



City & County of San Francisco Ethics Commission



Website Style Suggestions

Introduction

This presentation suggests changes to current website styles that will create a clearer visual hierarchy, adequate contrast, and achieve accessibility requirements.

As background, we'll cover:

- What visual hierarchy is and why it's important
- What a typographic scale is and how to choose one
- Best practices for links and lists
- Accessibility considerations



Objectives

By the end, let's decide:

- Which typographic scale to use
- How we'll handle website links
- Which colors will/won't be used on the website
- Next steps for testing or implementation



The background of the slide is a photograph of a highly ornate, gold-colored metal frame. The frame is decorated with intricate scrollwork and floral patterns. In the lower portion of the frame, the words "CITY HALL" are inscribed in a large, serif, gold-colored font. A semi-transparent grey triangle is positioned on the left side of the image, containing the number "01" in white.

01

Typography

Hierarchy

Clear visual hierarchy in design helps guide a reader, visitor, learner through the material by indicating what is most important and what is least important.

- There should be a clear visual path through the content. Consider the various levels of type in a newspaper: headings, subheads, captions all with distinct type styles.
- Use placement, size, color, weight, emphasis to differentiate headings from one another.
- Pair typefaces that have contrast: serif with sans serif, chunky with thin, etc. Avoid typefaces that are too similar & lack contrast. Letterforms that are too different invite distraction. Find the sweet spot.
- Use no more than three typefaces – It's okay to use multiple styles (thin, semibold, black) of one typeface to establish hierarchy and provide contrast.



Contrast in Heading Levels

x-height

■ Source Sans 3 Regular

x-height

□ Georgia Regular

g g

e e e g

Because certain letterforms in these two fonts are so similar (showing the “e” and “g” as examples) we should avoid placing these styles right next to one another or in the same size or weight due to this lack of contrast.

The slides that follow explore alternate pairings that create a clear visual hierarchy with sufficient contrast by combining various font styles, weights, and use of color. 0

Current Heading Styles – except H1

Heading 2 – Georgia Bold, 40pt. #343a40

Heading 3 – Source Sans 3 Bold, 28pt. #343a40

Heading 4 – Source Sans 3 Bold, 24 pt. #005a56

Heading 5 – Source Sans 3 Bold, 20 pt. #3d408b

Heading 6 – San Source 3 Bold, 16pt., #343a40

Body text – Source Sans 3 Regular, 16pt., 343a40

Image/table caption; Source Sans 3 italic, 16px, #343a4

There doesn't appear to be a specific scale governing the font sizes of these current styles.



Selecting a Typographic Scale

A typographic scale is just a scale of type sizes derived from a set ratio. Following a typographic scale creates a sense of harmony among the heading levels as each is relative to the other as determined by the ratio set by the scale.

There are many to choose from, and which scale is best, depends on the purpose of the website.

Marketing websites often use a bold ratio, with bigger differences in size from level to level, while text-heavy government sites such as ours, tend to be more conservative in the jump from level to level.



A Minor Third Type Scale – 1.2

P	H6	H5	H4	H3	H2	H1
<i>16px</i> <i>1rem</i>	<i>19px</i> <i>1.2rem</i>	<i>23px</i> <i>1.44rem</i>	<i>28px</i> <i>1.728rem</i>	<i>33px</i> <i>2.074rem</i>	<i>40px</i> <i>2.488rem</i>	<i>48px</i> <i>2.986rem</i>

A Minor Third Type Scale – 1.2

Heading 2 – Georgia Bold, 24.9pt.

Heading 3 – Source Sans 3 Bold, 20.7

Heading 4 – Source Sans 3 Bold, 17.3 pt.

Heading 5 – Source Sans 3 Bold, 14.4 pt.

Heading 6 – San Source 3 Bold, 12pt.

Body text – Source Sans 3 Regular, 12pt.

Image/table caption; Source Sans 3 italic, 12pt

Just taking the styles we already have and modifying the font sizes to conform to a Minor Third scale improves the hierarchy.



Suggested Styles - 1

Heading 2 – Georgia Pro Condensed BLK, 24.9 pt. / 33.17 px. #1F232B

Heading 3 – Georgia Pro Condensed Semibold, 20.7 pt. / 27.64 px. #004a80

Heading 4 – Source Sans 3 Medium, 17.3 pt. / 23.04 px #1F232B

HEADING 5 – ALL CAPS Source Sans 3 Regular, 14.4 pt. / 19.2px. #004a80

Heading 6 – San Source 3 Bold Italic, 12 pt. / 16 px. #1F232B

Body text – Source Sans 3 Regular, 12 pt. / 16 px.

