

Words You Need to Know

by the Ballot Simplification Committee

10-Year Capital Plan (Proposition A): The San Francisco Administrative Code requires the City to prepare and adopt a 10-year plan to meet the City's capital infrastructure needs. The plan includes a timeline for issuing new bonds.

Audit (Proposition A): A formal examination of financial or management accounts and information.

Bond (Proposition A): A bond is a promise by the City to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a specific date. If the City needs to raise a large amount of money to pay for a library, sewer line, school, hospital or other project or program, it may borrow the money by selling bonds. (See also "General Obligation Bond.")

Dedicated (Proposition A): Used for a specific purpose.

Early voting (Frequently Asked Questions): Voting in person at City Hall before Election Day or mailing a vote-by-mail ballot before Election Day. See page [X](#) for more information.

Emergency Firefighting Water System (Proposition A): A water supply system used specifically to fight fires. It includes a reservoir, pipes, cisterns, pump stations and high-pressure fire hydrants.

Existing height limits (Proposition B): Limits set by the City as to how tall a building or structure may be built.

Facilities (Proposition A): Buildings or structures used for particular purposes.

General obligation bond (Proposition A): A promise issued by a government body to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a certain date. The government body repays the money, plus interest, with property taxes. General obligation bond measures must be approved by the voters.

Initiative (Proposition B): 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.

Medical Examiner (Proposition A): The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner investigates and certifies deaths in San Francisco, and determines whether the cause was from natural causes or foul play; retrieves bodies; operates the City morgue; performs drug and poison analysis for criminal proceedings, stores death records; and provides vital services in responding to mass fatalities resulting from earthquakes and other disasters.

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

Oversight (Proposition A): Monitoring activities to ensure that the purposes of a program are followed.

Pass through (Proposition A): To recover an increase in property taxes by passing on a portion of the cost to tenants.

Planning Commission (Proposition B): The City commission responsible for adopting and maintaining a comprehensive, long-term general plan for future improvement and development.

Port Commission (Proposition B): The City commission responsible for managing and maintaining Port property.

Port property (Proposition B): The City, through its Port Commission, manages approximately 7-1/2 miles of property along the City's east side from Fisherman's Wharf to India Basin. Port lands include former tidelands that were filled to create the port, including the seawall that defines The Embarcadero shoreline, the finger piers, and the major filled areas of the Port's southern waterfront, which include deep-water berths and 145 acres of paved cargo handling facilities at Pier 80 and Piers 94-96. The seawall created additional filled areas, which are separated from the water in many locations by City streets. Port property does not include all of the eastern San Francisco Bay shoreline area. For example, a stretch of non-Port property between 22nd Street and 24th Street includes the former Potrero Power Plant, which is privately owned. There also are significant undeveloped, privately owned sites in Mission Bay adjacent to the Bay shoreline, including a 14-acre site between 3rd Street and Terry Francois Boulevard. Other privately owned parcels are also located along the eastern shoreline.

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

Proposition (Propositions A and B): Any measure that is submitted to the voters for approval or disapproval.

Proposition H (Proposition B): In 1990, San Francisco voters adopted Proposition H, an initiative ordinance, banning the development of hotels on Port-owned piers and imposing a moratorium on waterfront development until the City adopted a land use plan for Port properties within a 100-foot zone upland from San Francisco Bay.

Provisional ballot (Frequently Asked Questions): A ballot cast at a polling place that will not be counted until the Department of Elections verifies the voter's eligibility to cast that ballot.

Public trust (Proposition B): The public trust is a form of public ownership that limits uses of public land to those that benefit the people of California. The Port of San Francisco lands were transferred from the State by the 1968 Burton Act subject to the terms of the public trust. The State of California maintains oversight of Port activities through the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the California State Lands Commission.

Qualified write-in candidate: A person who has completed the required paperwork and signatures for inclusion as a write-in candidate. Although the name of this person will not appear on the ballot, voters can vote for this person by writing the name of the person in the space on the ballot provided for write-in votes and following specific ballot instructions. The Department of Elections counts write-in votes only for qualified write-in candidates. See page [X](#) for more information.

Reservoir (Proposition A): A natural or artificial place where water is collected and stored.

Revenue (Proposition A): Income.

Seismic retrofitting (Proposition A): Improving or renovating a structure to protect it from potential earthquake damage.

Vote-by-mail ballots (Frequently Asked Questions): Ballots mailed to voters or given to voters in person at the Department of Elections. Vote-by-mail ballots can be mailed to the Department of Elections, turned in at the Department of Elections office in City Hall, or turned in at any San Francisco polling place on Election Day. Also known as absentee ballots. See page [X](#) for more information.

Waterfront Land Use Plan (Proposition B): The policy document governing land use and development on Port property. The Waterfront Land Use Plan was mandated by Proposition H in 1990. It was created through a seven-year community process and adopted by the Port Commission in 1997.

Line to be added to Proposition B digest page:

A summary of “Port property” is provided in “Words You Need to Know.”