

Executive Summaries and Survey Comparison



General Manager San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

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Contents

**Executive Summaries
Community
Staff**

**Community-Staff Survey
Comparison**

SFPUC GM Recruitment Community Survey

Executive Summary

Survey overview

Item	Detail
Survey period	Responses received Sept. 25 – Oct. 9, 2026
Total responses	82 (includes 2 entries marked "test")
Open-ended comments (Q3)	33 answered, 50 skipped
Format	SurveyMonkey; Q1 and Q2 allowed up to 5 selections each

Q1 – Top priorities for the next GM

Respondents want a General Manager who can fix and fund aging infrastructure while keeping rates affordable.

Infrastructure and system resilience is the clear top priority, chosen by nearly 3 in 4 respondents.

Rank	Priority	% of respondents	Responses
1	Advance Infrastructure & System Resilience	72%	59
2	Strengthen Financial Sustainability	57%	47
3	Establish a Long-Term Strategic Vision	54%	44
4	Build Greater Transparency & Public Trust	50%	41
5	Advance Climate & Environmental Leadership	45%	37

Q2 – Top attributes of the ideal candidate

The top three attributes are closely bunched (61–66%): collaborative decision-making, balancing affordability with reliability, and developing the workforce.

Rank	Attribute	% of respondents	Responses
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Rank	Attribute	% of respondents	Responses
1	Collaborative Decision-Making	66%	54
2	Utility Affordability & Reliability	62%	51
3	Workforce Leadership & Development	61%	50
4	Communication & Public Engagement	49%	40
5	Fiscal & Financial Stewardship	46%	38

Q3 – Themes from open-ended comments

Of 33 comments (about 29 substantive), the most common themes were public power and utility-industry experience.

- **Public power / PG&E acquisition (6):** champion public power expansion, reduce transmission costs, and plan for the engineering and labor demands of a buyout.
- **Utility industry and technical experience (6):** prior utility experience at SF's scale; engineering or scientific background.
- **Affordability and fiscal discipline (4):** avoid rate shock, show ROI on capital programs, and examine SF's high construction costs.
- **Workforce, culture and accountability (3):** prioritize hiring and retaining staff at all levels, build in-house expertise, and address nepotism concerns.
- **Relationships and communication (3):** regular public interaction and strong ties with the Mayor, Board of Supervisors and sister agencies.
- **Equity and community commitments (3):** honor past commitments, including the Southeast mitigation agreement.
- **AI readiness (2) and climate and water-supply resilience (2).**
- **Internal vs. external hire:** opinion is split, with 2 favoring an internal or government candidate and 2 urging an outside hire.

SFPUC GM Recruitment Staff Survey

Executive Summary

Survey overview

Staff want a General Manager who will rebuild infrastructure under a clear long-term vision and who invests in the workforce, ideally a leader with real utility experience chosen on merit, not politics.

Item	Detail
Survey period	Responses received Sept. 28 – Oct. 9, 2026
Total responses	236 (Q1: 235; Q2: 236; includes about 2 test entries)
Open-ended comments (Q3)	141 answered, 95 skipped
Format	SurveyMonkey; Q1 and Q2 allowed up to 5 selections each

Q1 – Top priorities for the next GM

Infrastructure and system resilience leads by a wide margin, chosen by nearly 4 in 5 staff.

Rank	Priority	% of respondents	Responses
1	Advance Infrastructure & System Resilience	78%	184
2	Establish a Long-Term Strategic Vision	64%	150
3	Strengthen Financial Sustainability	57%	135
4	Advance Climate & Environmental Leadership	45%	105
5	Build Greater Transparency & Public Trust	41%	97

Q2 – Top attributes of the ideal candidate

Workforce leadership and development is the top attribute (64%), followed by collaborative decision-making and affordability with reliability.

Rank	Attribute	% of respondents	Responses
1	Workforce Leadership & Development	64%	152
2	Collaborative Decision-Making	59%	140
3	Utility Affordability & Reliability	57%	134
4	Fiscal & Financial Stewardship	53%	126
5	Capital Project Leadership	49%	116

Q3 – Themes from open-ended comments

Of 141 comments (about 114 substantive), staff most often asked for a leader who cares for employees and brings real utility experience. Counts below are approximate.

- **Employee care, staffing and hiring:** an approachable GM who values staff, plus faster hiring, more trades and operations positions, career paths, and work-life flexibility.
- **Utility and technical experience:** experience running a water, wastewater and power utility, ideally public-sector, with knowledge of all three enterprises and Hetch Hetchy operations.
- **Merit-based, non-political selection:** choose the best-qualified candidate rather than a political appointee, and one willing to push back on City Hall when needed.
- **Public power / PG&E acquisition:** support public power expansion from start to finish.
- **Efficiency and management layers:** reduce bureaucracy and management layers, and fix purchasing and administrative processes.
- **Accountability and culture:** address favoritism, nepotism and uneven accountability.
- **Internal candidates:** promote from within to keep institutional knowledge.
- **Engagement during the search:** staff asked for candidate Q&A sessions and all-hands updates.
- **Telework:** about 4 ask to keep remote or flexible work; 1 asks for full return to office.

SFPUC GM Recruitment Surveys – Staff vs. Community Comparison

Both groups rank infrastructure resilience first, but staff lean inward —strategic vision, workforce and operational experience — while the community leans outward — public trust, engagement, customer service and collaboration.

Participation

Staff responded nearly three times the numbers of the community and were more likely to comment.

	Staff	Community
Responses	236	82
Comments (Q3)	141 (60%)	33 (40%)
Responses received	Sept. 28 – Oct. 9, 2026	Sept. 28 – Oct. 9, 2026

Q1 – Priorities for the next GM

Staff favor strategic vision (+10 points); the community favors engagement, transparency and customer service (+9 to +10).

Priority	Staff	Community	Gap (pts)
Long-Term Strategic Vision	64%	54%	Staff +10
Infrastructure & System Resilience	78%	72%	Staff +6
Financial Sustainability	57%	57%	Even
Climate & Environmental Leadership	45%	45%	Even
Regulatory & Government Partnerships	38%	37%	Even
Transparency & Public Trust	41%	50%	Community +9
Customer Service & Equity	25%	34%	Community +9
Community & Stakeholder Engagement	34%	44%	Community +10

Q2 – Attributes of the ideal candidate

Staff rank workforce development #1; the community ranks collaborative decision-making #1.

Attribute	Staff	Community	Gap (pts)
Fiscal & Financial Stewardship	53%	46%	Staff +7
Stakeholder Relations & Negotiation	36%	30%	Staff +6
Capital Project Leadership	49%	44%	Staff +5
Workforce Leadership & Development	64%	61%	Staff +3
Strategic & Regulatory Leadership	41%	41%	Even
Utility Affordability & Reliability	57%	62%	Community +5
Collaborative Decision-Making	59%	66%	Community +7
Communication & Public Engagement	42%	49%	Community +7

Open-ended comments

Staff comments center on the workplace; community comments center on public power and services.

- **Top theme:** staff – employee care, staffing and hiring; community – public power and the PG&E acquisition.
- **Mainly staff:** merit-based rather than political selection, fewer management layers, favoritism and accountability, slow hiring, telework.
- **Mainly community:** SF's high construction costs, transparency about AI, equitable access to services, honoring community commitments.
- **Internal vs. external hire:** staff lean internal; the community is split 2 to 2.
- **Shared:** utility-industry experience, support for public power, affordable rates.