

22. Residential Rent Stabilization and Arbitration Board (Rent Board)

Criteria-based outcome: Keep	
Notes: - Criteria provide no reason to eliminate - Consider assigning appellate functions to Board of Appeals	

Primary Department	RNT	Established	1979
Current Type	Regulatory	Meetings (CY24)	12 meetings
Policy Area	Housing and Community Development	Members (as of May 2025)	5 seats ¹⁴⁸ 0 vacancies
Annual Cost (FY25)	\$202,247 ¹⁴⁹		

Implements and administers the City's residential rent control ordinance by enacting policies, rules, and regulations as needed. Considers appeals of decisions issued by the Rent Board's Administrative Law Judges. Determines the interest rate on residential security deposits ([Administrative Code § 37.4](#)).

Evaluation Criteria

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Result	Outcome
1 Required by state or federal law	1A. Does State or Federal law explicitly require the existence of this specific body?	No	
	1B. Does this body fulfil some function required by state or federal law?	No	
	1C. Could either another body or City staff fulfil this legal requirement?	N/A	
2 Inactivity	2A. Is this body inactive (did not meet in last year)?	No	
	2B. Is there a clear rationale to maintain the body despite its inactivity?	N/A	
3 Borderline Inactivity	3A. Is this body borderline inactive (Met < 4 times in the past year or > 25% of seats are vacant)?	No	
	3B. Could these issues be addressed by applying templates?	N/A	
4 Overlap with other bodies	4A. Do other bodies cover a similar topic or policy area?	No	
	4B. Could this body reasonably be combined with others in its policy area?	N/A	
	4C. Could this body reasonably take on the work of others in its policy area?	N/A	
5 Breadth of Focus	5A. Is this body narrowly focused on a single funding source, neighborhood, age/ demographic group, or narrow topic?	No	
	5B. Could those interests be adequately represented by some other body or City department?	N/A	
<i>Because the answer to all criteria is "no," the outcome is: consider keeping</i>			

¹⁴⁸ The Rent Board consists of 5 regular members, each of whom have a specific alternate with the same qualifications as the regular member. 1 alternate seat is currently vacant.

¹⁴⁹ Per the Budget and Legislative Analyst's [Financial Analysis report](#) issued September 1, 2025

Staff Discussion:

The evaluation criteria do not provide any reason to eliminate the Residential Rent Stabilization and Arbitration Board (Rent Board).

The Rent Board was created in 1979 to address the City's housing crisis. Its core mission is to protect tenants from excessive rent increases and unjust evictions, ensure fair and adequate rents for landlords, promote the preservation of sound and affordable housing, and provide a mechanism for tenant and landlord dispute resolution. The Rent Board oversees a department of the same name with a \$14.5 million budget and approximately 50 employees.

The Rent Board currently acts in both a governance capacity—approving budgets, setting policy, and participating in hiring/firing of the Rent Board's Executive Director—and a regulatory capacity—issuing 127 pages of rules and regulations to implement the San Francisco Rent Ordinance.

The Rent Board also serves an appellate function, deciding 70 appeals in the last year on decisions rendered by Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) from the Rent Board department. The Task Force has previously emphasized that appeals bodies should be independent from the City departments whose decisions they review. The Task Force may consider re-assigning the Rent Board's appellate function to the Board of Appeals in order to create more separation and neutrality. In doing so, the City may obtain a single appeals body related to housing, building, and permitting. If re-assigned, the Board of Appeals may need additional staff to handle the increased appeals workload.

Possible Application of Appeals Board or Governance Commission Templates:

Template component	Current State	Appeals Board Template	Governance Commission Template	Currently Aligned?
Number of Members	5	3-7	5-7	Yes – Both
Appointing authority	Mayor	N/A ¹⁵⁰	Mayor	Yes – Governance
Appointment confirmations	None	N/A	None ¹⁵¹	Yes – Governance
Member removal	At will	Members are “removeable” - removal is not at will but is at a lower threshold than for cause removals. Details TBD.	At will	Yes – Governance
Term length	4 years	4 years	4 years	Yes – Both
Term limits	None	3 terms	3 terms	No – assign term limits
Qualifications	2 landlords, 2 tenants, and 1 person who is neither a landlord nor a tenant and who owns no residential rental property	Qualifications required; determined by authorizing legislation	None required	Yes – Both
Establishing authority	Administrative Code	TBD	TBD	No
Sunset date	None	None; Evaluate workload/purpose every 5 years.	None	Yes – Both
Hiring and firing authority	Yes. The Commission nominates and the Mayor appoints the Executive Director (ED) of the Rent Board; the Commission may remove the ED of its own initiative.	N/A	Consultative responsibilities only	No

¹⁵⁰ Task Force Members determined that no changes should be made to current bodies around appointing authority and appointment confirmations. They deferred decision-making on whether they would recommend an appointing authority and appointment confirmation approach for future bodies.

¹⁵¹ For governance commissions, appointments are effective immediately unless rejected by 2/3 of the Board of Supervisors within 30 days (per Charter § 3.100.18)

Template component	Current State	Appeals Board Template	Governance Commission Template	Currently Aligned?
Contract approval authority	No	N/A	Retain status quo	Yes – Both
Budget approval authority	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes – Governance
Employee discipline authority	No	N/A	No role	Yes – Both

The Rent Board Commission currently acts as a governance, regulatory, and appeals body. There is no regulatory template to adhere to, so the Task Force may consider aligning the Rent Board Commission to either the governance commission or appeals board template.