

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
2022 Housing Element	The Housing Element was adopted in January 2023 and is San Francisco’s plan for meeting our housing needs for the next 8 years (2023-2031). It is the City’s first housing plan centered on racial and social equity. Its policies and programs express San Francisco’s collective vision for the future of housing, guiding policymaking, housing programs, and the allocation of resources.
Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	Housing units added to existing or proposed residential buildings. ADUs are also often called in-law units, granny flats, secondary units, or basement or garage apartments.
Activating Community Priorities (Housing Element)	SF Planning is partnering with Equity Communities and City agencies to highlight the community-identified actions included in the Housing Element. This public participation process will encourage community planning that celebrates and strengthens the unique cultural and ethnic identity of San Francisco's communities.
Affordable Housing (100% affordable housing)	Subsidized affordable housing that serves lower to moderate income households, 0% to 120% of area median income (AMI), and keeps rent price at 30% of those incomes.
Area Median Income (AMI)	If all household incomes in the Bay Area were lined up from least to most, the middle income would be the Area Median Income.
Buildable Area	Lot area or parcel which can be devoted to buildings and structures. In San Francisco the buildable area is the entire lot, minus the front setback requirement, if any, and rear yard requirement, plus permitted obstructions. In limited cases, there may also be a side yard requirement.
Building Density	Concentration of buildings in a geographic area. For example, in Residential Mixed-Use districts with moderate density allows for up to two units that are 600 sq. ft. or less.
Building Massing	The general shape, form, and size of a building.

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<p>Citywide Historic Context Statement</p>	<p>The SF Context Statement describes the broad themes that have shaped the City over time, such as patterns of residential settlement, industrial and commercial growth, transportation and infrastructure development, landscape changes, and cultural events. This document aims to determine resource significance and rarity by examining sites thematically and on a citywide scale.</p>
<p>Community-Serving Uses</p>	<p>Ground floor use that benefits the development project and activate the ground floor including, but not limited to cultural and arts spaces, retail stores, nonprofit organizations and social services, multi-use spaces</p>
<p>Cultural Districts</p>	<p>A geographic area or location within San Francisco that embodies a unique cultural heritage. Through a formalized, collaborative partnership between city departments, Board of Supervisors and communities, the mandate requires that the city coordinate resources to assist in stabilizing vulnerable communities facing, or at risk of, displacement or gentrification.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>This can include tangible aspects of the environment, such as buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts, as well as intangible aspects, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, festivals, and traditional crafts.</p>
<p>Density</p>	<p>The number of people, jobs or housing that exist in relationship to the area occupied.</p>
<p>Design Review</p>	<p>Comprehensive evaluation process conducted by SF Planning staff to assess a proposed project. Design Review ensures the project meets the City's existing policies and general principles of good design and neighborhood compatibility.</p>
<p>Development Agreements</p>	<p>Agreements with developers of larger projects (e.g., the size of a city block) that require additional public benefits, which could include space for community-serving uses.</p>

<p>Discretionary Design Guidelines</p>	<p>Design guidelines (or standards) set objectives that the public and sponsors can follow to ensure new housing is consistent with fundamental principles of quality neighborhood design. The Planning Department Design Review team has discretion to review any building permit application. These may change from project to project and may be difficult to decipher for applicants.</p>
<p>Discretionary Review</p>	<p>A member of the public may request that the Commission review a permit by filing a Discretionary Review (DR) application. Discretionary Review is then brought to the Planning Commission and reviewed outside the normal building permit application approval process. It is to be used only when there are exceptional and extraordinary circumstances associated with a proposed project.</p>
<p>Displacement</p>	<p>When a household is forced to move against their will, for example, due to an eviction, an extreme rent increase, foreclosure, or a demolition.</p>
<p>Down Zoning</p>	<p>A change in the zoning to permit less intensive developments than are currently permitted.</p>
<p>Environmental Review or Environmental Impact Report (EIR)</p>	<p>The process of reviewing development projects for potential environmental impacts on the City of San Francisco and residents. The analysis includes a project’s effect on transit, air quality, noise levels or health concerns.</p>
<p>Expanding Housing Choice Program</p>	<p>Changes to San Francisco's zoning rules in areas that haven't seen much development of a variety of housing types to accommodate new housing, increase housing affordability for low- and middle-income households, and help advance racial and social equity.</p>
<p>Fences</p>	<p>In San Francisco, a building permit is not required for a fence that is three feet or less in height at the front of the property, or six feet or less at the side or rear of the property lines.</p>

