing Trust Fund for 15 years.

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What Prop C Would Do

- Funds the construction and preservation of affordable rental and ownership housing for low- and moderate-income households, housing-related infrastructure, down payment assistance, and housing stabilization.
- *Increases* annual contributions to the Housing Trust Fund from approximately $52 million in the current fiscal year to approximately $125 million by around fiscal year 2036.
- *Extends* the trust fund's sunset date from 2043 to 2058.
- Prop. C also incorporates guardrails in case of a fiscal emergency .

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Backstory

- San Francisco's severe housing affordability crisis
- Housing is infeasible to build because of high development costs.
- The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended lowering mandatory affordable housing requirements and pursuing a significant and stable source of affordable housing to bridge the funding gap.
- Supervisor Myrna Melgar and Mayor Lurie introduced this proposal along with the TAC recommendation to lower development exactions.

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Pros

- Dedicated stable source of reliable funding to build affordable housing
- Supports programs that support preservation and prevent displacement
- Includes important financial safeguards in case of a fiscal downturn
- Developed through a consensus process among a broad range of stakeholders

Cons

- Reduces General Fund flexibility which is used to fund other important city priorities
- Changes the city charter so future amendments could only be made through another ballot measure.

SPUR's Recommendation

- Affordable housing is one of SF's highest priorities, yet it needs stable, sufficient funding, when state and federal funding is unreliable.
- Expanding affordable housing resources is even more critical as the city reduces development fees to spur greater production
- While General Fund set-asides limit flexibility, the measure includes thoughtful fiscal controls.

Vote YES 

Proposition I

Transfer Tax Set-Aside | Ordinance

Permanently dedicates a portion of transfer tax revenues from property transactions valued at $10 million or more to specific affordable housing and tenant protection programs.

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What the Measure Would Do

1 Restructures Transfer Tax

Reduces current transfer tax rates and creates a new "House SF" tax.

Sale Price	Current Rate	New Structure*
$10 – $25M	5.5%	2.75% (new rate) + 2.75% House SF tax
$25M+	6%	3% (new rate) + 3% House SF tax

New construction can be exempt from the House SF tax if it meets all 5 eligibility requirements.[1]

2 Creates a Dedicated House SF Fund

Revenues are set aside for specific affordable housing programs.

60% — **Affordable housing production**
At least half dedicated to "alternative models for permanent affordable housing," like social housing, community land trusts, and limited-equity cooperatives.

25% — **Affordable housing preservation and acquisition**

10% — **Tenant protections and homelessness prevention**
- At least half for eviction defense and prevention
- Remaining funds for emergency rental assistance

5% — **Administration**

3 Redirects General Fund Revenue & Limits Future Changes

$114M /year
redirected from General Fund beginning FY 2026–27

$124M+ /year
projected by FY 2029–30

Less discretionary General Fund revenue available for public health, public safety, human and homelessness services, and other city programs.