Image/table caption; Source Sans 3, 10 pt / 13.33 PX #



A Minor Third Type – Example 1

A Heading 2

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. **The line spacing of this paragraph uses the ratio too.**

A Heading 3

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.

A Heading 4

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.

A HEADING 5

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.

A Heading 6

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.

Image caption / table caption Source Sans 3, 10 pt. / 13.33 px #1F232B



Suggested Styles - 2

Heading 2 – Georgia Pro Condensed Bold, 24.9 pt. / 33.17 px. #1F232B

Heading 3 – Georgia Pro Semibold, 20.7 pt. / 27.64 px. #004a80

Heading 4 – Source Sans 3 Medium, 17.3 pt. / 23.04 px #1F232B

Heading 5 Source Sans 3 Italic, 14.4 pt. / 19.2px. #004a80

Heading 6 – Georgia Pro Regular SemiBold, 12 pt. / 16 px. #1F232B

Body text – Source Sans 3 Regular, 12 pt. / 16 px.

Image/table caption; Source Sans 3, 10 pt / 13.33 PX #1F232B



A Minor Third Type – Example 2

A Heading 2

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. **The line spacing of this paragraph uses the ratio too.**

A Heading 3

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.

A Heading 4

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.

A Heading 5

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.

A Heading 6

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.

Image caption / table caption Source Sans 3, 10 pt. / 13.33 px #1F232B



A Perfect Fourth Type Scale – 1.333

P	H6	H5	H4	H3	H2	H1
16px 1rem	21px 1.333rem	28px 1.777rem	38px 2.369rem	51px 3.157rem	67px 4.209rem	90px 5.61rem

A Perfect Fourth Scale – 1.333

Heading 2 –67.2

Heading 3 –50.4

Heading 4 –37.8

Heading 5 –28.4

Heading 6 –21.3

Body text –16pt.

Image/table caption; Source Sans 3 italic, 16pt

Just taking the styles we already have and modifying the font sizes to conform to a Perfect Fourth scale improves the hierarchy.



A Perfect Fourth Scale – 1.333

A Heading 3

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.
This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.
This is a paragraph. **The line spacing of this paragraph uses the ratio too.**

A Heading 4

This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.
This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph. This is a paragraph.
This is a paragraph. **The line spacing of this paragraph uses the ratio too.**



Number of Levels

The number of heading levels needed on a web page will depend on page content. As a general rule: Avoid layouts that use two headings right next to one another without at least 1-2 sentences of paragraph text between them.



H3 Heading here

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi.

H4 Heading here

Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi.



H3 Heading here

H4 Heading here

Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi.





02

Colors

Colors - Guidance

In design color can be used to **show emphasis and establish hierarchy**, but it should be applied strategically.

Too little color = boring visuals that don't grab attention.

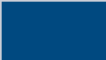





Too many colors = chaotic visuals that compete for attention.

Create a clean, harmonious website by limiting the use of colors to 3-4 (besides black and white).



Colors - Suggestions

Although we have a lot of colors from which to choose in our brand style guide, I suggest limiting them to the following:

Color	Purpose
#004A80 - 	Main site color: site headers, backgrounds, buttons, heading styles, links. Also used at 100% for border of informational cards and at 20% (#bac8d7) for the body of the cards. Must use #1F232b over card body for adequate contrast.
#BCE4EA 	Accent color, used for buttons over #004A80 background. Not used on white background.
#F2D492 	Accent color. Use at 100% for border on Warning cards. Use 20% (#F4E1C6) for the body of Warning Card. Must use #1F232b over card body for adequate contrast.
#3C676C 	Accent color, used for buttons over #FFFFFF background. Not used on blue background.
#1F232B 	The EC color for black instead of #000000. Used for headings, body text.
#981F09 	Reserved or warnings. Use 100% for border on Urgent or Critical warnings, use at 20% (#DCBFB9) for body of urgent warnings. Must use #1F232b over card body for adequate contrast.

#981F09

100%

20%

#004A80

100%

20%

#E69A26

100%

20%





03

Lists

Bullets & Lists - Guidance

Lists should contain **two or more items**. If the listed items must follow a prescribed sequence—such as steps in a procedure—use a numbered list. If the items do not follow a prescribed order, use bullets.

