

San Francisco Chronicle

Chronicle's recommendations for the June 7 ballot



Photo: Lea Suzuki, The Chronicle
Prop. 50 — call it the Leland Yee measure.

Lost in the presidential primary dust cloud are local ballot measures in San Francisco that touch on super-heated housing costs, neglected parks, and police shootings. For regional and state voters, there's more: a parcel tax to restore the bay shoreline and a California-wide proposition to dump corrupt legislators more quickly.

This eclectic list is anything but humdrum, but the campaigns are nearly nonexistent, and public debate is pretty much producing the sound of crickets. But that doesn't mean the issues are inconsequential.

For San Francisco voters, there's another level. Home-share giant Airbnb and other financial investors are funneling money into campaigns with little bearing on their core businesses in order to curry favor with lawmakers needed in future fights. In addition, the ballot's major housing measure shows the all-caps handwriting of Supervisor Aaron Peskin, the powerful progressive leader who composed the plan and pacified the opposition.

Here are summaries of the five city propositions along with the Chronicle's recommendation:

AA health infrastructure upgrade. This \$350 million bond measure improves San Francisco General Hospital's seismic safety, modernizes a vital ambulance facility, and includes funds for buildings providing homeless and mental health care. The bond costs fill a slot emptied by paying off earlier borrowing, meaning no tax increase. There is little opposition to this prudent investment in public health and safety. **Vote YES.**

BA locked-in budget for parks. San Francisco's population has jumped to an all time high of 865,000, wearing out parks and play fields. This measure promises a steady stream of money for a deprived department. But it's a mistake to guarantee money to one area of city government, now matter how deserving, while others compete for funds. Protecting parks plays into this city's focus on ballot-box fixes instead of leaving problem solving to elected leaders to sort through. It's a solution that narrows legislative choices and may lead other city agencies to seek similar all-weather protection. **Vote NO.**

CA Affordable Housing. San Francisco has a front-burner housing crisis that's producing evictions, sky-high rents and family flight. This sweeping measure rightly hands the job of setting the amount of subsidized housing in new developments to the Board of Supervisors and removes it from the ironclad city charter.

But it bumps the amount of below-market units required in residential buildings from 12 to 25 percent. This target, grabbed from thin air by boosters, could crater future housing plans. But developers aren't saying a peep because a long pipeline of projects in the approval queue is getting a pass. Also, Prop. C backers say they may revise the 25 percent figure if a study by the city controller shows the number will harm building. That's a only a promise, though.

The ingredients are a tribute to Peskin's artful arm-twisting. The results show how savvy he is: two influential endorsers — the local Chamber of Commerce and the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research organization, whose leaders would be expected to oppose a risky housing nostrum — are going neutral. Their silence can't disguise the risks in this housing plan. **Vote NO.**

DP Police shooting review. A wave of fatal police shootings is pushing city leaders to promise reforms. This measure would direct the Office of Citizen Complaints to investigate all future instances where a police shooting led to death or injury, not just cases where a request for review is filed.

Better oversight is needed, and the measure isn't drawing opposition from the police union or department brass. **Vote YES.**

ES Sick Leave. This housekeeping measure would put the city and state rules on counting sick leave in sync. The city's rules approved in 2006 were slightly expanded by a state law enacted two years ago. **Vote YES.**

Bay Area Proposition

AA The shoreline tax. The bay's mudflat edge is an environmental orphan, tabbed for restoration but deprived of funding. This measure asks two-thirds of the voters in nine counties to approve a \$12 per parcel levy to supply \$25 million per year for 20 years. Much of the land is already in public hands but needs the extra money to speed recovery. It's a modest price for a major improvement. **Vote YES.**

State proposition

50No pay for crooks. Call this the Leland Yee measure, named for the disgraced San Francisco state senator who pleaded guilty to corruption charges. The change would clarify hazy laws by letting either house of the Legislature suspend members without pay by a two-thirds vote. The amendment would enhance the nuclear option that state lawmakers rarely use in disciplining their ranks. **Vote YES.**