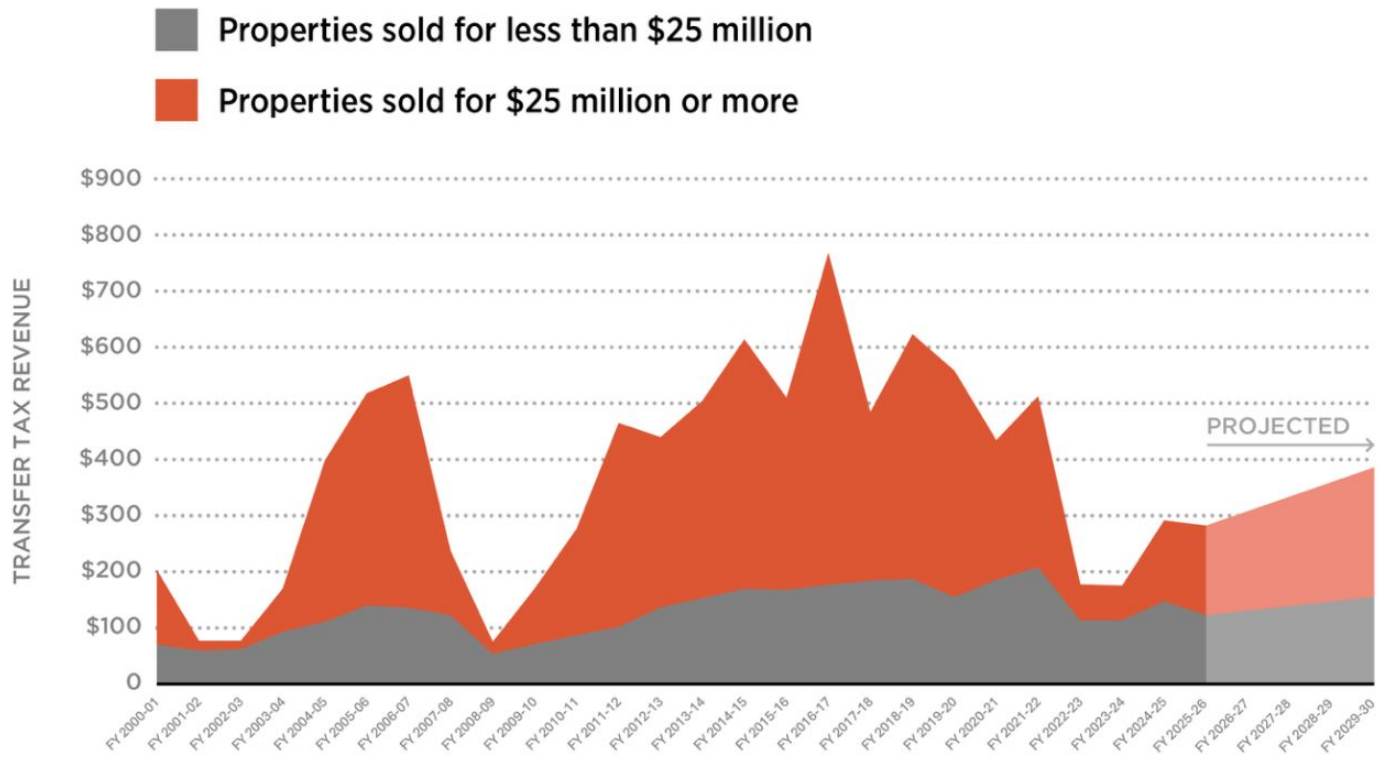
The Board may only exempt rent-restricted affordable housing or make other changes consistent with the stated purposes of the new tax. All other changes require voter approval.

In effect: Most $10M+ transactions pay the same total rate, but the revenue shifts from the General Fund to dedicated housing uses; qualifying new construction receives a substantial tax exemption.

[1] Exemption requires first sale of newly built 4+ unit housing, after certificate of occupancy issued after the measure takes effect.

Rate-Adjusted Real Property Transfer Tax Revenue, Actual and Projected (in millions)

Transfer tax revenue fluctuates with the economy, making it an unstable income source.



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Source: "Five Year Financial Plan Update: FY 2026-27 through FY 2029-30," City and County of San Francisco, December 19, 2025, p. 18.

THE BACKSTORY

How we got here: recent history of the transfer tax and efforts to balance housing needs with General Fund impacts.

GENERAL FUND IMPACT: TWO HOUSING MEASURES

Projected Annual Negative Fiscal Impact (Millions)	FY 2026–27	FY 2027–28	FY 2028–29	FY 2029–30
Prop C	—	—	$6.1M	$13.6M
Prop I	$114.1M	$117.3M	$120.4M	$123.6M

≈ $475 MILLION
additional General Fund risk over the next four years

At the same time, the City's projected General Fund shortfall grows from ~$169M to ~$1.1B.[1]

KEY CONTEXT: Unlike Prop C, Prop I immediately redirects more than $100 annually in existing General Fund revenue.

1 Controller's Office, November 2026 Affordable Housing Measures Ballot Analysis; Five-Year Financial Plan, FY2026–27 through FY2030–31.

Pros

- Creates a dedicated source of affordable housing that can't be redirected
- Significantly reduces transfer taxes for the first sale of certain qualifying new multifamily housing projects over $10 million

Cons

- Strips the Board of Supervisors' authority to reduce, suspend, or repeal transfer taxes, limiting its ability to respond to emergencies.
- Reduces available annual General Fund revenues by between $114 million and $124 million, with no exceptions during fiscal deficits
- Transfer tax revenues are highly volatile.
- Directs spending to highly specific programs, including that half of production funding should go to alternative models, which are less proven than conventional affordable housing models.