Just like we wouldn't create a list of steps with just one step on it, we shouldn't create a bulleted list with only one bulleted item. Instead, incorporate the item into the paragraph OR **come up with a second bullet**.

A bulleted list should not come directly after a heading style with no text between them. Include at least one sentence for context.

- Use the small solid square bullet for first-level bullets.
 - Use the small open square for a second-level bullet.
 - Include two second-level bullets, or none at all.
- Another bullet.



Major Developer Disclosure Process

- [Who must file](#)
- [Reporting](#)



Bullets & Lists - Examples

Conflict of Interest – City Officers

Last Updated October 3, 2019



Notification of Recusal

On January 1, 2019, a new recusal reporting law that amends Sec. 3.209 of the City's Campaign & Governmental Conduct Code became operational.

Sec. 3.209 specifies recusal procedures for Commissioners who have a financial conflict of interest arising from pending matters, including public disclosure of the conflict and leaving the room during discussion, voting and any other disposition of the matter. Commissioners who must recuse themselves also must file a public disclosure form with the Ethics Commission within 15 days after the date of the meeting at which the recusal occurred or would have occurred. Commissioners must file the form even if the member did not attend the meeting that would have required their recusal.

More information and filing procedures are available below:

- [Recusal disclosure procedures for members of City boards and commissions](#)

Restructure page content to avoid leaving a single bullet.



A close-up photograph of a highly ornate brass door handle. The handle features intricate scrollwork and a central circular medallion. Below the handle, a dark blue plaque with the words 'CITY HALL' in gold lettering is visible. A semi-transparent grey triangle is overlaid on the left side of the image.

04

Links

Links to resources

We rightly use links throughout our site to connect visitors to important related content. However, it's important to make sure that we are only including necessary links and applying links consistently:

Do you need a link? If so:

- Is it required or informational?
- Where does it fit best? In-line or in the sidebar?

Too many links dilutes the importance of linked content.

Always open links in a new window.

Include a clear call to action:

- *Read the Guide*
- *File your disclosure*
- *Learn more about...*
- *Contact us for advice*

Refer to the [San Francisco Content Style Guide](#) for more about links.



Links Example – In-Line

H3 Complete training

Candidates for City elective office and their treasurer/assistant treasurer must complete a training prescribed by the Ethics Commission prior to each election in which the candidate will appear on the ballot. An individual who serves as the treasurer for more than one committee is not required to complete a training if that individual has completed such a training within the previous 12 months. While other campaign representatives are not required to complete a training session, they are welcome to attend a live session, or to view the online version of the training.

After completing the training, the candidate and treasurer/assistant treasurer must [file a Training for Candidates and Treasurers \(Form SFEC-107\)](#).

Training dates and times for the November 2024 General Election will be released in the coming months.

One form, linked in-line with clear call to action.



Links Example - Listed

H3 Additional Resources

The Ethics Commission has produced a comprehensive guide for candidates running for City elective office, supplements for candidates running for the office of Mayor or [Supervisor](#), and filing schedules that outline campaign finance disclosure deadlines.

- [Candidates' Guide for City Elective Office](#)
- [Candidates Running for Mayor or Supervisor](#)
- [Filing Schedules](#)

Multiple forms or links, previously linked in-line, now arranged in a list.

The San Francisco Ethics Commission administers a limited public campaign financing program for candidates running for Mayor or Supervisor. For information about this program, [visit our Public Financing page](#).



05

Buttons

CITY HALL

Buttons – Guidance

Guidance on buttons from the **San Francisco Content Style guide** that we should incorporate into our website:

- Only use a button if there is a specific action you want someone to take.
- You should only have one button on a page. If you have more than one action, add the others as links.
- Buttons can only be 25 characters long. Shorter button text is more effective!
- Do not include icons, such as >> unless the button is used as a navigational element directing visitors to a following or previous page in a series:
<< Previous or Next >>.
- Use verbs: *Submit*, *Get Started*, *Learn More*, etc.

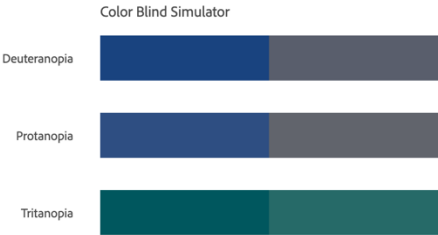


Buttons - Color

As an actionable UI element, a button's color requires adequate contrast between itself and its background. For accessibility purposes, according to [W3C Standards](#), a minimum contrast ratio of 4.5 is needed; 7 is recommended.



