

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Stay
home
Save
lives.

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"With the public health and economic crisis we face, there is no more important time to step up in public service. Our residents and businesses are counting on us to provide help where we can and to lead us through this challenging time. There is light at the end of the tunnel and we need to do our best to pull through together,"

- San Francisco Assessor Carmen Chu

Like many of you, our Office's plan for FY 2019-2020 took a sharp turn due to the unforeseeable COVID-19 crisis. In mid-March we immediately transitioned to a remote work environment to continue core government functions despite a regional shelter-in-place order.

In the months that followed, our operational duties did not pause and instead we doubled down on finding creative ways to get credible and useful information to San Franciscans through online platforms and new technology. Consistent with our goals, we again closed the \$302 billion roll on-time representing \$3.6 billion in annual revenues for local services and relief efforts.

We also continued to deliver on implementing pivotal technology initiatives that improve transparency, services and efficiency. In August 2020 we launched our new public records system with better functionality and safeguards for operations. A second phase is planned for March 2021 which would reduce cost for taxpayers. In January 2021 we also went live on the first phase of our property tax system! Identified as one of the top properties for the City, this project, when complete, replaces our existing 1980's legacy system and would help reduce revenue-at-risk, create critical auditing and reporting capabilities, improve transparency and integration and ensure we are able to continue maintaining our system into the future.

COVID Responses and Economic Recovery

This year, our office also played a key role in the City's economic recovery planning and COVID-19 response efforts. Assessor staff served as disaster service workers helping to conduct and manage contact tracing efforts, coordinate disaster service worker assignments and launched early COVID-19 community public health education campaigns.

In addition, we led early economic recovery planning efforts in my role as Co-Chair of the San Francisco Economic Recovery Task Force. Convened by Mayor London Breed and Board of Supervisors President Norman Yee, the Economic Recovery Task Force brought together over 100 business, labor union, non-profit, academia, faith-based, and other community leaders to develop safe reopening strategies and long-term policy recommendations to help San Francisco rebound stronger and more equitably. As a daughter of small business owners, I understand the narrow margins by which many local businesses had already been operating before the pandemic. That's why the detailed policy recommendations covering economic stimulus, job connection, safe reopening, economic justice and other areas are so important - we need to continue immediate relief efforts, do all we can to safely reopen and plan ahead on strategies to promote reinvestment and growth now.

Transitioning

I also want to thank you for all your well wishes as I transition to the role of City Administrator for the City and County of San Francisco. While we may never feel that our work is complete, I leave the role of Assessor-Recorder knowing that our office has made a meaningful impact on the day-to-day lives of San Franciscans.

During my term, total assessments increased 74% from \$173 billion to \$302 billion, in-progress lien date value rose to \$11 billion in 2018 compared to \$500 million in 2014, and roughly \$40 million in underreported transfer taxes was recovered as a direct result of our efforts to strengthen local transfer tax laws and practices, including our audit initiative focused on high value transactions. Collectively, these actions have resulted in over half a billion dollars in property tax revenues above forecasts, \$2.6 billion in increased bonding capacity for road repairs and needed public infrastructure improvements and increased property tax growth has been a key driver for the \$545 million in ERAF dollars returned to San Francisco by the State in 2018 and 2019.

With a focused commitment to make government work for the people, I am proud of our work to reverse a decades old backlog of assessments and appeals and our efforts to increase access to services earning us the prestigious 2020 Good Government Award, an honor recognizing excellence in public sector management and stewardship.

This was done by investing in people and in the tools needed to get the job done. Our track record of progress includes creating a standards division to ensure uniform practices, training and data, providing professional career growth opportunities through appraiser trainees programs, deploying automated real-time data reports to increase transparency and improve management, launching a centralized property records system that improves security of vital records and efficiency for staff, revamping our mapping functions and advancing towards GIS spatial mapping capabilities, implementing a new public records system that improves access and reduces costs for taxpayers, providing secure electronic recording and filing services, and replacing our City's legacy property tax system to improve resilience, reduce inefficiencies and revenue risk and provide critical audit controls and safeguards.

Embedded in these operational improvements is a fundamental belief that government can impact lives for the good. As this past year has taught us, the push for equity must be constant. In my first year as Assessor-Recorder, San Francisco was the only County Recorder's office in the State to remain open the entire weekend when California first resumed same-sex marriages. We made sure 479 couples did not have to wait a minute longer for the same rights to marry. In 2018, we continued advancing these principles by drafting and advocated for the passage of AB2663 which ensures locally registered domestic partnerships receive the same property tax benefits as married couples.

We have also prioritized services for low-income and monolingual communities. Among the programs I am most proud of is our signature Family Wealth Forum. Bringing together non-profit partners, attorneys, and estate planning and taxation professionals, the Family Wealth Forum has provided direct one-on-one financial counseling or assistance for over 3,000 families across the City! In addition, a redesigned public website, multilingual factsheets and videos, and re-imagined public service lobby with multilingual kiosks demonstrate our commitment to serve everyone coming through our doors, including those with language challenges.



BIG THANKS TO THE ASSESSOR TEAM!

I want to recognize my entire team at the Assessor-Recorder's Office for their vast and outsized contributions to the City. I offer my heartfelt appreciation for their partnership these past eight years and for continuing to carry on the important work of the office.

Finally I thank the people of the City and County of San Francisco for the opportunity to serve. Public service is truly a privilege and I look forward to continuing that public service as San Francisco City Administrator.

Sincerely,



Carmen Chu,
San Francisco Assessor



LEADING CITYWIDE EFFORTS

When the pandemic hit, the public health needs were immediate and the economic shock was devastating. Our office rapidly responded to the City's call for help and stepped in to assist in areas such as economic recovery planning, safe reopening, and tax relief for small businesses. Assessor Chu provided an oversight role in the creation, implementation, and ongoing process improvements of the City's Shared Spaces program, that provides businesses with the flexibility to operate outside during the pandemic.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Assessor Carmen Chu co-chaired the City's newly created Economic Recovery Task Force to develop safe reopening strategies and long-term policy solutions to help San Francisco rebound stronger and more equitably. One of the best examples was the launch of the Shared Spaces Program, which allows many businesses to continue to operate on sidewalks and parking spaces and lots. The Task Force published its final report in October after convening with over 100 business, labor union, non-profit, academia, faith-based and other community leaders, as well as conducting over 1,200 public surveys and over 70 community convenings. Read the full report at onesanfrancisco.org/covid-19-recovery.



TAX RELIEF

Early in March, our Office joined other departments in the public finance branch, such as the Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office, the Controller's Office, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, to identify and create a local economic relief package for impacted businesses, including the deferral of business tax payments, the extension of the business personal property reporting deadline, deferral of license fees, and emergency grant and loan programs.

COMBATING COVID-19 TOGETHER

San Francisco declared a local emergency early in February to strengthen the City's preparedness to COVID-19. This declaration allowed the City to accelerate emergency planning, mobilize disaster workers from different departments, coordinate resources and partnerships, as well as beginning contact tracing work. A team of our staff was also activated to assist with their expertise when the City needed them most.

DISASTER SERVICE WORKERS

All San Francisco public employees serve as disaster workers under emergencies. Our Communications Director was activated at the beginning of the outbreak to lead a multi-lingual, multimedia [communications campaign](#) to help educate our diverse communities on prevention. Our Deputy of Administration and Finance was activated after the Shelter-In-Place public order and was issued to manage urgent and massive staffing needs for the Public Health Departments and Human Services Agency as the confirmed cases and public needs were on the rise.



"Collaborated with SFGTV to develop the multilingual flyers



Eric Chan, Senior Administrative Analyst, served as the coordinator of the contact tracing team from our Office.

CONTACT TRACERS

Another team of five staff from across divisions worked part-time for six months and more to serve as contact investigators who are responsible for interviewing people who are COVID-19 positive. Their work ensures our public health professionals are appropriately following-up with contacts and assessing and mitigating public health risks as needed. Their stories were documented by KQED special health series at "[Diversity Among Disease Detectives Key to Containing the Coronavirus](#)" and "[In Search of 20,000 COVID-19 Contact Tracers, California Taps Local Librarians, Tax Assessors, City Legal Staff](#)".

WE CONTINUE TO SERVE

After the Bay Area County Health Directors jointly announced a shelter-in-place directive on March 16, 2020, our physical offices were closed the following day. Our office transitioned 98% of operating hours to remote work with 2% completed onsite to ensure continuity of core public service functions, including: property assessments, real estate transactions and access to vital public records. Understanding that vital documents, such as public marriage licenses (often needed to ensure beneficiary information or access to health care), family trusts or deeds, may be time-sensitive during an active pandemic, our staff has gone above and beyond to accommodate those needs.

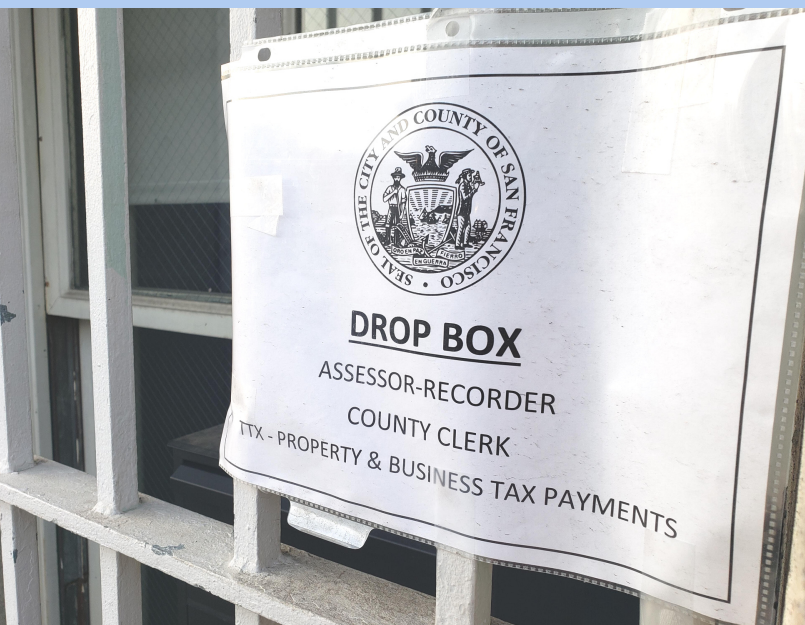
EMERGENCY MARRIAGES

Our office is responsible for recording and providing marriage certificates. During the pandemic, we worked closely with the County Clerk, who is responsible for issuing the marriage licenses and performing the ceremonies, to make sure we could process and provide marriage certificates the same day. Our collaboration and quick action helped minimize any delays for couples with urgent, time-sensitive needs such as immigration, health and safety, and military deployment. Learn more [here](#).