SPUR's Recommendation

- Permanently dedicates a significant portion of General Fund revenue at a time when the structural deficit is projected to exceed $1 billion
- Reduces current revenue currently available to core services, including fire, police, public health, and human services
- Strips the Board of Supervisors' of their ability to adjust the transfer tax to respond to evolving needs or emergencies.
- Directs spending to highly specific, unproven "alternative housing" models
- Current transfer tax rates have been identified as a significant impediment to downtown recovery

Vote NO X

Proposition J

Transfer Tax on Foreclosures | Ordinance

Expands San Francisco's real property transfer tax to include most foreclosed commercial and multi-family residential properties. ***Single family homes and condominiums remain exempt.*** *Increases the city's appropriations limit by the amount of transfer tax revenue collected until 2030.*

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What the Measure Would Do

San Francisco's real property transfer tax would apply to all foreclosed commercial properties, mixed-use, and multi-family residential properties with more than five units, effective March 1, 2027. Single family homes, condominiums, and multifamily buildings of up to four units would remain exempt.



Projected Fiscal Impact

Generates $100 million – $150 million annually

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Current Transfer Tax Rates

Property Sale Price	Transfer Tax Rate (%)
$100 – $250,000	0.50%
$250,000 – $1 million	0.68%
$1 million – $5 million	0.75%
$5 million – $10 million	2.25%
$10 million – $25 million	5.5%
More than $25 million	6%

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The Backstory

- San Francisco imposes a transfer tax on certain real estate transactions. Revenue from this tax becomes part of the city's general fund.
- Since 2023, there has been a rise in investors using this exemption to avoid paying transfer tax on income-producing and investment-oriented properties – transactions that would have generated more than $450 million for the city.
- Closing the foreclosure loophole was originally intended to offset the revenue loss from a withdrawn proposal to reduce transfer tax rates on properties over $10 million. If plans to revisit this proposal succeed, the fiscal benefits of this measure would be lower than projected.
- If both Prop. I and Prop. J pass, a portion of the revenue generated by this measure would directly support these uses and transfer tax rates would be "locked in" at current levels.

Equity Impacts

- Transfer tax revenues become part of the general fund and broadly support municipal functions and services, including programs that benefit low-income residents and communities of color.
- This measure maintains foreclosure exemptions for single-family homes, condominiums, and small multi-family buildings to avoid causing hardship for households and small landlords facing financial difficulties.

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Pros

- Prop. J generates up to $150 million annually for the city's general fund to help offset revenue losses during a time of fiscal uncertainty.
- Closing this loophole simplifies the city's tax code and makes the transfer tax fairer overall, in line with other recent tax code changes for businesses and property owners.

Cons

- Lenders may pass on transfer tax costs to buyers or enact higher transaction fees to compensate for the additional cost, potentially making it financially infeasible for new buyers to purchase and revive certain struggling properties.
- San Francisco's commercial office market is still struggling; making it more expensive to transact commercial real estate may slow downtown recovery.

SPUR's Recommendation

San Francisco is facing significant fiscal uncertainty and needs revenue to support basic municipal functions, programs, and services. The city has few ways to generate revenue without increasing the tax burden for working families and small businesses. Closing the foreclosure loophole for commercial and multi-family residential properties offers a path to increase revenue without causing harm to individual homeowners or small landlords. If the city moves forward with plans to reduce transfer tax rates in the future, the additional revenue generated by this measure will be particularly important to avoid negative financial impacts.

Vote YES ✔

Proposition B

Public Bank | Charter Amendment

Establishes the purpose and governance structure of a municipal finance corporation and public bank to invest in affordable housing, small businesses, and climate sustainability and resilience.

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What Prop B Would Do

Amends the city charter to establish the mission and governance structure of a public bank.

Implementation Framework

Two-Step Process: Municipal Financial Corporation (MFC) non-depository lending institution ➜ Public Bank ("full bank") after 3+ years successful operation and regulatory approval (State & FDIC).

*The measure **does not authorize or appropriate funding** to capitalize the bank = no new costs for the City.

Core Priorities

The institution would focus financing on:

- Affordable housing development
- Small business growth & support
- Climate sustainability & local resilience

Strict Prohibitions

Explicitly barred from financing:

- Fossil fuel energy projects
- Weapons manufacturers
- Private prisons & detention centers
- Companies with major labor law violations

Governance Structure

Independent oversight includes:

- Specified governance framework
- Independent decision-making authority
- Dedicated Board of Directors
- Public Oversight Commission

The Backstory

2017

BOS recommended that the City study the creation of a public bank. The Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector formed the Municipal Bank Feasibility Task Force to conduct a feasibility study.