The combination of colors on the site now does not meet this requirement.



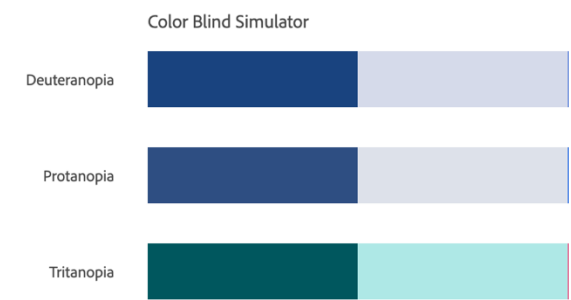
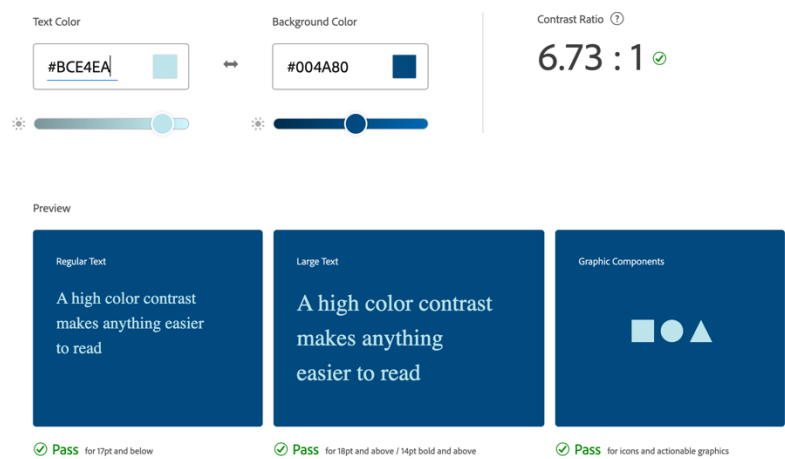
There could be more contrast for color blind users as well.

Accessibility tool used [Adobe Color](#).

Buttons – Suggestion 1

To achieve the appropriate level of contrast, I recommend swapping out our brand palette color #3C676C with #BCE4EA for buttons when placed on the dark blue (#004a80).

This combination yields sufficient contrast and does not present issues for site users with colorblindness.



Accessibility tool used [Adobe Color](#).

Buttons – Suggestion 2

When placed on a white background, the following color combinations could be used as needed:

Text Color

#F2D492

Background Color

#004A80

Contrast Ratio ?

6.38 : 1

Preview

Regular Text

A high color contrast makes anything easier to read

✓ Pass for 17pt and below

Large Text

A high color contrast makes anything easier to read

✓ Pass for 18pt and above / 14pt bold and above

Graphic Components

✓ Pass for icons and actionable graphics

Color Blind Simulator

Deuteranopia

Protanopia

Tritanopia

Accessibility tool used [Adobe Color](#).

Buttons – Suggestion 3

Using the green color of the original button against a white background gives us an alternative to the dark blue for some variety and has adequate contrast.

Text Color

#FFFFFF

Background Color

#3C676C

Contrast Ratio ?

6.27 : 1

Regular Text

A high color contrast makes anything easier to read

Large Text

A high color contrast makes anything easier to read

Graphic Components

Color Blind Simulator

Deuteranopia

Protanopia

Tritanopia

Pass for 17pt and below

Pass for 18pt and above / 14pt bold and above

Pass for icons and actionable graphics

Accessibility tool used [Adobe Color](#).