CITY HALL DROP BOX

Understanding that some people may prefer to submit important documents and payments in-person, we worked with the County Clerk and Tax Collector to set up a drop box outside City Hall to accept any timely submissions of applications, statements, recording documents and payments. It was first put into use in June to accept annual business personal property statements. Learn more [here](#).



A drop box was set up outside City Hall (Gough Street) to receive documents while in-person visits are not available.

CLOSING THE ROLL REMOTELY

When the shelter-in-place public health order was issued in spring, our team was in the middle of our annual roll close timeline to complete valuations on all taxable properties before the fiscal year end on June 30, 2020. This annual process helps the City secure over \$3.6 billion dollars in property tax revenue to fund public programs, which has been especially important during the pandemic when other economic-related revenues plummeted. Fortunately, with a telework policy already in place before the COVID-19 outbreak, our Office was able to transition to working remotely quickly without affecting our performance and efficiency. In fact, we managed to close our roll on time for the second year without backlogs.



Coming together and witnessing the moment when we press the button and submit the roll over the system is an annual tradition of our Office. This year, since we are not able to gather, we did a virtual watch party to witness the moment.

EXTENDED DEADLINE FOR BUSINESSES

Under state law, Business Personal Property (BPP) filings are due every May 7 to avoid state-mandated penalties. However, because our office was physically closed, we extended the deadline to June 1, 2020 to provide some breathing room for businesses. The State announced all counties would be allowed to use the same extended deadline soon after San Francisco took the lead.

Also, to make things easier for businesses under these circumstances, we immediately asked the State Board of Equalization for approval to accept submissions by email and other methods, including fax, in addition to mailed statements and E-filing directly through our online portal.

ONLINE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

In collaboration with attorneys, CPA, and other financial professionals, we produced a series of online webinars called “Cooped Up with Carmen” to cover topics such as financial resources and tips during COVID-19, discussion on recent eviction moratorium and negotiation tips for commercial tenants in partnership with Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights, how to recognize and combat the rise in xenophobia.

COOKING WITH CARMEN

Through a social media campaign, “Cooking with Carmen”, highlighted faces behind the scenes at some of San Francisco’s favorite local eateries to promote and encourage local business support.



JOIN US NEXT THURSDAY FOR

COOPED UP WITH CARMEN

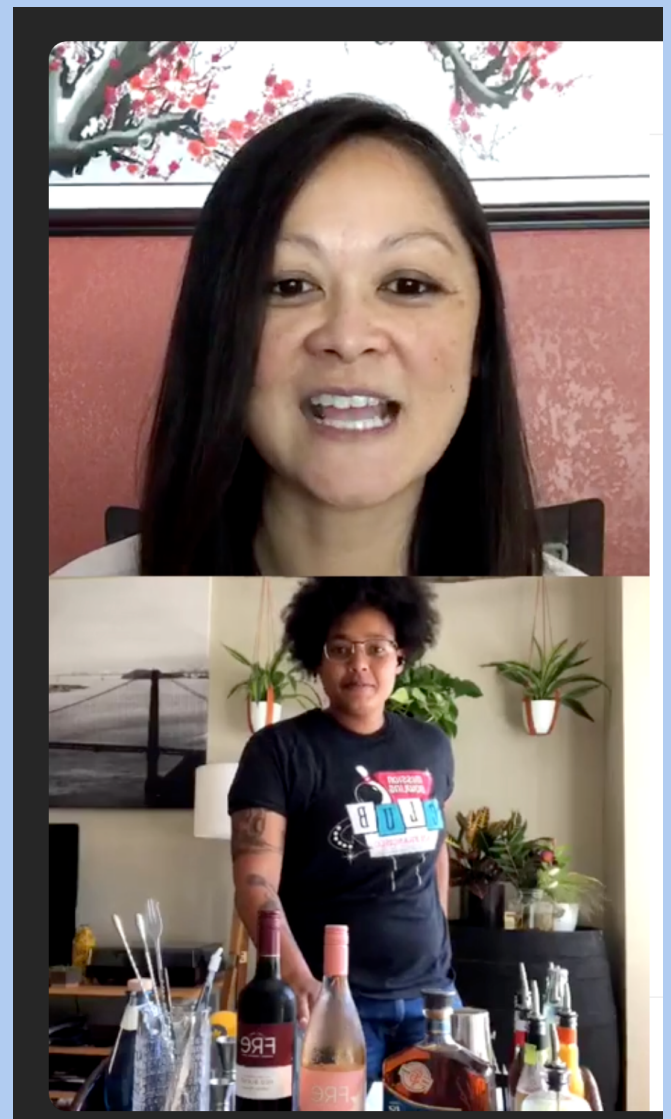
April 16th | 12:00 PM | Facebook Live
Budgeting During the COVID-19 Crisis

Ask your questions at <https://bit.ly/3dMvEvQ>

San Francisco Assessor Carmen Chu

Larry Pon
Pon & Associates
CPA / CFP

Assessor Carmen Chu interviewed CPA Larry Pon on saving tips and budgeting during the pandemic.



Featuring Tammy Hagans, Bar Director at Mission Bowling Club, in Cooking with Carmen. Hagans demonstrated her passion for creating amazing drinks during the show. Mission Bowling Club is on the list for one of the best burgers in the nation (visitors come from all over the world to experience the Mission Burger)



REOPEN safely together

Abramos de nuevo juntos de una forma segura • 一起安全地重開

Sama-sama sa ligtas na muling pagbubukas



Wear a face covering

Use un cubrebocas

佩戴面罩

Magsuot ng panakip-mukha



Stay 6 feet apart

Manténgase a 6 pies de distancia

請保持六呎身距

Panatilihin ang anim na talampakang
distansya sa bawat isa



Practice good hygiene

Practicar buena higiene

保持良好的衛生習慣

Magsanay ng mahusay na kalinisan

DIGITAL FAMILY WEALTH FORUM

Credible financial information and education on estate planning is more important than ever face of an active pandemic. Therefore, we moved our annual in-person financial education event- the Family Wealth Forum- online in July 2020.

Over 200 residents joined us for topics such as financial assistance for families and homeowners, how to begin estate planning, and the importance of having an advanced health care directive in case of an emergency.



ASSESSOR CARMEN CHU PRESENTS

BUILD YOUR FINANCIAL RESILIENCE DIGITAL FAMILY WEALTH FORUM

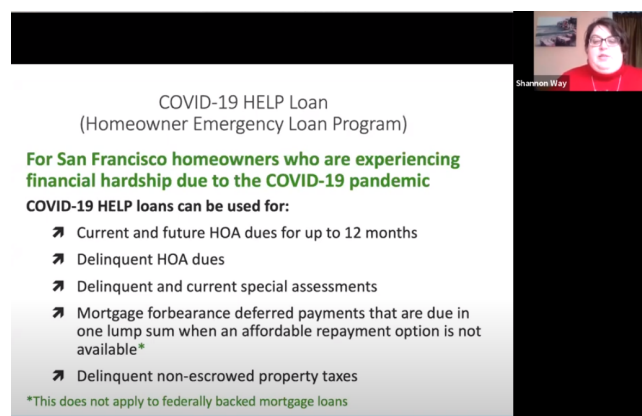
Saturday, July 18, 2020 | 10 A.M. - 1 P.M. on Zoom



Register for the webinar online at sfassessor.org/familywealthforum

(Photo taken from previous years)

Caption: (Left) Digital Family Wealth Forum digital postcard with photos from the past



Caption: Assessor Carmen Chu interviewing Executive Director Shannon with Homownershpf on immediate assistance for families

1ST ONLINE EVENT WAS A SUCCESS!

NO. OF PEOPLE
ATTENDED:

260+

SURVEYS RATED
INFORMATIVE :

80%

QUESTIONS
ANSWERED :

140

LANGUAGES
OFFERED :

3

A recording of the online event is available : www.sfassessor.org/familywealthforum

COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE

Every year, the Assessor's Office mails an annual letter, the Notice of Assessed Value, to all property owners. This year, with all the different information circulated about COVID-19, our Office added an insert to our letter to consolidate resources and services for families, seniors, and vulnerable populations. We also took the opportunity to explain the timeline and planning around property tax relief according to State Law to help address inquiries to our Office.

Contact Information
 Website: www.sfassessor.org
 Email: assessor@sfgov.org
 Tel: 415-554-5596

A Message for SF Homeowners

The Office of the Assessor-Recorder is committed to help San Franciscans navigate through the COVID-19 crisis. That's why this quick resource guide was created to share community resources and information relevant to you.

Families

- Financial planning is more important than ever, our 2020 Family Wealth Forum is now moving online! Register for this event, named "Build Your Financial Resilience" on July 18, 2020 at www.sfassessor.org/familywealthforum today and learn how to prepare for future financial challenges.
- Children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals can continue to get free grab & go meals from San Francisco Unified School District (visit www.sfsud.edu for more information). Families can also apply for additional CalFresh food assistance with the Human Services Agency at www.sfhhsa.org/services/health_food or call (415) 558-4700.
- Sign up for the Department of Children, Youth and Families' summer notification list at www.dcyf.org/care to stay informed on citywide summer camps and youth jobs programs.