2019

The ‘Municipal Bank Feasibility Study was published.

The study presented possible public bank models that are different from what is proposed in this Proposition.

2019

David Chiu authored California's Public Banking Act (AB 857), creating a legal path for cities to charter public banks.

2021

BOS formed the Reinvestment Working Group (Controller, Treasurer, banking/finance/EJ/housing experts) to again conduct a public bank “viability” study

2023

BOS adopted the viability study, business plan, and governance structure for a SF public bank.

This Proposition is based on the governance plan developed by the RWG.

2026

Supervisor Fielder, co-founder of the SF Public Bank Coalition, proposed a measure to raise business taxes on credit card companies, consumer lenders, and mortgage brokers to provide $400 million in funding over 9 years to capitalize the bank.

Pros

- A public bank could keep more public resources circulating within the local economy & stretch public dollars further than direct grants (such as through revolving loan funds), while reaching customers and projects underserved by traditional banks.
- Once chartered, it will be regulated by the California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation (DFPI) and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

Cons

- Embedding detailed governance structures in the city charter runs counter to San Francisco's pursuit of charter reform.
- Prop B does not identify how the public bank would be capitalized. It may require General Fund or new revenues alongside grants, which is difficult given the city's current budget deficit. Without capital, the MFC would remain inactive and unfunded.

SPUR's Recommendation

Prop. B's proposed charter amendment does not reflect SPUR's principles of good governance. The measure embeds detailed governance structures for the proposed Municipal Financial Corporation, future public bank, and multiple oversight commissions directly into the city charter, limiting future flexibility and adding complexity to a document that should focus on fundamental governmental structures. Importantly, establishing a public bank does not require these governance provisions to be in the charter. The city could pursue a public bank through ordinance, administrative action, and existing oversight processes.

At a time when San Francisco is working to simplify its charter and improve governance, SPUR does not believe adding new charter-defined commissions and requirements is the right approach.

Vote NO X

Proposition G

Cars in Sunset Dunes | Charter Amendment

Closes Sunset Dunes Park (formerly the Upper Great Highway) to recreational use during the work week, allowing cars Monday through Friday and recreational use on weekends and holidays.

What the Measure Would Do

Proposition G reverses 2024 Prop. K, which established Sunset Dunes as a permanent recreational open space and closed it to private vehicles.

It would allow private vehicles to use the Upper Great Highway (between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard), currently a park known as Sunset Dunes, at all times except from 6 p.m. on Friday to 4 a.m. Monday, and on holidays.

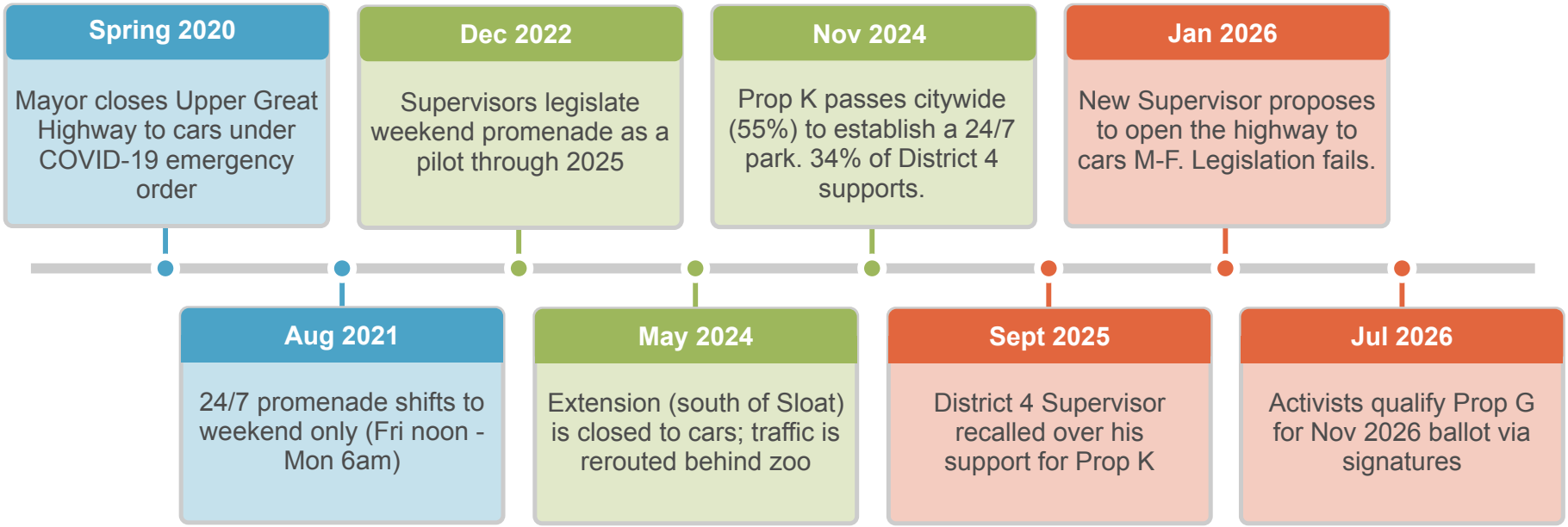
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The Backstory (Before COVID)