<p>Front Setback</p>	<p>The required front setback is that area at the front of the lot that cannot be built upon except for permitted obstructions listed in the Planning Code (Section 136).</p>
<p>General Plan</p>	<p>A long-term plan that guides the physical development of the city. It is required by state law and is prepared by the city's planning department with input from residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. It includes topic areas known as "elements." Each element provides a policy framework that sets the rules and guidelines to address city's projected growth and development.</p> <p>View San Francisco's General Plan.</p>
<p>Gentrification</p>	<p>A process of neighborhood change that includes economic change or displacement of residents in a historically disinvested neighborhood(s). Many factors can trigger gentrification like real estate investment, new higher-income residents moving or demographic change – not only in terms of income level, but also in terms of changes in the education level or racial make-up of residents.</p>
<p>Group housing, co-housing, or co-living</p>	<p>Types of housing that may have limited cooking facilities and do not contain a full kitchen in each room. Co-housing may include (but is not limited to) communes, fraternities and sororities, or Residential Hotels.</p>
<p>Historic Preservation</p>	<p>An understanding of the location, distribution, and significance of historic and cultural resources like buildings, parks, or shared spaces. It is an effective strategy for conserving significant elements of the built environment to maintain a tangible physical connection to the past.</p>
<p>Housing affordability</p>	<p>Housing is affordable when a household spends 30% or less of their combined income in housing expenses (rent, mortgage, utilities, etc.)</p>
<p>Housing Opportunity Areas</p>	<p>Areas in every region of the state whose characteristics have been shown by research to support positive economic, educational, and health outcomes for low-income</p>

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	families—particularly long-term outcomes for children. SF Planning used this same index to identify "Well-resourced neighborhoods."
Impact Fee	A fee imposed by the city on a development project to pay for the costs of providing public services and amenities (such as transit services or public open space) to the new development.
Incubator Space	Retail or industrial space that is affordable to new, low-rent paying businesses.
Inclusionary affordable housing or Below-Market-Rate (BMR) units	San Francisco requires new residential buildings of 10 or more units to include on-site affordable units (inclusionary housing). Other options to meet this requirement include the payment of in-lieu fees that fund 100 percent affordable housing or subsidize off-site affordable units, and land dedication.
In-fill	Building on an empty lot, within the constraints of an already built-up city.
Land use	What the property will be used for. This could be industrial, open space, office, residential, mixed use, institutional, cultural, educational, retail or for a hotel.
Planning Code (Land use regulations/rules)	Set of rules that may apply to parcels citywide or to specific zones and areas that determine what can or cannot be build, its shape, height, and use.
Mid-rise/medium-sized multifamily buildings	Buildings of 5 to 8 stories.
Ministerial/by-right/administrative approval	A governmental decision involving little or no personal judgment by the public official; it involves only the use of fixed standards or objective measurements, and the public official cannot use personal, subjective judgment in deciding whether or how the project should be carried out.
Mixed-use	A combination of land use types, such as office, residential or retail, in a single building or project.
Moratorium	A freeze on a particular type of development or activity.

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<p>Neighborhood Commercial Transit District (NCT)</p>	<p>Intended to serve as local neighborhood shopping districts, providing convenience retail goods and services for the immediately surrounding neighborhoods primarily during daytime hours. NCT-1 Districts are also located near major transit services. For example, The SoMa Neighborhood Commercial Transit District (SoMa NCT) is located along the 6th Street and Folsom Street corridors in the South of Market. This commercial area provides a limited selection of convenience goods for the residents of the South of Market such as eating and drinking establishments.</p>
<p>Objective design standards</p>	<p>Clear design requirements that apply to developments that are easy to understand so that applicants and architects can meet all requirements before they submit for a permit.</p>
<p>Overcrowding</p>	<p>More than 1 person per room (including living rooms) for overcrowding, and more than 1.5 persons per room for severe overcrowding.</p>
<p>Parcel</p>	<p>A piece of property, also known as a lot.</p>
<p>Permitted Obstructions</p>	<p>An item or building feature allowed to exist in or extend into a required open area. These include things like stairs, bay windows etc., These items and or features must receive a permit from the city to be installed or built.</p>
<p>Pipeline</p>	<p>All pending projects—filed, approved or under construction.</p>
<p>Planning Commission</p>	<p>The Planning Commission is an unpaid panel of seven people, four of them are appointed by the Mayor and three appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The San Francisco Planning Commission plays a vital role in shaping land use in San Francisco. Commissioners are charged with maintaining San Francisco’s General Plan and Planning Code. For the public, the Planning Commission is an avenue for community participation in land use decision making that may affect their home or place of work. The commission meets every Thursday at 1pm in San Francisco City Hall.</p> <p>Members of the public may sign up for public hearing notifications on the SF Planning Department website.</p>
<p>Priority Equity Geographies</p>	<p>A Priority Equity community (or communities) are groups who are uplifted for resources, policies, and services to</p>