Seniors and Vulnerable Populations

- Call the Department of Disability and Aging Services' hotline (415) 355-6700 (7 days a week) to access latest information on food, home care, social engagement, and other essential support.
- Seniors and adults with disabilities can access

Additional Resources

- Find new job opportunities on the Office of Economic and Workforce Development's website. Visit www.oewd.org/covid19 and sign up to receive email updates.
- The San Francisco Public Library's robust digital

NEIGHBORHOOD E-MEETINGS

Understanding that many of us get information from our neighbors and community organizations, Assessor Carmen Chu reached out to neighborhood and merchant associations, as well as women and family groups, to attend their regular meetings online and provide direct updates on economic recovery and public health.

E-NEWSLETTER

Our Office had also sent out a monthly newsletter and industry bulletin to help our community and industry partners stay informed on developments with the pandemic, resources and programs available for families and businesses, as well as the reopening and recovery plans. Sign up at www.sfassessor.org/contact

SF ASSESSOR
CARMEN CHU

WEBSITE

Our Office has been upgrading our website in recent years before the outbreak of COVID-19 because we know it is one of the easiest ways for you to obtain information. Those efforts have helped us transition to serving you remotely during the pandemic as our website serves as a one-stop shop for information you need, including recording a document, obtaining a marriage certificate, applying for tax-saving programs, and understanding your tax assessment. Visit us at SFAssessor.org to learn our most recent upgrades as listed below.

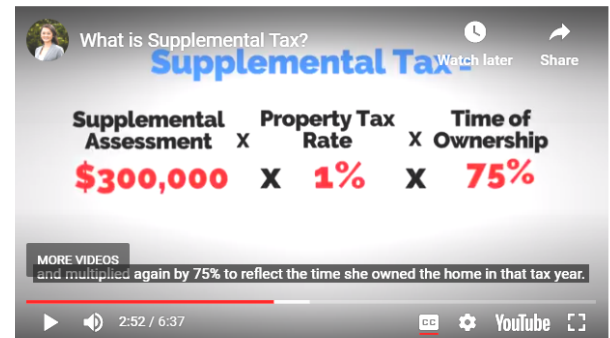
CALCULATORS

One of the most frequently asked questions we received is "How to calculate my supplemental tax?" To help answer that question for each particular taxpayer, we added a [Supplemental Tax Calculator](#) on our website to demonstrate the step-by-step calculation for different fiscal years depending on the time of the ownership transfer. A transfer tax calculator was also added by applying a tiered tax rate according to the sales price.

[Home](#) | [Property Information](#) | [Homeowners](#) | [Welcome to the Supplemental Tax Calculator](#)

Welcome to the Supplemental Tax Calculator

This calculator is designed to help you estimate property taxes after purchasing your home. Before we start, watch the video to understand what are supplemental taxes.



After a property transfers, State law (Proposition 13, passed in 1978) requires the Assessor's Office to set a new assessed value for your property. This value, called the assessed value, should reflect the market value of the property as of the date of transfer. However, it takes time for our office to analyze market data to determine the fair market value. By the time we value your property for reassessment and update our records, property tax bills may already be calculated based on the prior assessed values. This is why supplemental taxes are assessed.

NEWS & INFO

Throughout the years, we have developed multiple outreach materials, such as a series of educational [videos](#) and [fact sheets](#), [news releases](#), [property tax data](#) and reports to help explain our core functions and services. They are now consolidated under the "News & Information" category on our website.

IN-LANGUAGE PAGES

Many of our outreach materials, such as fact sheets, videos, forms and notices, are available in multiple languages. Last year, we overhauled our language pages to better organize different types of materials, so they are easier to find.



Supplemental Tax?

In addition, on January 5, we hosted an online workshop about the changes brought by this new law and invited financial and estate planners to join us. A recording of the workshop is now available on the [Prop. 19 webpage](#).



CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR-RECORDER

Español

中文

Filipino

[Property Information](#) ▾
 [Recorder Information](#) ▾
 [Tax Savings](#) ▾
 [Forms & Notices](#) ▾
 [News & Information](#) ▾
 [About Us](#) ▾

[Home](#) / [About Proposition 19 \(2020\)](#)

About Proposition 19 (2020)

[View published](#)

New draft

Moderate

Description

 FAO

 Forms/Attachments

Share   | Print 

RELATED CONTENT

Prop 19: Transfers in Family (Chinese -19號提案: 家庭成員間業權轉讓)

Prop 19: Transfers in Family (Spanish - Proposición 19 : transferencias en familia)

Prop 19: Transfers in Family (Filipino - Proposition 19: Mga Paglipat Sa Pamilya)

In November 2020, California voters passed Proposition 19 , which makes changes to property tax benefits for families, seniors, severely disabled persons, and victims of natural disaster in our state. In response, our Office has consolidated resources, including video tutorials, frequently asked questions, forms and reference links, on this page (see separate tabs) to help you understand and prepare for the upcoming changes.

We are also organizing a series of [Digital Family Wealth Forums](#), online events designed to provide families with the necessary tools to understand this new law and continue their financial planning. Recording of our first webinar is available below. Visit [here](#) to register for future events.

New Proposition 19(2020) webpage developed to help answer questions and consolidate resources. Available at SFAssessor.org/Prop19

PROP. 19 WEBINAR WELL ATTENDED!

NO. OF VIEWS ON
ONLINE RECORDING :

16,600+

**SURVEYS RATED
HELPFUL:**

98%

QUESTIONS ANSWERED :

284

A recording of the online event is available : www.SFAssessor.org/Prop19

SYSTEMS FOR THE FUTURE

Over the past few years, we have been working to replace our Office's obsolete legacy systems, including the City's official public record system and the property tax assessment system which both had been in service for over two decades but lack modern technology features such as ease of configurability, robust reporting and increased accessibility. With the needs of transparency, data analytics and remote access on the rise, we are excited to announce that our Office has reached key milestones in building systems for the future.

RECORDER

Our Office is responsible for recording over 150,000 documents per year, including deeds, maps, and marriage certificates. In the coming year, we are prepared to launch a new recorder system that enables easy search, smart cashiering, data validation and tracking, as well as online self-servicing to allow users the ability to purchase copies of recorded documents, without visiting our Office or mailing in their requests.



The screenshot shows the 'City and County of San Francisco Assessor-Recorder Public Index Search' web application. It features a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and the word 'Search'. Below the search bar, there are several input fields: 'Document Type' (set to 'Officials'), 'Grantor/Grantee Name' (set to 'Grantor or Grantee'), 'Titles' (set to '--All Types--'), 'Document Date' (set to '01/07/1987'), 'Document Number', 'Old Doc Number', 'Block', and 'Lot'. Each field has a 'To' field for a range. The interface is clean and modern, with a blue header and a white body.

New recorder system online at <https://recorder.sfgov.org/>

PROPERTY TAX

We started to overhaul and modernize our new property tax assessment system in 2019. The new system is web-based. It will be responsible for processing all valuation needs that go behind the \$3.6 billion dollars of property tax revenue generated per year. In Spring 2021, we launched the first phase of the new system to process our unsecured business personal property filing and exemption request processing, which will inform us on improvements needed for secured property and integration with other city departments. The project is slated to be completed by 2023.



TECHNOLOGY & TRANSPARENCY

In recent years, our Office has also worked hard to modernize our tools that improve efficiency and provide transparency. For example, we have used Power BI, a data transformation and visualization software, to build automated data dashboards to keep track of our performance and detect early bottlenecks. We have also digitized all vital real estate records and migrated them to a consolidated and secured platform for easy access.

POWER BI

Our office used to have numerous manually updated excel files to track our progress. We began to use Power BI a few years ago to develop a tool to assign assessment cases more accurately and transparently. Since then, data analysts across the office have built more than 50 dashboards dedicated to increasing transparency into our assessment and recording workloads, assigning work to staff, and tracking our progress towards our annual roll close goals. This tool has played a key role in eliminating our Office's backlogs last year.



ASSESSOR INFORMATION & MAP SYSTEM (AIMS)

In 2018, we accomplished our goals of transitioning and safeguarding close to 3 million images to searchable digital records on a new information system. Not only is the system secured for disaster recovery, it is connected to our property tax assessment system to provide easy and convenient access to related documents, which improves efficiency and transparency. These records include vital real estate records, maps and ownership information.



In 2016, the Assessor's Office launched a office-wide digitization project to migrate all paper files to a new information system called AIMS.

ASSESSOR BLOCK MAP PROJECT

In late 2017, our Office launched a new project to revamp our mapping process in order to keep up-to-date, high quality and digitized maps for all blocks. We also took the opportunity to clean up historic data on our maps, as well as building a geographic information system (GIS) platform to produce new maps, make quick edits and conduct data analysis.

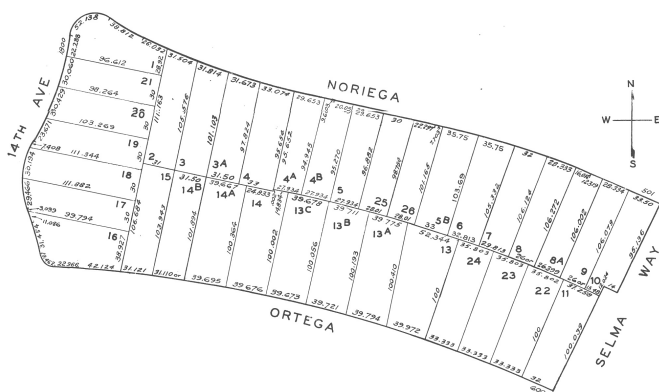
GO PAPERLESS!