- **SInce early 2000s**, coastal erosion has caused frequent closures and significant safety hazards to car commuters
- **2010:** SPUR launched a master planning process with local, state, and federal agencies to protect infrastructure from sea level rise, restore ecosystems, and improve public access at Ocean Beach
- **2012:** SPUR's plan recommended transforming the Upper Great Highway into a car-free public recreation space

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The Backstory (Since COVID)



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Pros

- Southbound car commuters may experience slight relief from delays during peak rush hour (about one more vehicle per minute at peak hour)
- Clear some traffic congestion on Chain of Lakes Drive and other streets in western Golden Gate Park

Cons

- Costs the city $10M+ to restore traffic signals, and $350K–700K yearly for sand removal
- Removes a car-free promenade for people (wheelchair users, roller skaters, kids on bikes) to enjoy the coast safely, without high-speed traffic
- Restoring vehicle access would increase runoff pollution in a sensitive coastal ecosystem
- Undercuts the Ocean Beach Master Plan’s coastal-resilience approach, which SPUR helped develop

SPUR's Recommendation

Prop. G would undo a successful city effort to protect neighborhoods from the threats of rising sea levels and coastal erosion and create more places for San Franciscans to recreate safely and connect with nature. It would delay the city's plan for addressing climate impacts at a time when the effects of climate change are only increasing.

SPUR supports policies that expand access to shared public amenities, encourage transportation options such as walking, biking, and transit, and proactively address sea level rise and coastal erosion.

Prop. G would do the opposite.

Vote NO X

Proposition H

Muni Parcel Tax | Ordinance

Establishes a tiered parcel tax on commercial and residential properties for 15 years to avoid severe cuts to Muni public transit service as well as to enhance service.

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What the Measure Would Do

The measure would create a tiered annual parcel tax on residential and commercial properties in San Francisco that would raise approximately $160 million per year for fifteen years to close Muni's annual deficit and avoid significant cuts to Muni service, in coordination with stronger fiscal management and a regional tax measure. The tax rate scales with the size and type of the property in order to ensure fairness and affordability.

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Parcel Tax Structure and Rates

Single-family homes

- Base rate of $129 for the first 3,000 square feet of space
  - Add 42 cents per square foot over 3,001 square feet up to 5,000 square feet
  - Add $1.99 per square foot over 5,000 square feet, with no cap

Multifamily buildings

- Base rate of $249 for the first 5,000 square feet
  - Add 19.5 cents for each square foot over 5,001, up to a cap of $50,000

Commercial buildings

- Base rate of $799 for the first 5,000 square feet
  - Add 76 cents per square foot over 5,001 up to 50,000 square feet
  - Add 84 cents per square foot over 50,001 up to 250,000 square feet
  - Add 99 cents per square foot over 250,001, up to a cap of $400,000

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Parcel Tax Structure and Rates

Exemptions

- Senior homeowners are exempt from the tax for their primary residence.

Caps

- Rent-controlled tenants will pay no more than $65 per year
- Commercial properties will pay no more than $400,000 per year

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The Backstory

- Muni's 3 main sources of operating funds have declined significantly due to macroeconomic trends, sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Coupled with rising costs, the agency is facing a $307 million operating shortfall next year and it is expected to grow to nearly $400 million by 2030.
- Federal and state relief, coupled with $265 million in cost savings and improved fare compliance, have forestalled major cuts up to now.
- A deficit of this scale could trigger Muni to cut up to 20 routes entirely, cut the number of buses and trains per hour in half, eliminate cable cars service, end service at 9pm, and scale back the pass programs that make Muni free or low cost to underserved populations.

