

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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Application for Boards, Commissions, Committees, & Task Forces

Name of Board/Commission/Committee/Task Force: Planning Commission

Seat # (Required - see Vacancy Notice for qualifications): 2

Full Name: Elizabeth Suzanne Macdonald

Zip Code: 94131

Occupation: Retired, UC Berkeley Professor Emerita

Work Phone: _____ Employer: _____

Business Address: _____ Zip Code: _____

Business Email: emacdon@berkeley.edu Home Email: _____

Pursuant to Charter, Section 4.101(a)(2), Boards and Commissions established by the Charter must consist of residents of the City and County of San Francisco who are 18 years of age or older (unless otherwise stated in the code authority). For certain appointments, the Board of Supervisors may waive the residency requirement.

Resident of San Francisco: Yes ☒ No ☐ If No, place of residence: _____

18 Years of Age or Older: Yes ☒ No ☐

Pursuant to Charter, Section 4.101(a)(1), please state how your qualifications represent the communities of interest, neighborhoods, and the diversity in ethnicity, race, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, types of disabilities, and any other relevant demographic qualities of the City and County of San Francisco:

I have lived in San Francisco for 30 years and the city continues to unfold for me as a place of large and small joys, nurture, and constant learning experiences. I have a deep appreciation for its unique urban form, the ways in which its built form interacts with geography and the natural environment, its many distinctive neighborhoods and local shopping streets, and the density, open spaces and built design details that contribute to livability and a lively public realm. This appreciation comes from my lived experience and is buttressed by my training and work in the city planning field. I also have immense appreciation for the wide diversity of San Francisco's residents and other community members. San Francisco's urban form and its people together are what make San Francisco such a special place. I spent much of my career as a planning professor at UC Berkeley, within a culture dedicated to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, a culture that aligns with my own values. I have seen how communities with these characteristics thrive through respectful dialogue and action. I believe that city planning at its best seeks to shape a city's form and future in ways that address the concerns of all members of the community, and that reflect community needs, values, and aspirations within the context of sustaining the natural environment and addressing regional concerns. Within San Francisco, the City Planning Commission plays a key role in planning processes, and I would be honored to serve on it and contribute what I can. On a personal note, I count myself fortunate to be a longtime San Francisco homeowner. I know what it is to care strongly about one's immediate environment and neighborhood as it is. On the other hand, I understand that change happens in cities, is necessary, and can be exciting and bring good things. The City Planning Commission and City Planning Department grapple with preservation versus transformation tensions like these, alongside the community, seeking to find thoughtful and creative balances. I would like to be a part of that grappling, especially in these current challenging times of extreme housing unaffordability, state housing mandates, and office and commercial vacancies.

(Applications must be submitted to BOS-Appointments@sfgov.org or to the mailing address listed above.)

Business and/or Professional Experience:

My professional experience encompasses multiple aspects of urban planning and design, and includes administrative and leadership positions. I recently retired from UC Berkeley, where for 22 years I was a professor in the Department of City & Regional Planning, which followed upon two years teaching at the University of Toronto and one year at the University of British Columbia. I primarily taught professional master's degree students but also undergraduates, and worked with doctoral students. Always, in both my teaching and research, I kept an orientation toward practice. My research analyzes issues related to urban physical development and the design of the public realm, with a focus on livability and environmental sustainability. My objective is to provide knowledge that addresses the emerging concerns of urban design and planning practice and to provide that knowledge in a way that is directly useful to practitioners and communities. I am author of five books, most notably *The Boulevard Book* (MIT Press) and *Urban Waterfront Promenades* (Routledge), and also many journal articles on urban planning and design subjects. At UC Berkeley, I sought administrative positions to help further the whole. At the college level, I served as Acting Chair of the Department of City & Regional Planning, Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning, and ultimately as Associate Dean for the College of Environmental Design. At the campus level, I was appointed to high level committees including the Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation, and served as Co-Chair of the Chancellor's Committee on Parking and Transportation. Prior to my academic career I practiced architecture with small Bay Area firms, doing residential, commercial and institutional projects. During much of my time in academia I maintained a small urban design practice focused primarily on street design. Examples of my work in San Francisco include contributions to the Market-Octavia Neighborhood Plan, the design of Octavia Boulevard, the Transbay Redevelopment Project Area Design for Development, and the Better Streets Plan. Beyond this, I've consulted nationally and internationally on various urban plans and street design projects.

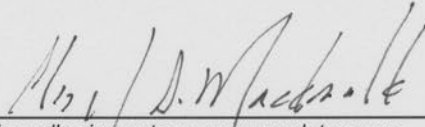
Civic Activities:

My civic activities most relevant to this application involve the community engaged urban planning courses I developed and taught at UC Berkeley. Most notably, I taught the graduate level Plan Preparation Studio, which each year focused on a different Bay Area neighborhood or corridor scale study area faced with topical real-world planning issues or development pressures or both. My course required students to do grounded team work based on local context and integrated cross-cutting research, and to engage directly with the study area through empirical observation and interaction with local stakeholders and community partners in a variety of ways. Examples include working with the Annie E. Casey Foundation in our work for Oakland's Lower San Antonio neighborhood, with Connect Oakland in our work on the I-880 and I-980 freeway corridors, and with the Friends of the Napa River in our work for Downtown Napa. Within San Francisco, areas we looked at included the Cesar Chavez, Masonic Avenue, Lombard Street and Central Freeway corridors, and for each of these we liaised with planning department staff, other city staff, activists and community members. We created graphic presentations explicitly meant to be easily comprehensible by lay people, and made our work available so that it could become a part of the public dialogue as community members saw fit. My undergraduate course Urban Design: City-Building and Place-Making included multiple field trips to San Francisco, designed to teach students first-hand about the city's public realm and neighborhood form, and the community actions, planning policy and decisions that influenced what was built and what wasn't built. I view opening students' eyes in this way as a civic activity, since what they learn will shape their understanding of cities and how they transform, and hopefully influence them to engage in urban planning processes throughout their lives.

Have you attended any meetings of the body to which you are applying? Yes ☒ No ☐

An appearance before the Rules Committee may be required at a scheduled public hearing, prior to the Board of Supervisors considering the recommended appointment. Applications should be received ten (10) days prior to the scheduled public hearing.

Date: July 12, 2026 Applicant's Signature (required):


(Manually sign or type your complete name.
NOTE: By typing your complete name, you are
hereby consenting to use of electronic signature.)

Please Note: Your application will be retained for one year. Once completed, this form, including all attachments, become public record.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Appointed to Seat #: _____ Term Expires: _____ Date Vacated: _____