We started the process of scanning all the maps. The digital maps were indexed and uploaded to our document management system. Over 2.5 million images had been uploaded in six months, covering roughly 210,000 parcels. With all historical maps being digitized, they were then moved offsite to save space. The completion of this first step resulted in improved efficiency by providing a comprehensive singular source for staff to locate maps electronically.



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CITY & COUNTY ASSESSOR 1995

2036B
G.G. HEIGHTS AND PART OF
SUNSET BLOCK 873
REVISED 1ST
/67



DATA MIGRATION

After digitization, our office was working towards migrating our map data to a Geographic Information System (GIS) software, so we create, update and maintain our maps digitally. In order to do that, we would need to transfer all data displayed on the map to the system in digital format. Our Office's Mapping Team partnered with a vendor for a year and reviewed hundreds of thousands of items of data prepared by the vendor to make sure our input data is accurate. Data items reviewed included the digital placement of every dimension, and every lot number, for every parcel in the city.

GIS: MAPPING PROPERTY DATA

With the implementation of GIS for maintaining the Assessor Block Maps, our Office was able to leverage the technology to assist in several ways. Visualizing data geographically to better understand trends, and using special analysis tools for data integrity are two examples.

This year, our Office noticed a significant increase in Assessment Appeals. By mapping the location of the appeals by property type, the Office was better able to understand market conditions and understand how staff workloads would be impacted. The map on the left (Figure 1) below shows a heatmap of all property types appealed in 2020. The map on the right (Figure 2) shows a heatmap of dwellings that were appealed in 2020.

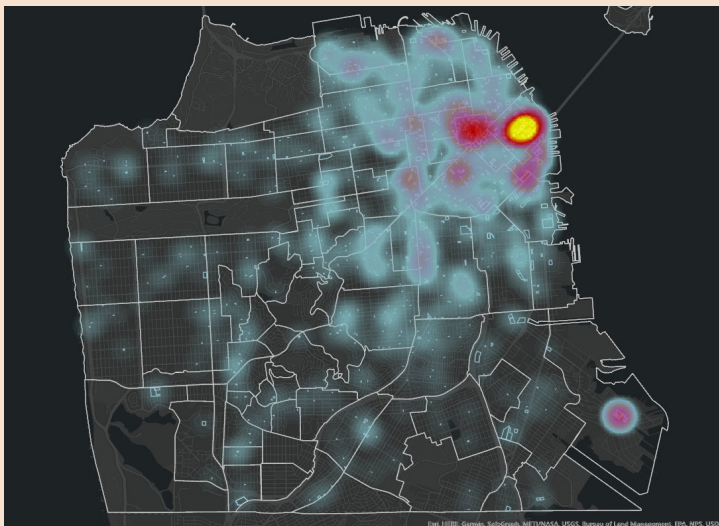


Figure 1: A heatmap of all property types appealed in 2020, including commercial and residential properties.

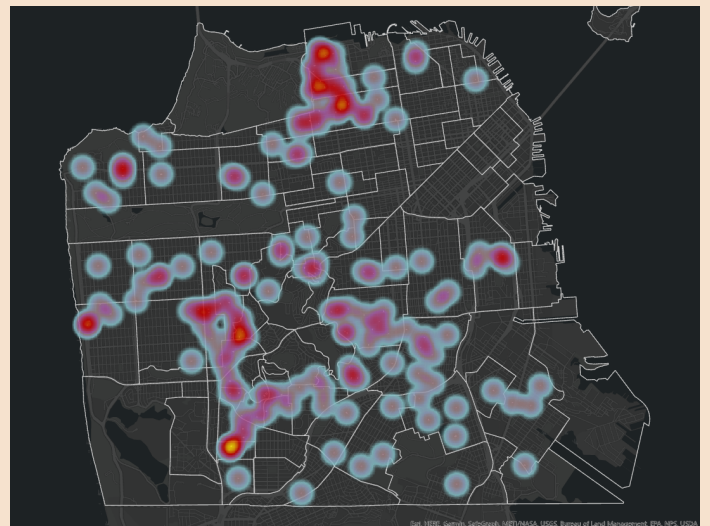


Figure 2: A heatmap of residential dwellings appealed in 2020

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

This map (Figure 3) shows all property parcels in San Francisco with spatial analysis. The spatial analysis was performed using digital elevation models to calculate the mean slope for each parcel. When the calculated number for each parcel is given a shade of color based on its value, areas with steeper slope are a darker shade, and vice versa.

This type of analysis assists our Office in data collection and verification with regards to land attributes.

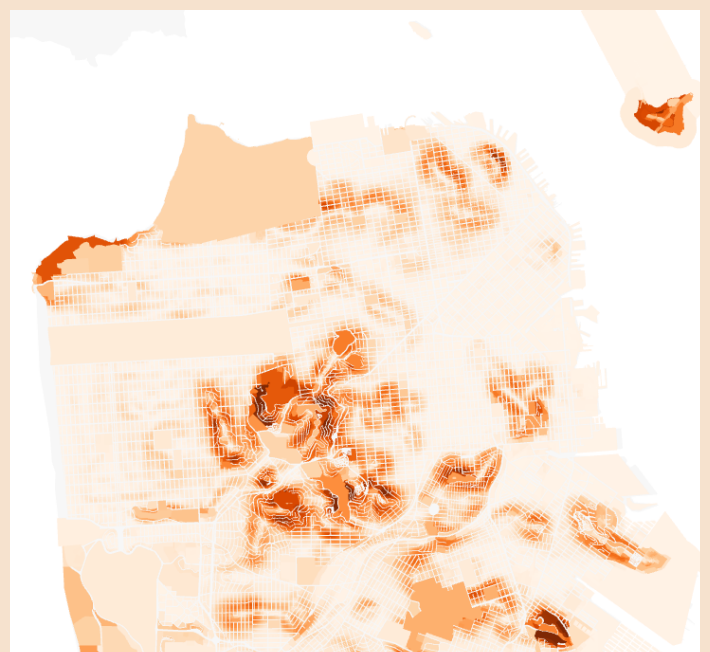


Figure 3: San Francisco's assessor parcel map with spatial analysis.

PROPERTY TAX REVENUE:

\$3.6B

Due to continued construction and sales activities, paired with our Office's ability to process transactions and valuations remotely, the total assessment roll of San Francis grew by 7.X% to \$302 billion by fiscal year end. This translates to \$3.6 billion annually in property tax dollars to support much needed local public services and education.

TRANSFER TAX REVENUE:

\$335M

The number of property sales dropped by 14% compared to last year, as a result, San Francisco saw a 9% decrease in transfer tax revenue, generating \$335 million in tax dollars.

TAX EXEMPTIONS GRANTED:

\$18B

We provide tax savings support to nonprofits, veterans and homeowners through property tax exemptions. This year, we granted over \$18 billion in exemption value to eligible taxpayers.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

23

FUNDS FOR LOCAL SERVICES:

\$2.3 B

Every year, about two-thirds of all property tax revenue goes to funding general operational services, such as housing, public health, and homelessness services, as well as public benefits for families. This year's general operational funding is expected to be at \$2.3 billion dollars.

NONPROFIT RESIDENCE TAX EXEMPTIONS VALUE:

\$3.7 B

Residences operated by non-profits, including most affordable housing developments, are eligible for property tax exemptions. Of the \$18 billion in exemption value granted, about one-fifths are granted for non-profit residential purposes. Due to recent affordable housing developments, exempted value in this category has increased by 16%.

TAX SAVINGS BENEFICIARIES:

85,000+

Our Office provides property tax deductions to eligible homeowners through our exemption programs. Every year, over 85,000 homeowners benefit from these programs with a cumulative exempted value of \$600 million.



WELFARE EXEMPTION WORKSHOP

Supporting local community organizations through tax exemptions is a direct way in which we help build stronger communities. However, navigating the application and annual renewal process can be challenging, especially for smaller nonprofits.

In January, we partnered with the CA State Board of Equalization to host San Francisco's first Welfare Exemptions Workshop, in which we explained the step-by-step process and carved out time to answer questions in one-on-one and small group settings.



Caption: (Left) Assessor Chu gave opening remarks at the Welfare Exemption Workshop at the Main Library in January 2020.



Caption: Over 130 financial managers from nonprofits attended and were offered opportunities to ask questions one-on-one.

SUCCESS BY THE NUMBERS

NO. OF PEOPLE
ATTENDED:

140+

ANNUAL
FILINGS:

1,290

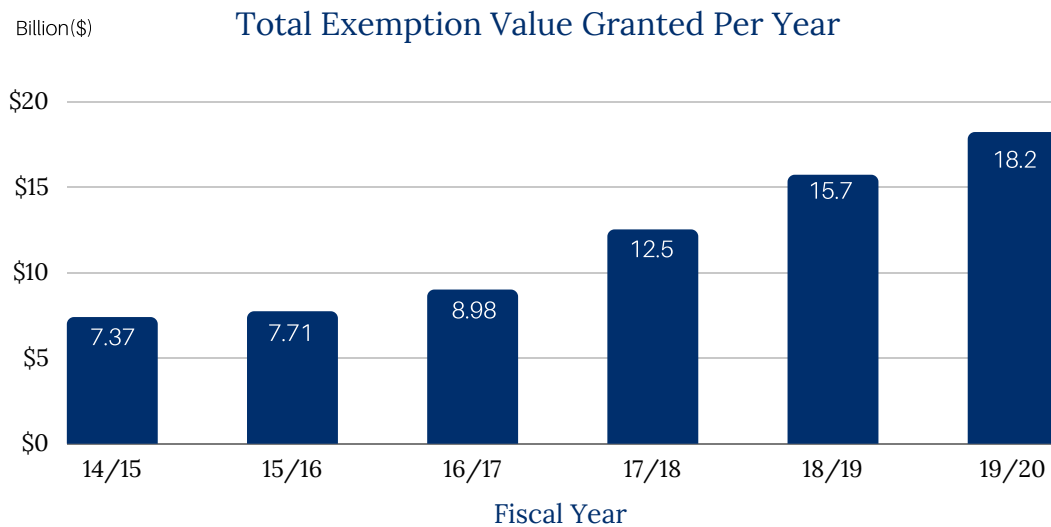
EXEMPTED VALUE FOR
NON-PROFIT:

\$11.6B

A recording of the event at : sfassessor.org/tax-savings/exemptions/non-profit-exemption

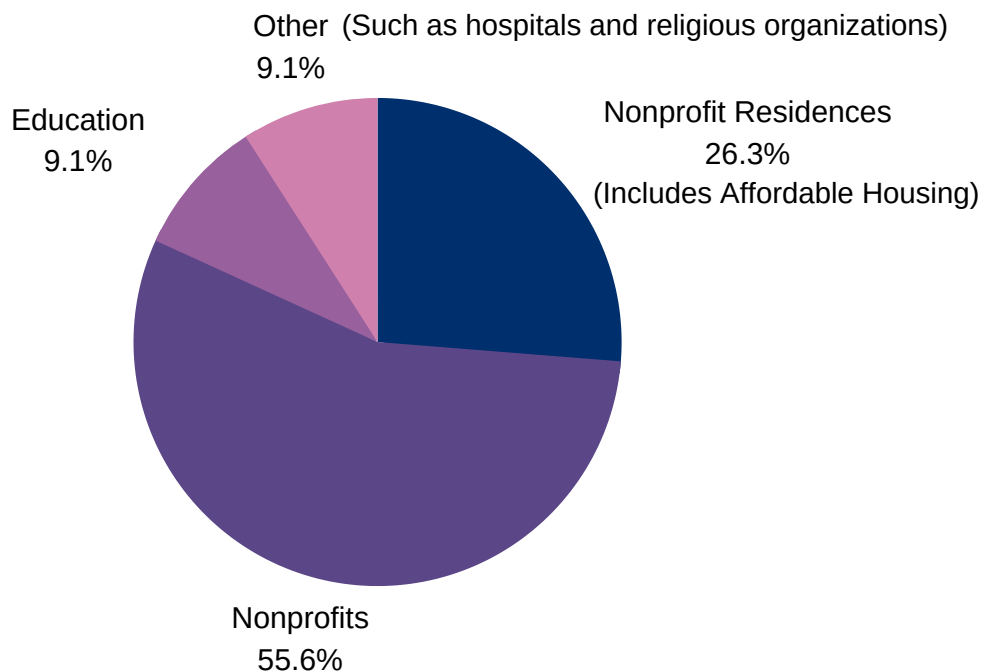
\$18B IN PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

This fiscal year we granted over \$18 billion in exemptions to support homeowners, non-profit organizations, religious entities, hospitals and schools. This year we saw an annual growth of over \$2.5 billion in exemptions, largely due to nonprofit affordable housing.



WHAT DO WE EXEMPT?

Of the \$18 billion granted in exemptions, about \$14 billion provides relief to institutions like nonprofits, hospitals, and educational facilities. The pie chart below shows the share of exemptions received by different uses.



PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL SERIES

Providing accessible and timely information to San Francisco's residents has always been our Office's core value. Like many of us, after COVID-19 pandemic hit, our Public Affairs Team has quickly adapted to the new remote environment and moved our regular in-person public educational programming, such as organizing workshops or setting up information booths at community fairs, to online platforms, such as virtual interviews and social media live events.

LIBRARY WORKSHOPS

This year, our Office hosted 17 community workshops (mostly before the pandemic), including our most popular library workshop series where we target a specific neighborhood each time by partnering with neighborhood library branches, senior groups and community-based organizations to present on topics from property tax savings, post-purchase planning, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and new construction.



NEW ONLINE SERIES

In collaboration with attorneys, CPA, and other financial professionals produced online webinars on topics such as financial resources and tips during COVID-19, discussion on recent eviction moratorium and negotiation tips for commercial tenants in partnership with Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, how to recognize and combat the rise in xenophobia. Through a social media campaign, "Cooped Up/Cooking with Carmen", highlighted faces behind the scenes at some of San Francisco's favorite local eateries to promote and encourage local business support.

JOIN US NEXT THURSDAY FOR

COOPED UP WITH CARMEN

April 16th | 12:00 PM | Facebook Live
Budgeting During the COVID-19 Crisis

Ask your questions at <https://bit.ly/3dMVEvQ>



San Francisco
Assessor
Carmen Chu



Larry Pon
Pon & Associates
CPA / CFP

LEADERSHIP AND LEGISLATION

Together with the California Assessors' Association, we provide leadership on critical State legislation. During the beginning of the pandemic to support impacted businesses, our office deferred filing for businesses required to complete the annual business personal property statements. Further, we advocated to the state to ensure this deferral was uniform across counties. Locally, two new ordinances proposed by our office were passed unanimously by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

RECORDING OF JURISDICTIONAL TRANSFERS AND STREET VACATION

The legislation addresses an unknown but problematic issue in which departments transfer land between each other without any process of recording these transactions with us. As a result, it is not uncommon for the details of these transfers to get lost, with muddy ownership and usage information. Our legislation solves this problem by requiring mandatory recording of these transfers, thereby ensuring transparency, accurate records, and that the City is not losing any value.

REAL PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX REFUNDS

The legislation addresses an issue where transfer tax refunds adjudicated by the Board of Supervisors-appointed Assessment Appeals Board must also be reviewed and approved by the Board of Supervisors. Our legislation solves this by removing a review layer permitting the City to settle transfer tax claims more efficiently, without expending resources to evaluate an issue that has already been decided by an independent body. This is a win-win solution to improve administrative efficiency. This legislation builds upon our prior efforts to strengthen and streamline San Francisco's transfer tax process:

- 2017 legislation to preserve the City's ability to collect unpaid transfer taxes
- 2016 legislation to close the loophole on transfer tax collections for legal entities
- 2015 legislation to create greater transparency by requiring that the transfer tax due on the face of the deed
- In 2015, we launched a transfer tax audit program that verifies self-reported sale values. Since inception, the program has successfully identified \$45 million in underreported transfer tax



Helping families with their estate planning, including parent-and-child transfers in 2019 Family Wealth Forum

PARENT-CHILD TRANSFERS

California tax laws allow parents or grandparents to transfer their home and other residential properties (capped at \$1 million in assessed value) to their children or grandchildren without reassessing the property to market value. This tax savings program was enabled by Proposition 58 (1986) and Proposition 193 (1996). However, in November 2020, California voters passed Proposition 19 which would limit the program to principal residences and increase taxes on high value properties. These changes will become effective February 2021. Visit our website for more information: www.sfassessor.org/Prop19.



Our Business Personal Property auditor was answering questions from nonprofits

SMALL BUSINESSES

Small businesses with personal property worth less than \$4,000 in value are exempted from paying business personal property taxes under our City's low value ordinance.

Last year, close to 5,500 businesses benefited from this program. According to State Law, businesses pay property taxes on items they own, such as tables and chairs, or other equipment used to operate their businesses.

SENIORS

Many seniors consider moving as they grow older. Proposition 60 is a constitutional amendment passed by California voters in 1986 that allows owners who are 55 years old or older to transfer the assessed value of their existing home (original property) to their new home (replacement property) if both properties are located in the same county.

However, in November 2020, California voters passed Proposition 19 which would relax some of the rules around this program effective April 1, 2021. Visit our website for more information: www.sfassessor.org



We visited the YMCA senior lunch to share tax savings program that may benefit them

VETERANS

Veterans who became disabled due to a service-related injury or disease while in the armed forces may be eligible for partial property tax reductions.

Last year, approximately \$23 million was granted in veteran exemptions to benefit 174 disabled veterans and their families.

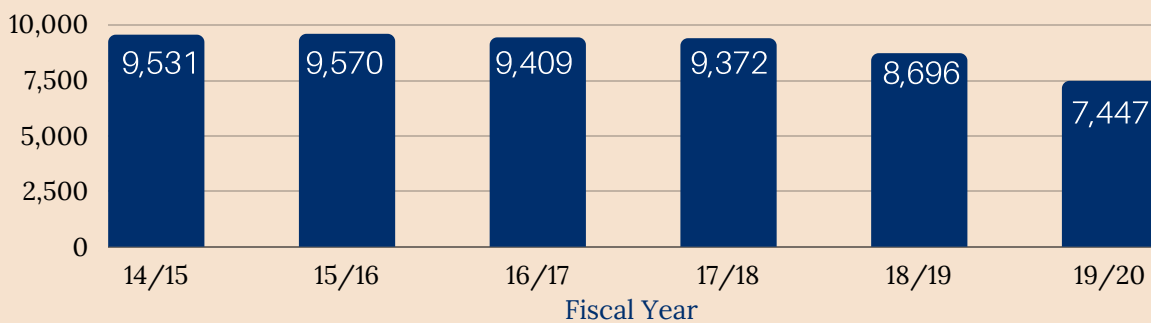


William Barnickel (second to the right), a local veteran serving on the City's Veterans Affairs Commission.