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Pros

- The measure avoids catastrophic Muni service cuts, which would be harmful for the city, downtown, the regional economy, and would leave tens of thousands of people behind.
- The tax structure is designed fairly with tiered rates considering property size, and exemptions for seniors and rent-controlled tenants.
- Muni has strengthened fiscal management; it realized $246 million in cost savings in 5 years and has shown consistently strong business performance

Cons

- Two measures required to save Muni, which may be confusing and hard for cost-sensitive voters.
- City has no legal authority over how a parcel tax is passed on to commercial or other non-rent-controlled tenant, so pass through rates for market rate tenants is highly individualized.
- The measure adds a new tax to commercial properties at a time when the market is just beginning to recover from the pandemic.

SPUR's Recommendation

Muni isn't optional for San Francisco. Muni's operating deficits are severe and will trigger catastrophic service cuts, which will hit people with the fewest options hardest and first. Transit cuts will make life in San Francisco more expensive, exacerbate traffic congestion, worsen air quality, and imperil the pace of recovery for downtown. Muni has proven to be a good steward of public funds. Muni is the second-most productive transit system in the country and has improved its routes and services that make it faster and more reliable for riders while realizing over $250 million of cost savings in five years–growing ridership, boosting customer satisfaction, and earning public trust.

Vote YES 

Proposition RTM

Regional Transit Sales Tax | Initiative

Levies a sales tax to prevent severe transit service cuts on BART, Caltrain, Muni, and AC Transit and to invest in local transportation priorities to protect and improve quality of life, affordability, economy, and air quality.

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What the Measure Would Do

Proposition RTM is a 14-year, 5-county sales tax that would raise approximately $1 billion per year to preserve transit service. In addition to preventing cuts to BART, Muni, Caltrain, and AC Transit, the measure would raise revenue for regional rider-focused programs that make transit more seamless and easy to use. Most counties would also receive funding for local transit improvements and road maintenance.

The tax rate would be set at 0.5% in Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, and San Mateo and at 1% in San Francisco. The varied rates reflect differences in each county's tax base and use of regional transit services.

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Expenditure Plan

Administration and Regional Transit Transformation Investments	Direct Support to Transit Agencies for Operations	County "Return-to-Source" Funds for Public Transit Purposes
Administration • (0.22%) Regional transit transformation programs, including discounted and coordinated fares, accessibility improvements, transit priority, and wayfinding • (4.44%)	Large Operators • BART (31% • Muni (16%) • AC Transit (5%) • Caltrain (7%) Small Operators • Alameda County small operators (0.5%) • Contra Costa County small operators (1.5%) • SF Bay Ferry (0.7%) • Golden Gate Transit (0.1%)	Designated County Entity • Alameda County Transportation Commission (1%) • Contra Costa County Transportation Authority (2.5%) • San Francisco County Transportation Authority (0%) • San Mateo County Transit District (4.7%) • Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (25.1%)

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Oversight

- **Independent financial reviews** of BART, Muni, Caltrain, and AC Transit, with requirements to implement cost-saving recommendations in order to receive funds
- **Citizen oversight** of spending and performance.
- **County-level oversight** to ensure service standards are applied fairly, with authority to withhold funds for noncompliance.

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The Backstory

- Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bay Area's largest transit systems operated near capacity, collecting a significant share of operational funding from fares, parking revenues, and other local sources tied to the economy's health.
- When federal and state COVID-relief funds are exhausted at the end of this year, BART, Caltrain, Muni, and AC Transit will face annual deficits of 25% to 45% of their operating budgets unless new funding is passed.
- Agencies have been reducing costs. An independent review of AC Transit, BART, Caltrain and SF Muni found that they have collectively saved $1 billion in operating expenses in the last five years through various cost saving actions.