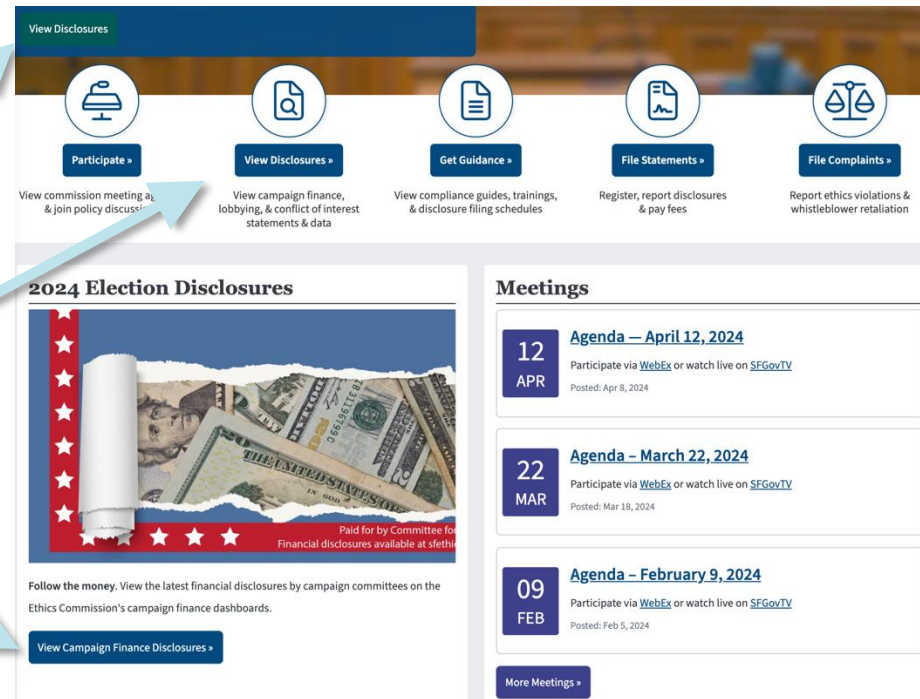


Buttons –Observation & Suggestion

As actionable UI elements, duplicates of the same button, linking to the same place, or with similar label text should not be placed on the same page.

Are these buttons the same? If not, what do they link to that's different?

If they link to different pages the text labels should be **clearly distinct**.
If all link to the same place, why do we need three of them?













06

Icons










CITY HALL

Icons — <https://sfethics.org>

Button	Current Icon	Suggested
Participate		
View Disclosures		
Get Guidance		
File Statements		
File Complaints		














Icons — <https://sfethics.org/commission>

Button	Current Icon	Suggested
Meetings		
Commissioners		
Staff Directory		--
Policy Issues		--
Interested Persons List		 













Icons — <https://sfethics.org/guidance>

Button	Current Icon	Suggested
Campaign Finance		--
City Officers & Employees		--
Lobbyists		
Campaign Consultants		 
Permit Consultants		
Major Developers		








Icons — <https://sfethics.org/complaints>

Button	Current Icon	Suggested
File a Complaint		
Make a Payment		
Case Resolutions		
Unpaid Late Fees		
Regulations		














Icons — <https://sfethics.org/disclosures>

Button	Current Icon	Suggested
Campaign Finance Dashboards		
Statements of Economic Interests		--
Contact Lobbyists Activity		



Icons — <https://sfethics.org/campaigns>

Button	Suggestion(s)
Starting your Campaign	 
Public Financing Program	
Running the Campaign	
Reporting Requirements	
Filing Schedules	 
Ad Disclaimer Charts	
After the Campaign	
Campaign Finance Support Portal	 



The background image shows a highly detailed, ornate gold callout or crest. It features intricate scrollwork, floral motifs, and a central circular medallion. Below the crest, the words "CITY HALL" are inscribed in a serif font on a dark blue background. The entire scene is framed by a gold border.

07

Callouts & Cards

Callout Cards – General

The purpose of the callout cards is to differentiate content visually provide a progressive scale of urgency directing visitors to content that they **could**, **should**, or **must** know.

The following slides will describe the suitable uses of and the design guidelines for each card type.



Callout Cards – Informational

Informational content is useful, supportive, but is not required or actionable. Content is placed in a callout rather than in the page body to draw attention to the useful content, but if the content is ignored, there will be no negative consequence.

The final icon is still TBD, but it will be clearly optional and a different type of alert than the other types.



A short one or two sentence description and likely includes a link to another page or helpful resource. Georgia Pro, 14.



Callout Cards – Warning

Warning content should be actionable but not urgently imminent. Warnings alert visitors to upcoming deadlines, filing obligations on the horizon, scheduled required trainings, and other upcoming important tasks and deadlines.

The final icon is still TBD, but it will be clearly a caution of some kind that captures visitors' attention.



A short one or two sentence description and likely includes a link to another page or helpful resource. Georgia Pro, 14.



Callout Cards – Notice

Notice content should be immediately. Notices alert visitors to imminent deadlines, filing obligations, consequences for non-compliance.

The final icon is still TBD, but it will indicate that visitors must urgently read and take action to avoid breaking the law.



A short one or two sentence description and must include a link to steps, or form, or whatever action the visitor must take to comply with the law.

