

Online Community for SFCM Housing Options

In order to disseminate useful information, share helpful resources, and provide communication between current and incoming students, the Conservatory manages an online housing community. This interactive community provides a forum for Conservatory students to discuss housing needs, trends, and opportunities and includes a roommate database, comparison charts for over fifteen Bay Area neighborhoods, and helpful online links. This SFCM-Housing Yahoo! Group is a valuable resource in preparation for a move to the Bay Area and to the Conservatory. More information on this online community can be found at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sfcm-housing>. When requesting membership, please mention your full name and your status as a newly accepted student.

Planning Ahead

Many students plan their move to the Bay Area in early summer. The online community offers helpful information about the Bay Area housing market, and also connects students to potential roommates and residences. Some students visit San Francisco in advance (June – early August) to find suitable housing before the semester begins. Please note that many apartment leases begin on the first day of each month. As the current rental market has become extremely competitive, students are encouraged to begin the housing search process early.

Students unable to solidify their housing before Orientation often make a reservation at a hotel, youth hostel, residence club, or Golden Gate Hall before their arrival. It is recommended that students not search for housing during Orientation placement exams and auditions. Please allow a minimum of three to four weeks to locate permanent housing.

Come Prepared

We recommend you come prepared for your apartment search with a rental resume and a credit report. For help with designing a rental resume, refer to the Rental Application Resume form found online at www.rentalguide.com/pdf/rental_application.pdf. A credit report will be needed if you intend to look for your own apartment and/or sign a lease. If you do not have a credit history, be prepared to have your parents co-sign your applications. For more information about your credit report, contact Experian at www.experian.com; Equifax at www.equifax.com; or TransUnion at www.transunion.com/index.jsp.

Communicating with potential landlords or roommates is easier and more secure if you have a steady personal voicemail and/or email. If you do not have a mobile phone, voicemail companies can provide you with your own phone number for a small fee. Your SFCM email account will be available for your use starting this summer.

Transportation Resources

Public transportation service in San Francisco is readily accessible. MUNI, the city's bus and in-town train system, is convenient to use and provides easy access to every neighborhood in town. All collegiate students are enrolled in the MUNI Class Pass system, which allows access to any MUNI surface bus, underground train or cable car in the city of San Francisco. Visit www.sfmuni.com and www.511.org for more information.

Tips for Finding Housing

- Subscribe to the SFCM-Housing Yahoo! Group located at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sfcm-housing/>. While the Conservatory maintains a physical Housing Bulletin Board in the student lounge, the most updated and pertinent information will be posted to the online community.

Apartment Living for SFCM Students

- Refer to the SFCM-Housing Yahoo! Group for information on Bay Area neighborhoods and for information on settling into your new home (such as setting up gas & electric, water, refuse/recycling, and cable & internet).
- Find a roommate! The SFCM-Housing Yahoo! Group contains a roommate database for students looking to live with fellow Conservatory students. Once you are a member of the online housing group, you can post your own roommate listing or search the database for a compatible companion.
- Utilize the Internet; <http://sfbay.craigslist.org> and <http://www.sfgate.com> are particularly helpful sites.
- Walk around the neighborhoods that interest you. Bring pen and paper to record addresses and telephone numbers from “For Rent” signs displayed in windows. Many landlords advertise their vacant apartments by placing a sign in the available apartment, as it is often more effective than a newspaper listing.
- Local colleges & universities also provide online postings. The University of California at San Francisco Housing Board can be found at Milberry Union/UC Medical Center, 501 Parnassus Avenue, (415) 666-1426, or at http://www.campusliveservices.ucsf.edu/housing/off_campus/service/. The San Francisco State University Housing Board is located at 1600 Holloway Avenue in their Student Union, or online at <http://sfstate.och101.com/>.
- Weekly newspapers and word of mouth are helpful resources. The San Francisco Bay Guardian, www.bayguardian.com, and SF Weekly, www.sfweekly.com, are delivered to the Conservatory and can be found throughout the city.

Craigslist, Craigslist, Craigslist!

The vast majority of Conservatory students find their Bay Area apartments, flats, and/or houses through the use of Craigslist, a website overflowing with housing postings and other useful information. Craigslist can be found at <http://sfbay.craigslist.org/>

Craigslist allows you to sort through housing postings by neighborhood, rental price, keywords, and much more. If you are looking to start a new lease, visit the apts/housing section. If you would like to join an existing living situation, visit the rooms/shared section where current tenants look for new roommates. If you would like a temporary place to stay before settling into a more permanent housing situation, visit the sublets/temporary section.

As with any online forum, please use your discretion and be cautious when corresponding with and meeting potential landlords and/or roommates. Scams appear on Craigslist regularly – if a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is! One past scam offered a beautiful apartment at an extremely affordable price, but because the “landlord” was out of the country and could not show the apartment in person, s/he asked that a money order for one month’s rent be sent first in exchange for the key. When in doubt, do not exchange any money until you have signed a legal lease and have been shown (or had a trusted friend or family member see) the specific unit that you will rent. Please read the following to ensure your online safety: <http://www.craigslist.org/about/scams>

San Francisco Neighborhoods

San Francisco is one of the most distinguished and celebrated cities in the world. Its diverse cultures and lifestyles attract prospective students to the city, and with a little bit of direction, you can discover all the treasures of San Francisco! Short descriptions of the major neighborhoods are listed below. More information on city

neighborhoods can be found at www.sfgate.com/neighborhoods/sf/. To further explore the city, visit the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau's Web site at www.sfvb.org.

