

# DRAFT: 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 describing a strategy 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 Fund** (**Term does not appear in either digest**): That part of the City's annual budget used for basic City services such as public safety, health and human services and public works. Each year, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors decide how the General Fund will be used. Money for the General Fund comes mainly from property, business, sales, and other taxes and fees. Currently, the General Fund is [XX](#)% of the City's budget.

**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, over a period of years 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 of the City.

**Port property** (Proposition B): The City, through its Port Commission, manages 7-1/2 miles of Bay waterfront on the City's east side from Fisherman's Wharf to India Basin. The Port's lands were transferred from the State of California to San Francisco. 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 construction of the Seawall created additional filled areas, which are now separated from the water in many locations by City streets. Not all of the eastern San Francisco Bay shoreline is owned by the Port. There is a significant stretch of non-Port property between 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and 24<sup>th</sup> Street, most of which is occupied by the former Potrero Power Plant, which is privately-owned, as well as other privately held parcels. There also are significant undeveloped, privately-owned sites in Mission Bay adjacent to the Bay shoreline, including a 14 acre site between 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Terry Francois Boulevard.

**Property tax** (Proposition A): A tax assessed by the City on real property.

**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 those Port properties within BCDC's "Shoreline" jurisdiction, a 100 foot zone upland from the waters of 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 of submerged land and tidelands which generally limits uses to those that are water dependent or related, and include commerce, fisheries and navigation, environmental preservation and recreation. Ancillary or incidental uses, that is, uses that directly promote trust uses, are directly supportive and necessary for trust uses, or that accommodate the public's enjoyment of trust lands, are also permitted. The Port of San Francisco lands were transferred from the State by the 1968 Burton Act. The State of California maintains oversight of Port activities through the

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (“BCDC”) 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 for use, especially to supply drinking water to a community, irrigate land, and generate power.

**Revenue** (Proposition A): Income.

**San Francisco Port Commission** (Proposition B – *this exact term does not appear in digest; change to “Port Commission”?*): The City commission responsible for managing and maintaining the seven and one-half miles of the City’s waterfront along the San Francisco Bay.

**Seismic upgrade** (Proposition A – *this exact term does not appear in digest; change to “seismic retrofitting”?*): 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 Plan was mandated by Proposition H in 1990 and was created through a seven-year community process with a broad range of waterfront stakeholders 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.”