

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is ESER?

ESER, Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response, is the City's bond program that funds much-needed upgrades and improvements to capital infrastructure and first responder facilities, bolstering San Francisco's resiliency and allowing the City to quickly respond to a major earthquake or other disaster and to recover from its aftermath.

2. How much money is in the 2020 ESER bond?

The 2020 ESER bond is a \$628.5 million bond.

3. When will I see the bond on the ballot?

You will see the ESER bond on the upcoming March 2020 ballot.

4. Why is ESER 2020 necessary now?

San Francisco is surrounded by major fault lines and, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, there is a 72 percent chance of a 6.7 magnitude earthquake in the next 20 years. It is important that San Francisco continues to upgrade its public safety facilities to ensure the utmost safety for our first responders and residents during times of emergency.

5. How will ESER 2020 affect property tax rates?

Property tax rates will not increase as a result of ESER 2020. Through careful planning, the City only issues new bonds once previous bonds have been paid down. ESER 2020 will allow for these upgrades to be made in a way that does not raise the tax rate.

6. Didn't I already vote for two ESER bonds?

Yes. ESER 2020 is the next phase of a multi-year program to improve the City's deteriorating emergency response system. Voters overwhelmingly approved the first ESER bond in 2010 and a second one in 2014. ESER 2010 began our efforts to safeguard San Francisco from the next major earthquake or other disaster, and ESER 2014 continued the significant progress. To adapt to changing times and a growing population, more strategic improvements must be made to ensure the safety of our first responders and the residents and visitors of San Francisco during an emergency.

7. What did the money from ESER 2010 and 2014 accomplish?

Under ESER 2010 and ESER 2014, the City identified improvements and seismic upgrades to all of the then-43 neighborhood fire stations, including two replacement projects at Station 5 and Station 16. The program also funded construction of the Public Safety campus which houses San Francisco Police Department headquarters, a district police station and a firehouse; the renovation of the Chief Medical Examiner's Office; improvements to select district police stations; the relocation of the Motorcycle Police and Crime Lab facilities; and phased improvements to the aging Emergency Firefighting Water System.

8. Can this be paid for using the General Fund?

At \$628.5 million, the cost of necessary upgrades is beyond what the City's General Fund can support.

Our facilities are old – in some cases a century old – and cannot be fixed all at once. ESER 2020 is part of a strategic, multi-year plan to upgrade our deteriorating first response facilities and ensure functioning recovery services without raising taxes.

9. When would ESER 2020 projects start?

The projects proposed under ESER 2020 are expected to begin immediately, and the progress made by ESER 2010 and 2014 will continue without interruption. The City is investing resources into making sure ESER 2020 immediately begins further improvements to the City’s deteriorating and aging first response services.

10. What is the City’s 10-Year Capital Plan?

San Francisco’s 10-Year Capital Plan is approved by the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors every odd year. The Capital Plan includes figures on the costs of maintaining our streets and right-of-way infrastructure, making seismic repairs to capital facilities and improving parks and cultural facilities without going beyond our means. The most recent Plan provides a financing strategy for the City and its partner agencies to deliver \$39 billion in infrastructure investments without raising property tax rates or overburdening the General Fund.

For more information on the City’s 10-Year Capital Plan, please visit [onesanfrancisco.org](https://www.onesanfrancisco.org).