

SAN FRANCISCO
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DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

CITY APPROVAL OF HOUSING

Under City law, to approve housing projects City boards, commissions, and officials must make various discretionary decisions requiring them to use their judgment. Those discretionary decisions may include:

- the Planning Commission's and the Planning Department's review of permits and licenses for consistency with the City's Planning Code ("Code");
- the Planning Commission's discretionary review of a project as required by Code or upon request by a member of the public;
- the Planning Department's or Planning Commission's review of projects for consistency with the City's General Plan, which guides development in San Francisco;
- for certain projects, and before issuing a permit for demolition or change in a property's use, the Planning Department's and Planning Commission's review of projects for consistency with the City's priority policies for land use and housing;
- the Board of Appeals' consideration of appeals challenging the approval or revocation of most permits and licenses, including building permits;
- the Historic Preservation Commission's review of work on designated landmarks or within historic districts;
- the Arts Commission's review of the design of structures on City property; and
- the Board of Supervisors' approval of leases and other contracts that provide revenue to the City or require the expenditure of City funding above certain dollar thresholds, have a term of 10 years or more, or involve the sale or other transfer of City property.

The City has limited discretion over certain affordable housing projects. State law requires the City to approve projects that comply with Code when 50% of the units are affordable.

The City requires projects with 10 or more residential units to comply with its affordable housing program by either:

- paying a fee to help fund affordable housing projects, or
- constructing on-site or off-site affordable units.

If a project requires the City to make discretionary approvals, then State law generally requires the project, including new housing, to undergo a review process that assesses the project's impact on the environment.

The proposed measure would change City laws for two types of housing projects that meet certain eligibility requirements:

1. **Affordable Housing Projects:** a multi-family housing project where 100% of the residential units are affordable.

2. **Increased Affordable Housing Projects:** a project of fewer than 25 residential units providing more on-site affordable housing than required by the City's affordable housing program; or a project of 25 or more residential units providing 15% more on-site affordable units than the number of units the City otherwise requires.

The proposed measure would exempt Affordable Housing Projects and Increased Affordable Housing Projects that comply with Code from requirements for discretionary approvals, including review by the Planning Commission, Planning Department, Board of Appeals, Historic Preservation Commission, Arts Commission, and Board of Supervisors.

By eliminating City discretionary approvals for these projects, the measure would allow Affordable Housing Projects and Increased Affordable Housing Projects complying with Code to proceed without environmental review.