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	<p>address their experience in social and health inequities. These communities have been or are currently chronically underserved by our systems and institutions and continue to be marginalized due to poverty, structural racism, or other factors. Equity populations include but are not limited to, American Indian, Black and other people of color; low-income communities; recent immigrant and refugee communities; LGBTQIA communities; people whose first language is not English; and returning citizens who were previously incarcerated.</p> <p>To view SF Priority Equity Geographies, view this map.</p>
Rear Yards	The required rear yard is that area at the back of the lot that can't be built upon except for permitted obstructions listed in Section 136 of the Planning Code.
Redlining	An explicitly discriminatory federal policy that color-coded Black and nearby neighborhoods in red, deeming them "hazardous" to potential mortgage lenders. This systematically denied residents in these neighborhoods' loans for homeownership or maintenance, leading to segregation and cycles of disinvestment in primarily Black and other communities of color.
Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)	A process used by the state and regional governments to assign each city and county in California their "fair share" of new housing units to plan for at different income levels to respond to existing need and projected growth in the region.
Rent burdened	Households that pay more than 30 percent of their income for rental housing.
Rent control	Rent Ordinance (1979) that restricts annual rent increases, ensures tenants can only be evicted for "just causes," and restricts evictions of tenants occupying a qualifying unit built prior to June 13, 1979. Once tenants vacate the rent-stabilized unit, landlords can raise its rent to market rate (otherwise known as vacancy decontrol).
Resilience	The capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within the city to survive, adapt, and grow, no matter what kind of chronic stresses and

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	acute shocks they may experience. It is important to note that resilience is a concept that extends beyond preparation for discrete natural disasters and should be defined in connection to issues such as climate change, escalating urbanization, and other disruptions of daily life.
San Francisco Citywide Cultural Resources Survey (SF Survey)	A multi-year effort to identify and document places and resources of cultural, historical, and architectural importance to San Francisco’s diverse communities.
Service Arts Light Industrial District (SALI)	The Service/Arts/Light Industrial (SALI) District is largely comprised of low-scale buildings with production, distribution, and repair uses. The district is designed to protect and facilitate the expansion of existing general commercial, manufacturing, home and business service, and light manufacturing activities, with an emphasis on preserving and expanding arts activities.
Setbacks	Areas of a property that cannot be built on (ex: in the front, side, or rear of a building).
Side Yards	A yard extending from the front yard to the rear yard. In San Francisco, a side yard is only required in districts that are Single-Family, Detached (RH-1(D))
Special Use Districts (SUD)	In addition to its zoning districts codes, a SUD status allows for additional layers of land use regulations-or relief from certain regulations. SUDs are in place to encourage more residential development, preserve historical buildings, or protect neighborhood context. In San Francisco, the Calle 24 Special Use District is intended to preserve the prevailing neighborhood character of the Calle 24 Latino Cultural District while accommodating new uses and recognizing the contributions of the Latino community to the neighborhood and San Francisco.
Subdistrict	Smaller part of a larger area marked off for administrative or other purposes, for example, in San Francisco’s Richmond District, there is an inner and outer Richmond within the district.
Stepbacks	When a building becomes narrower at upper stories (e.g., to create open space or to better relate to neighboring buildings)

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Streamlining	Simplifying the permitting and approval of housing developments to increase certainty, reduce costs and get housing built quicker.
Supportive housing	100% affordable housing that includes on-site services (behavioral, mental, and social services, for example) and that serves formerly homeless people or people at risk of homelessness.
Tenant protections	Policies that stabilize tenants in their homes (like rent control) or that protect them from unfair evictions.
Urban design	The design of the built environment, including buildings, streets, and public spaces. Urban design is concerned with the relationships of these elements within a city, and the way people experience, use and move through the city.
Urban Mixed Use (UMU)	The UMU district is intended to provide a planning, regulatory, and management frame- work for the design, development, and operation of urban mixed-use centers which pro- mote social interaction, community identity, and efficient use of land and resources. The UMU district should also support and encourage a variety of transportation options, including transit, bicycles, and walking.
Urban renewal	A federally funded program that acquired, razed, and redeveloped areas of cities condemned as "blighted." In practice, redevelopment areas often followed redlining, and property was often taken from people of color by eminent domain for minimal compensation creating massive displacement of those communities.
Variance	a request for an exception to a Planning Code standard. The Zoning Administrator is the city official that interprets and maintains the Planning Code. If the criteria are met, the Zoning Administrators can approve variances for projects with special circumstances that prevent them from meeting the requirements of the planning code.

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<p>Vulnerable populations</p>	<p>Populations defined by a shared identity or life experiences that society, institutions, and the state marginalize. Vulnerable populations frequently experience barriers to thriving from institutions and systems and report poor life outcomes across some or many variables. SF Planning identified and incorporated vulnerable populations in the identification of Priority Equity Geographies and the prioritization of resources and services in the Housing Element. Populations may include, but are not limited to, people of color, transgender and LGBTQ+ people, youth, seniors, formerly incarcerated people, people with limited English proficiency, low-income households, and people with disabilities.</p>
<p>Zoning</p>	<p>Regulations that govern how land can be used. For example, zoning regulations can define the size and shapes of buildings, the number of units, and the number of parking spots. It can also specify hours of operations for businesses.</p> <p>Click here to access more codes, definitions, and land use regulations.</p>
<p>Zoning incentives</p>	<p>Options that make housing development more financially attractive in exchange for community benefits.</p>

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