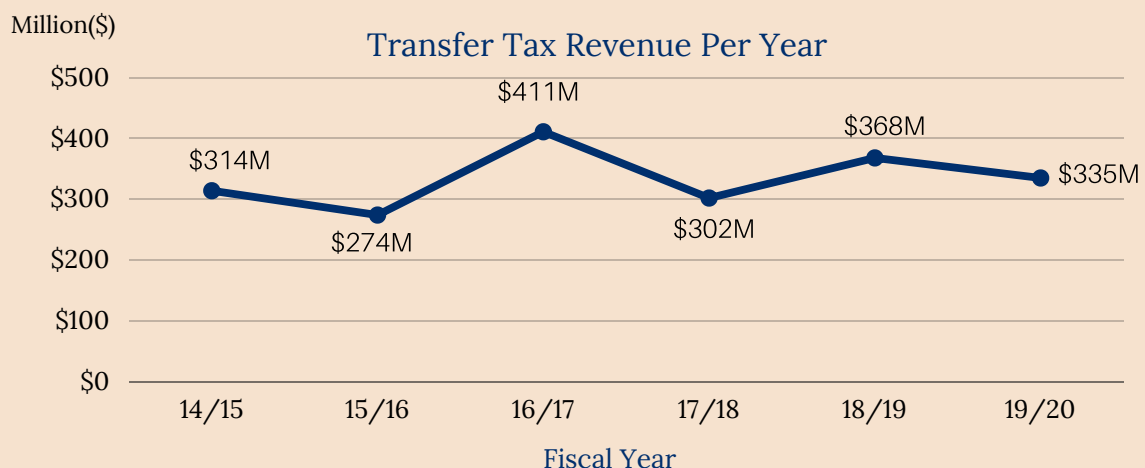
COVID-19 SLOWS DOWN SALES

The pandemic hit our economy hard, including local real estate activities. At the time of sale, our Office records the transaction and collects a one-time fee called transfer tax. According to our [transfer tax data](#), San Francisco saw a 14% decline in the total number of sales, with a monthly average number of sales dropping from 682 pre-shelter-in-place (July to March) to 435 afterwards (April to June). The table below shows a recent history of sales in the City.

Number of Transactions Per Year



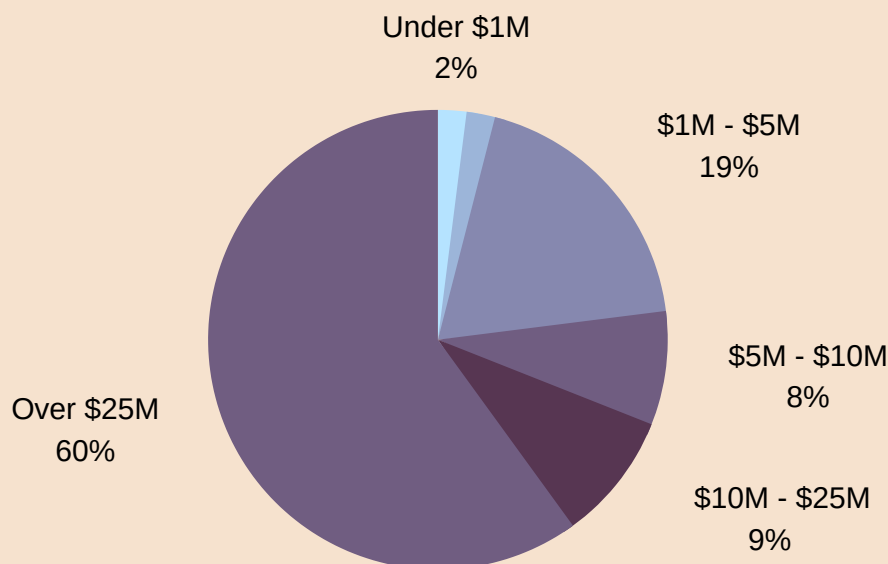
As a result, transfer tax collected also decreased from \$368 million to \$335 million this year. This is mainly attributed to the drop in sales in single-family and multi-family residential properties. Compared to last year, transfer tax revenue from single-family properties, including single family homes, condominiums and townhouses, dropped by \$19 million dollars, and multi-family residential properties like apartments also dropped by \$19 million dollars. Though the number of sales has also dropped among commercial properties, overall revenue increased by \$4 million, mainly from high-value office sales as revenues from hotel, retail and other sales have also dropped .



HIGH VALUE SALES AND REVENUES

San Francisco transfer tax rates increase with higher valued properties. High-valued properties continue to dominate transfer tax generation. This year, the top 0.7% sales (52 transactions) contributed close to 60% of all transfer tax collected or a total of \$202 million dollars. With the passage of Prop I (2020) increasing the tax rate on top-valued properties, we expect to see a drop in those transactions but an increase in their contributing proportion.

Transfer Tax Revenue by Tax Tier



SINGLE FAMILY SALES DROP

Single family residences (including condominiums) experienced the biggest drop in sales among all properties two years in a row. It decreased from 5,854 to 4,936 this year but the median sales price increased slightly, reaching \$1.32 million this year.

Single Family Median Sales Price



SALES ACTIVITIES

SINGLE FAMILY:

4,936

This year, there were a total of 4,936 transfers among single family residential properties citywide, a 16% drop from last year. It is the first time single family sales dropped below 5,000 per year in the past five years. Among those sales, South Beach continued to be the most popular neighborhood but with the number of sales dropping from 327 last year to 240 this year.

MULTI-FAMILY:

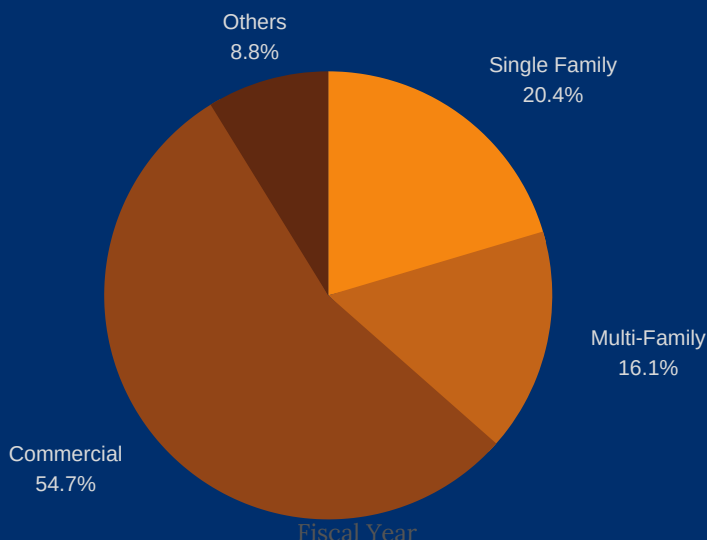
1,127

There were 1,127 sales of multi-family residential properties, a decrease from 1,255 last year. The most active multi-family market continued to be in the Inner Mission, with 83 sales, followed by 71 sales in Noe Valley and 65 sales in Russian Hill.

COMMERCIAL:

1,250

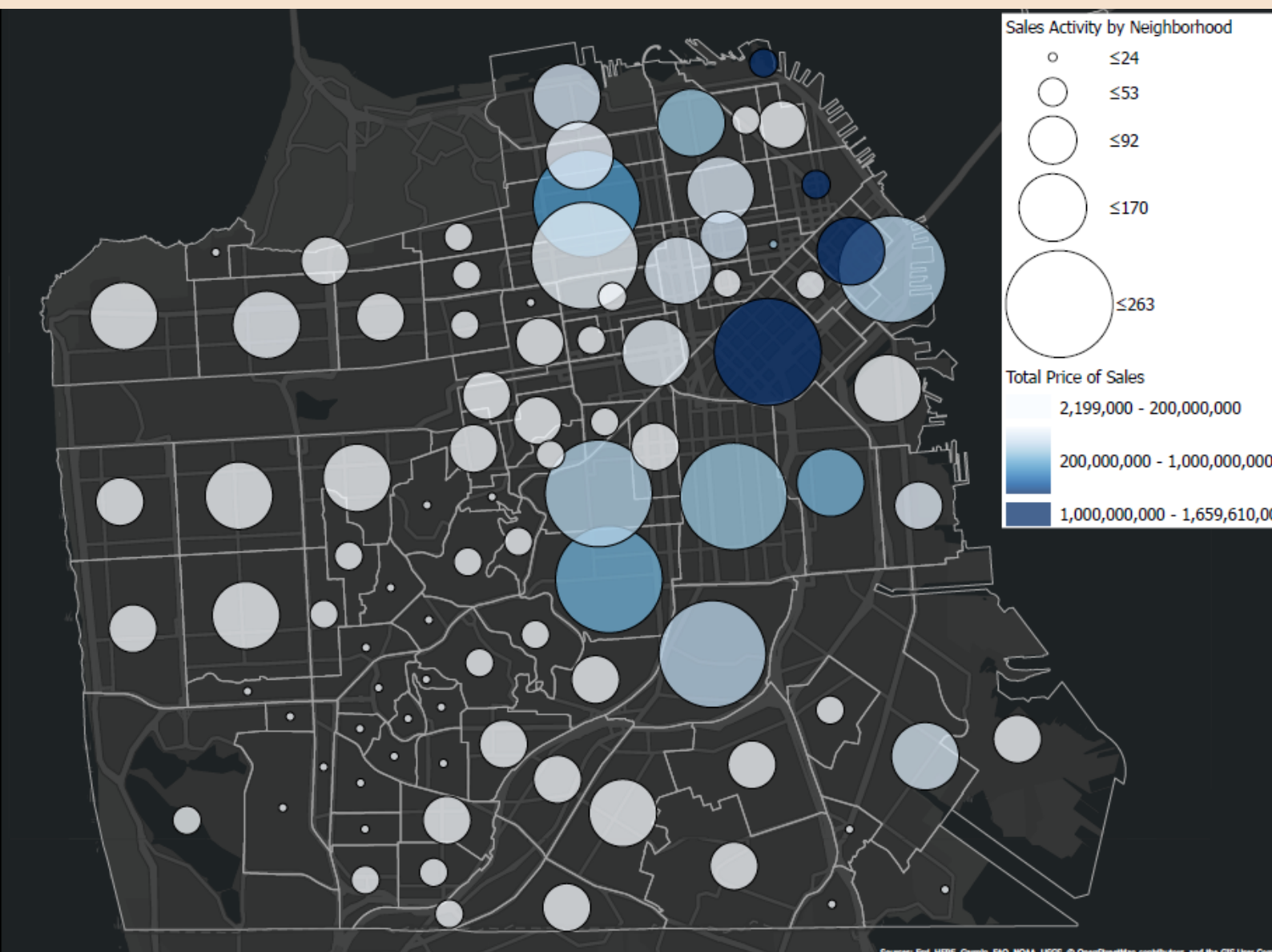
Commercial property sales have decreased from 1,397 to 1,250 this year. Union Square remains the most active area for commercial property sales, representing 8% of all commercial sales citywide.