The Castro

The universally-agreed Mecca of gay life is San Francisco's Castro District. It is home to a predominantly lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender community with excellent bakeries, boutiques, cafes, restaurants and nightlife. The Castro hosts a variety of festivals, street fairs and activities throughout the year.

Cole Valley/UCSF

A generally quiet neighborhood populated by families and young professionals, this area offers a variety of mom-and-pop shops in lieu of mainstream franchises.

Haight-Ashbury

Commonly referred to as the Upper Haight, the Haight-Ashbury was the center of '60s psychedelia. It is now home to a variety of gift shops geared towards the ex- or wannabe hippie, piercing salons, vintage clothing stores and Amoeba Music, the country's largest independent music store.

Hayes Valley/Civic Center

With the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco Ballet, Opera, Symphony—and the Conservatory—Civic Center is the cultural nexus of San Francisco. Adjacent to Civic Center is Hayes Valley, which caters to the “symphony crowd” with its fine restaurants, boutiques, trendy furniture stores and upscale shoe emporia.

Lower Haight/Western Addition

One of the more culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods in San Francisco, Western Addition and the Lower Haight offer a vast array of housing ranging from low-income complexes to gorgeous older Victorian and Edwardian buildings with San Francisco charm. The Lower Haight offers unique restaurants and bars, as well as intriguing shops.

The Marina

A bustling area that boasts many tourist attractions but also a plethora of trendy restaurants, bars, and shopping. Many young professionals call this area home.

The Mission

The Mission is an exceptionally diverse area of San Francisco with a strong Latino influence. The area boasts a colorful collection of authentic restaurants, taquerías, Mexican bakeries, produce markets, specialty shops, kaleidoscopic murals, and a lively, thriving club scene.

Nob Hill

Known for its landmarks and famous hotels, upscale Nob Hill offers a wide variety of shops, restaurants, and a range of bars and clubs.

Noe Valley

West of the Mission and south of the Castro is Noe Valley. Like those two neighborhoods, its streets are lined with renovated Victorians. Somewhat upscale and slower-paced, Noe Valley attracts young families, students, artists and professionals.

North Beach

Even though it's home to Little Italy and the Beat movement, North Beach offers an extremely wide variety of restaurants, bars, clubs,

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shopping (fantastic bookstores and funky shops) and sites.

Pacific Heights

A very wealthy neighborhood offering beautiful multi-million dollar homes and amazing views, Pacific Heights boasts upscale shopping and restaurants. However, some find the most exciting activity is to sit at a sidewalk café on Fillmore Street and people watch.

Potrero Hill

Once a largely industrial area, the Internet boom brought a change with warehouses being converted into offices and houses. Potrero Hill is fairly residential with unusually clean streets and a strong sense of community. You will see window boxes and gardens adorning almost every house.

Russian Hill

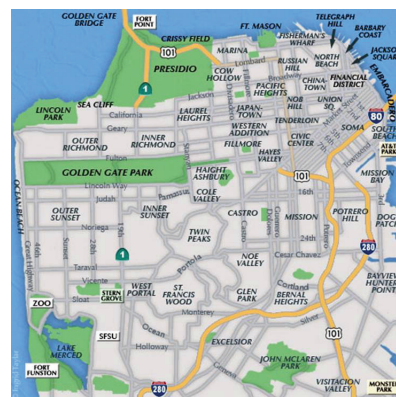
Encompassing two of the highest points in San Francisco, Russian Hill is a neighborhood of steep ascents and descents, panoramic views, interesting restaurants and shops on Hyde and Polk Streets, and fairly pricey housing. Macondray Lane was the inspiration for Barbary Lane in Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City.

The Sunset District

Home of the Conservatory from 1956 to 2006, this largely residential area is a good place to find affordable housing. Irving Street features a number of excellent, reasonably-priced restaurants.

The Richmond District

A middle-income, family-oriented area, the Richmond is convenient to a variety of shops, restaurants and transportation. In addition, Clement Street offers many options in East Asian cuisine. This neighborhood is relatively inexpensive and is close to Ocean Beach, The Presidio, and Golden Gate Park.



Housing Disclaimer

The Conservatory assumes no responsibility for accommodations, services, injuries, loss or damage that occur on any properties suggested by Conservatory and its employees or found through listings on the SFCM-Housing Yahoo! Group, housing referral board or suggested housing websites, newspapers or bulletin boards. Students and landlords alike are urged to thoroughly investigate any housing, rental or roommate options.

Questions?

Contact Yunny Yip, Associate Dean for Student Life, at 415-503-6281 or yvip@sfc.edu.