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The Backstory

Facing a fiscal cliff, BART, Caltrain, Muni, and AC Transit could undertake widespread service cuts beginning as soon as January 2027:

- **BART:** To close a $376 million deficit, cut more than 60% of service, reduce service to three primary lines with limited peak service on two others, and end service by 9 p.m. Longer-term cuts could include closing up to 15 stations and potentially the entire system.
- **AC Transit:** To address a $200 million four-year deficit, cut service by 16%, eliminate routes, reduce service hours and frequency, including transbay service, and leave only 13 of 74 lines unchanged.
- **MUNI and Caltrain also planning severe service reductions**

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Pros

- The measure avoids catastrophic service cuts to BART, AC Transit, Muni and Caltrain
- Avoiding cuts protects mobility for people with disabilities, students, older adults and others who are not able to drive .
- Sustaining transit avoids significant new congestion and gridlock on Bay Area freeways and as well as increased emissions
- The measure emphasizes financial accountability and includes strong oversight protocols

Cons

- The measure would impose a new tax on Bay Area residents in the five subject counties

SPUR's Recommendation

The potential collapse of transit services poses a serious threat to the many people who rely on transit to access jobs, medical appointments, and groceries. Vulnerable groups — including people with disabilities, older adults, students, and low-income workers — would bear the brunt of service cuts.

Transit is also vital for the region's economy: half of all transit trips are work-related, and transit supports access to job opportunities. Without robust reanist, traffic congestion will worsen, raising transportation costs for everyone and negatively impacting quality of life and the regional economy.

Vote YES 

California

	**Affordable Housing Bond**	**Authorizes $10 billion in general obligation bonds to fund affordable and supportive housing and $1.25 billion in mortgage revenue bonds to fund a homeownership program for veterans and military families.** State financing is critical to address California's housing crisis and leverage federal matching funds.
	**Rainy Day Fund**	**Increases the maximum balance of the state's rainy day reserves from 10% to 20% of annual general fund revenues and expands debt repayment requirements.** Saving more during economic booms protects essential public services and safety-net programs from severe cuts during future downturns.
	**High-Earner Income Tax Extension**	**Permanently extends marginal income tax rates on California's top 2% of earners to fund education, healthcare, and other state programs.** Dedicated, predictable funding for Medi-Cal will be needed to backfill federal cuts from H.R. 1.
	**Campaign Financing**	**Repeals the constitutional ban on public campaign funding, allowing state and local governments the option to establish voluntary programs.** Public campaign financing lowers barriers for first-time and underrepresented candidates and helps reduce the influence of money in politics.
	**Recall Election Process**	**Amends the state constitution to eliminate simultaneous successor elections during recall votes, filling vacancies through established succession rules instead.** This change would prevent recalls from being used as shortcuts to install candidates with less than 50% voter support.
	**Homeowner Loans**	**Authorizes $25 billion in state revenue bonds to provide fixed-rate second mortgages for middle-income buyers of newly constructed homes.** This funding would expand homeownership opportunities and boost housing supply without impacting the state General Fund.

California

	Voter ID	**Mandates government-issued ID for in-person voting or ID numbers for vote-by-mail ballots.** California already maintains strong voter verification safeguards, and strict ID laws create unnecessary barriers for eligible voters while imposing significant administrative costs.
	Billionaire Tax	**Enacts a one-time 5% state wealth tax on net worth over $1 billion to fund healthcare and food assistance.** While the measure raises substantial revenue to mitigate federal Medi-Cal cuts, it could push billionaires out of state, resulting in long-term revenue risks for the state.
	Audits of Special Taxes	**Requires state audits and applies spending caps to all new state special tax initiatives.** Designed to defeat Prop. 40, this measure restricts state and local governments' ability to raise and spend revenue for urgent public needs.
	Personal Property Taxes	**Prohibits new state and local taxes on personal property, financial assets, and retroactive residency taxes.** Placed on the ballot to counter Prop. 40, these sweeping restrictions would permanently limit the state's ability to adopt progressive tax policies.
	Local Tax Threshold	**Mandates a uniform two-thirds voter approval requirement for all local special taxes, eliminating the simple-majority threshold for citizen initiatives**. This expansion of Proposition 13 would undermine majority rule and restrict local funding for important projects like transit and affordable housing.
	Changes to Environmental Review (CEQA)	**Streamlines environmental review under CEQA for eight categories of projects, including housing and infrastructure.** While streamlining infill housing and green infrastructure is essential, the measure's broad scope could also fast-track sprawl development and environmentally harmful projects.

Want to learn more about state measures?

Join us for San José Ballots and Brews (in-person or livestream) on Tuesday, October 13 at 6:00PM

Register using the QR code below:

BALLOTS & BREWS

San José 2026

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NOVEMBER 3, 2026 ELECTION

The SPUR Voter Guide is here!

spurvoterguide.org