RESIDENTIAL VS COMMERCIAL

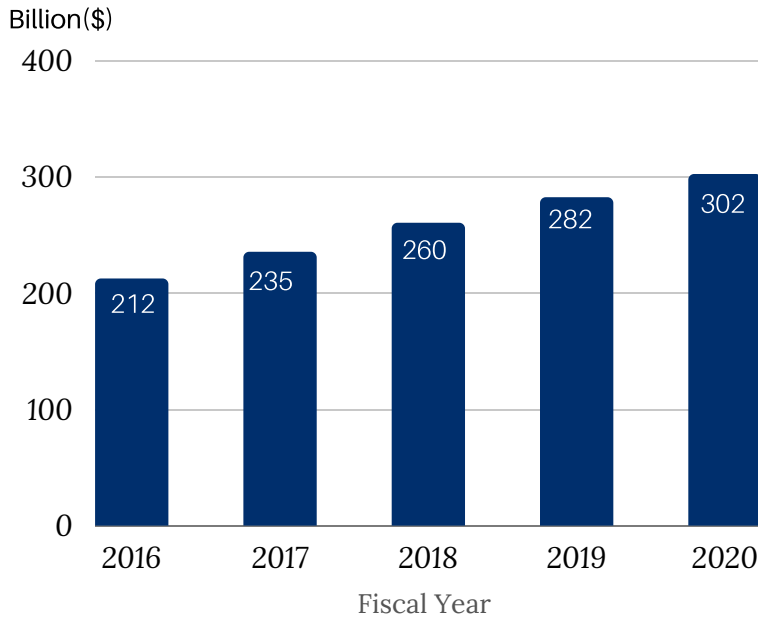
With a progressive tax tier system, transfer tax has depended heavily on large commercial sales. Commercial sales represent 17% of all sales but contribute 55% of the revenue streams, while residential (single and multi-family) represents 80% of sales but contributes 37% of the revenue.

CITYWIDE SALES



According to our transfer tax data, a total of 7,447 sales occurred in San Francisco in FY 2019-20. As shown in the map above, most sales activities (larger circles) occurred in the northern, eastern and center of the City.

As expected, the high value sales (darker circles) concentrated in the Financial District and the second tier of high value sales occurred in the South of Market, and the waterfront.



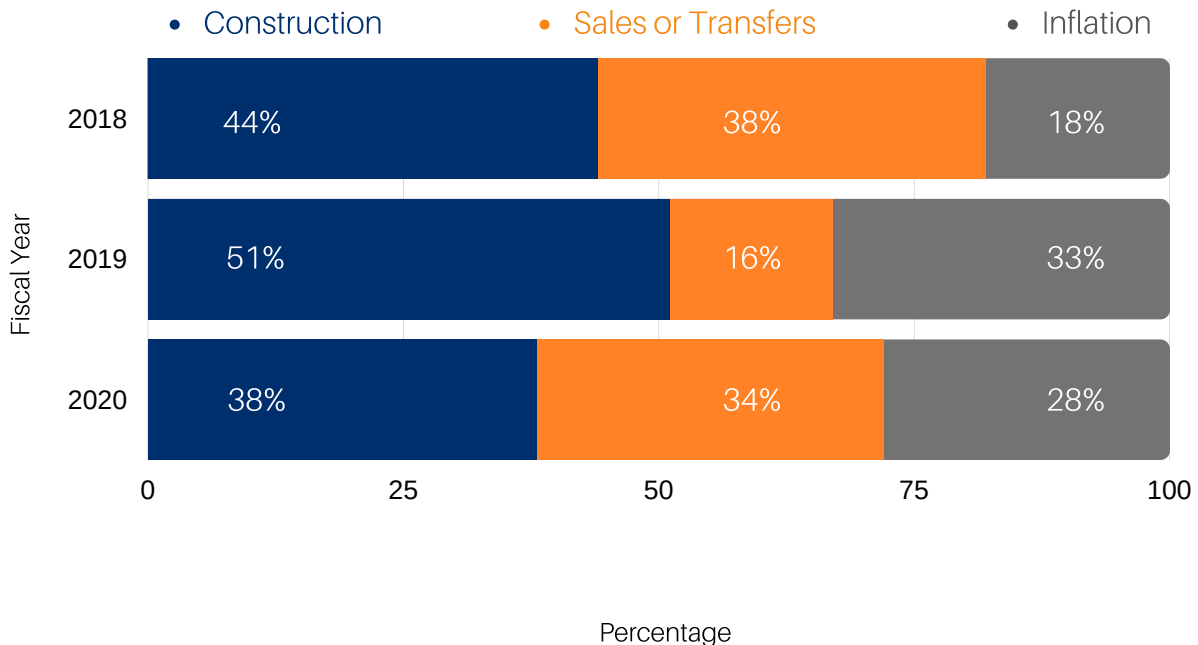
7.2% GROWTH IN TAXABLE VALUE

At a cumulative value of \$302 billion, the total taxable property value grew by 7.2% compared to last year, which is the highest percentage growth in California. This translates to \$3.6 billion in property tax revenue, \$295 million more than last year. At a cumulative value of \$282 billion, the total taxable property value grew by 32% compared to three years ago.

DRIVERS OF ASSESSMENT GROWTH?

The continued growth in property value is a cumulative result of construction activity, sales, and inflation adjustments in San Francisco. Under Proposition 13 (1978), a property's taxable value resets to its market value when there is a change in ownership or construction activity. Otherwise, the value simply increases by the California Consumer Price Index or 2%, whichever is lower.

See how construction activity, sales, and the annual inflation adjustment have impacted total taxable property value over the last three years.



PARCEL BY PROPERTY TYPES

SINGLE FAMILY:

151,707

In San Francisco, there are 206,042 parcels (excluding timeshares) and among them, 74% are single family residential properties, including single family homes, condominiums, town houses, etc. Together, they add \$128 billion in property value.

MULTI-FAMILY:

36,728

Multi-family residential properties, such as apartments, represent 18% of the total number of parcels and added \$64 billion to total property value. Together with single family residential properties, they represent over 90% of all properties in the City.

COMMERCIAL:

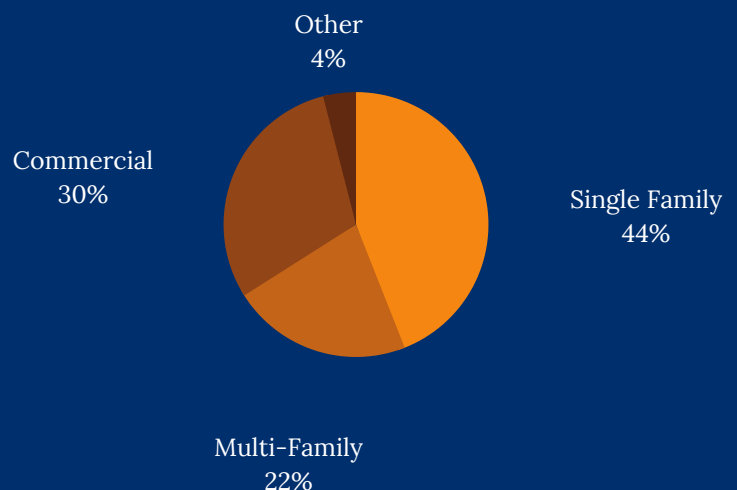
8,616

Meanwhile, commercial properties represent only 4% of all parcels but contribute \$88 billion to total property value. Other properties such as industrial properties account for the remaining 4%.

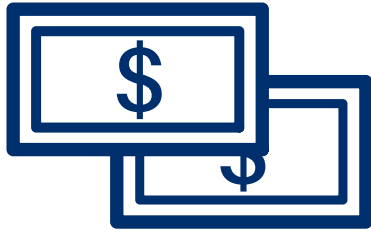
VALUE BY PROPERTY TYPES

In San Francisco, 90% of properties are categorized as residential but they contribute to 66% of total real property assessed values in the City. Meanwhile, 4% of properties are commercial, contributing 30% of the total value.

Assessment Breakdown by Property Type



IMPACTS OF PROPERTY TAX GROWTH



Property tax is considered the most stable and reliable source of income for state and local governments.

During the pandemic, while other economic related revenue streams are impacted, property tax continues to be the single largest source (32.6%) of revenue for the City's general operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year, contributing over \$2 billion dollars to the local General Fund, and \$765 million to the state.

WHERE DOES YOUR PROPERTY TAX DOLLAR GO?



CITY SERVICES:
64 %

Including:

- Community Health
- Recreation & Parks
- Libraries
- Human Welfare & Neighborhood Development
- Public Works (street cleaning)
- Family Support Services
- Public Safety: Police & Fire



SCHOOLS:
34 %

Including:

- San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)
- San Francisco Community College District (SFCCD)
- Education Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF, supporting California public school system)



OTHER:
2 %

Including:

- Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District

MOST VALUABLE PROPERTIES IN SF

01 415 MISSION ST
TRANSBAY TOWER LLC
\$1,783,077,177

02 1 WARRIORS WAY
GSW ARENA LLC
\$1,356,965,686

03 555 CALIFORNIA ST
HWA 555 OWNERS LLC
\$1,059,562,654

04 101 CALIFORNIA ST
ELM PROPERTY VENTURE LLC
\$1,024,646,277

05 1 MARKET ST
PPF PARAMOUNT ONE
MARKET PLAZA OWNER LP
\$868,013,216

06 1800 OWENS ST
KR MISSION BAY LLC
\$835,809,683

07 301- 345 POWELL ST
SHR GROUP LLC
\$747,602,183

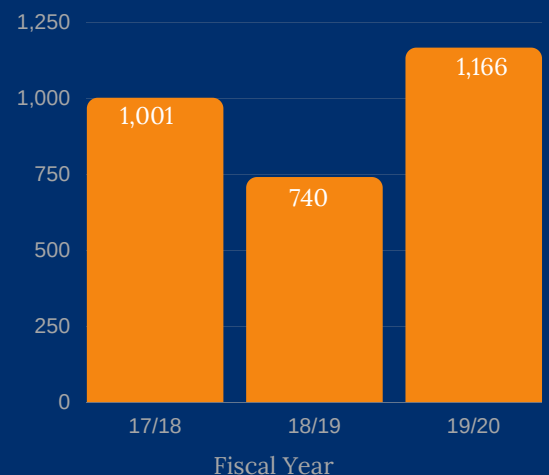
08 50 FREMONT ST
SFDC 50 FREMONT LLC
\$717,267,750

09 250 HOWARD ST
PARK TOWER OWNER LLC
\$613,671,587

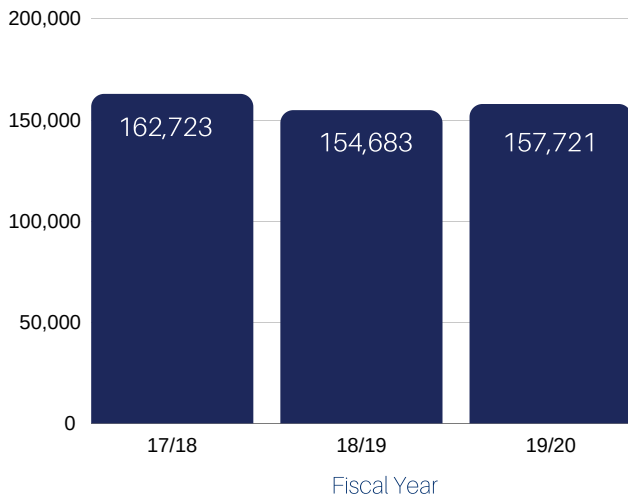
10 699 EIGHTH STREET
BCP-CG 650 PROPERTY LLC
\$602,679,598

APPEALS

Owners have the right to appeal to a separate body, the Assessment Appeals Board (AAB)(sfbos.org/aab), if they disagree with the value determined by our Office. By working with the AAB to resolve appeals more efficiently, the number of open appeals has gradually decreased to an average of 1,000 annually, compared to over 7,000 after the Great Recession. We expect to see a rise in appeals from commercial properties contesting their value due to the pandemic, especially for hotels and offices.



OUR PUBLIC RECORDS

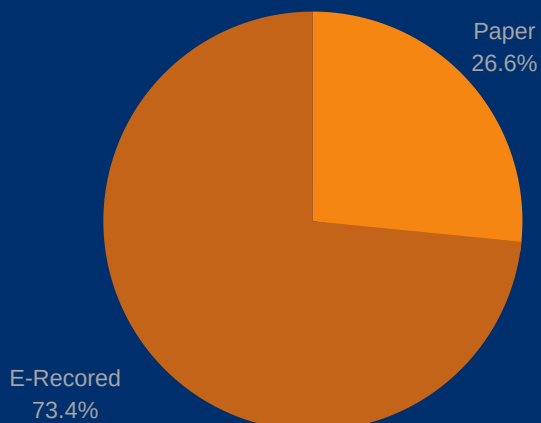
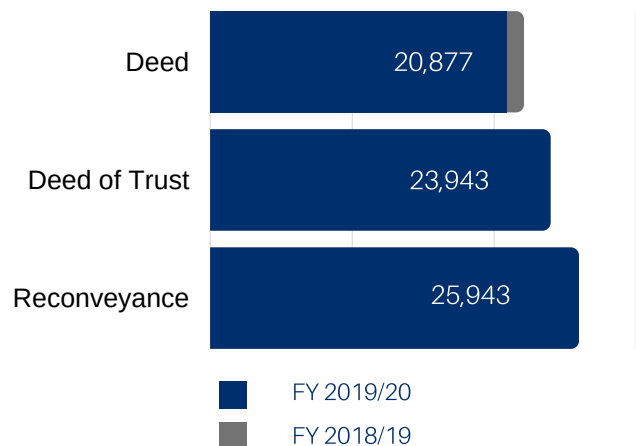


RECORDED EVENTS DROP

The number of recorded documents remains steady. This year, recorded documents increased slightly by 2% compared to the prior year.

TOP RECORDED DOCUMENTS

The graph on the right shows the decrease in recordings for deeds but deeds of trust, reconveyances have increased by over 6,000 recordings, likely due to refinancing activities for lower interest rates.



73% E-RECORDING

Every year, we record over 150,000 documents into the public record and more than 60% are submitted electronically since our Office launched e-recording in 2014. This year, due to office closure, e-recording has become the safest and most convenient way for record submission.

BUSINESSES

ASSESSED BUSINESSES:

39,075

Under the State law, items like furniture, machinery, equipment and supplies used to run a business are subject to property taxation. They are called Business Personal Property. In San Francisco, 39,075 businesses were required to file statements declaring business personal property.

EXEMPTED BUSINESSES:

5,495

To support small businesses, these owners with less than \$4,000 in business personal property are eligible for an exemption from taxation. This year, 5,495 small businesses were exempt from paying business personal property taxes. The total value exempted for small businesses is \$9.5 million

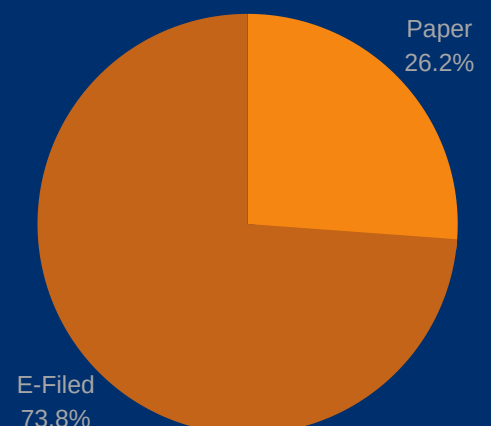
TOTAL VALUE:

\$19.4B

In San Francisco, the cumulative value of all business personal property was \$19.4 billion, which translates to \$230 million in property tax revenue collected.

75% E-FILED

A vast majority of San Francisco businesses already submit their business personal property (BPP) filings online before the pandemic. E-filing saves time by allowing businesses to save information from last year's statement and compare year to year changes. We hope more businesses will take advantage of this service.



Here are the functional divisions within our Office:



PUBLIC SERVICE

We serve close to 40,000 people per year through walk-ins, phone, email, and 311 requests. This year, we served over 32,000 before office closure and continued our service through phone, email, mail and personal drop-offs. Most of our customers are looking for public documents like marriage certificates or deeds, or wanting to understand their property taxes.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Commit to ensure all communities, especially immigrant and underserved communities, have access to financial resources and education. With multicultural and multilingual background, we conduct outreach to, build relationships with, and educate homeowners with a focus on families, seniors, and underserved communities, real estate professionals, nonprofit organizations, and small businesses. Advocates on critical legislation and state Board of Equalization rules and regulations.



RECORDER

Some of our customers come to our office to record public documents. Our Recorder team records over 150,000 public documents annually including deeds, maps, and marriage licenses. When deeds are recorded, we may collect transfer tax and it kicks-off our assessment review.



TRANSACTION

Over 23,000 recorded documents that indicate a change in ownership makes their way to this division for review. Our Transactions team updates ownership information and apply property tax exclusions to qualified properties.



REAL PROPERTY

If there is no tax exclusion and a transaction triggers reassessment, the action makes its way to Real Property for valuation. Our Real Property team valued over 16,000 change in ownership and new construction cases last year.



BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY

Business Personal Property team works with close to 40,000 business owners to account for items like machinery and equipment used to run businesses in San Francisco.



EXEMPTIONS

After the property value is set, our Exemptions team applies eligible tax exemptions to reduce the assessed value. This year, we granted over \$18 billion worth of exemptions to benefit charitable organizations, homeowners and veterans.



FINAL ASSESSMENT

Property owners are notified of their final taxable value.



APPEALS

If property owners disagree with the value, they can file a formal appeal with the independent Assessment Appeals Board. In FY19-20, we closed almost 1,000 appeals.

IMPORTANT DATES

JAN 01

The date taxes for the next fiscal year become a lien on property.

FEB 15

Deadline to file all exemption claims.

MAR 31

Last day to file Informal Proposition 8 Review

APR 01

Due date for filing statements for business personal property and marine vessels.

APR 10

Last day to pay the second installment of secured property taxes without penalty.

MAY 07

Last day to file a business personal property statement without incurring a 10% penalty. In 2020, the deadline for filing was deferred to May 31, 2020.

JUL 01

Local assessment roll is surrendered to the Controller. The local assessment roll is the official list of all taxable property within the County.

MID-JULY

Annual mailing of assessment notices to all San Francisco real property owners stating the taxable value of the property.

JULY 02

First day to file an assessment appeal application with the Assessment Appeals Board.

AUG 31

Regular roll unsecured taxes due.

SEP 15

Last day to file an assessment appeal application for reduced assessment with the Assessment Appeals Board, unless extended to November 30.

DEC 10

Last day to pay first installment of secured property taxes without penalty.

CONTACT US



**WEBSITE:
SFASSESSOR.ORG**

Sign up for our community newsletter here!

The Assessor-Recorder's Office continues to serve the public during the pandemic. Please visit our website at SFAssessor.org or call 311 if you have any questions.

If you have a question about your tax bill, please contact the Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector at www.sftreasurer.org