Commission Streamlining Task Force Recommendations

Board of Supervisors

March 17, 2026

Agenda

1. Project Background
2. Goals and Process
3. Recommendations
4. Next Steps

Background

Background on Proposition E (Nov. 2024)

- Established the Commission Streamlining Task Force
  - Mandate: Make **"recommendations to the Mayor and BOS about ways to modify, eliminate, or combine the City's boards and commissions to improve the administration of City government"**

- Task Force Members:
  1. Chair Ed Harrington, public sector labor representative (Board of Supervisors' designee)
  2. Vice Chair Andrea Bruss, Director of Government Legal Reform, City Attorney's Office (City Attorney's designee)
  3. Sophie Hayward, Legislative and Public Affairs Director, City Administrator's Office (City Administrator's designee)
  4. Natasha Mihal, City Performance Director, Controller's Office (Controller's designee)
  5. Sophia Kittler, Budget Director, Mayor's Office (Mayor's designee)

Timeline

JAN-DEC 2025
- **Task Force develops recommendations**

FEB 1, 2026
- **Final report to MYR/BOS**

MAR 1, 2026
- **Draft legislation to BOS (ordinance, Charter amendment)**

APR 1, 2026
- BOS holds hearing on legislation by 4/1

JUN 2026
- **Ordinance** takes effect within 90 days unless rejected by BOS supermajority

JUL 2026
- BOS decides whether to put **Charter amendment** on ballot

NOV 2026
- Voters approve/reject possible **Charter amendment**

Current State of San Francisco's Commissions System

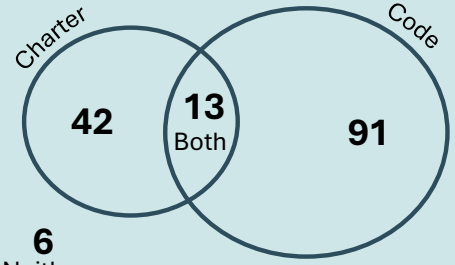
- The City has **152 boards and commissions** (or "public bodies") – far more than most other cities.
  - **116** active, **36** inactive
  - Categorized as either **"decision-making"** or **"advisory"** bodies
- Public bodies can help the City's government **remain transparent, accountable, and reflective** of the diverse communities it serves.
- However, many public bodies have **existed for decades without evaluation.**

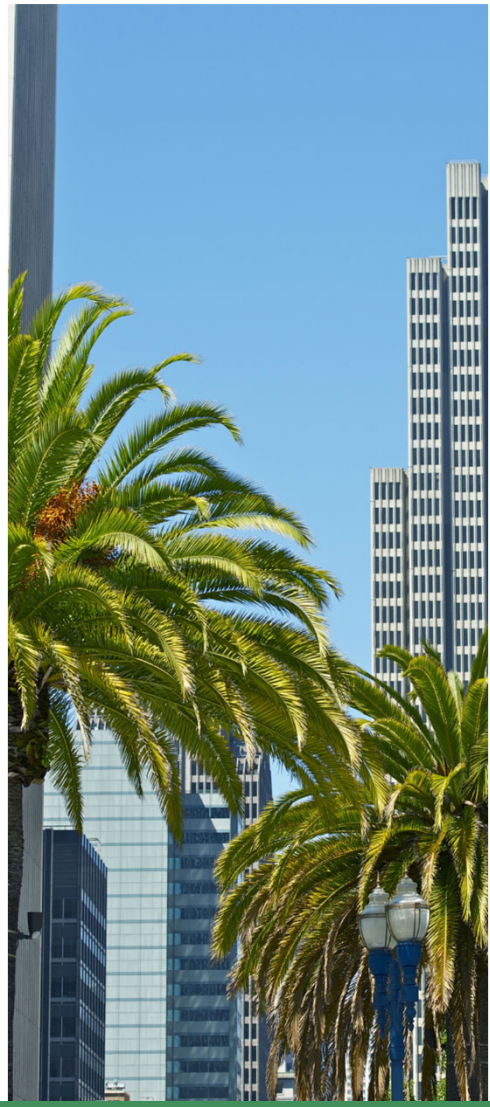
Overview:

In-scope public bodies

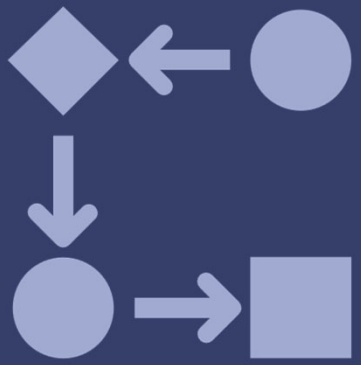
Approx. seats

Public Bodies by Location in Code:





Goals and Process



Guiding Principles of the Commission Streamlining Effort

Purpose: *Make recommendations to the Mayor and BOS about ways to change, eliminate, or combine the City's boards and commissions to improve the administration of City government.*

- Create clear lines of accountability
- Make City government easier to understand
- Use City resources responsibly
- Effectively elevate and coordinate public input

Input & Outreach

- Survey to departments
- Workshop with commission secretaries
- Notifications to BOS, department heads and staff about upcoming meetings
- Public meeting materials posted online 1.5-2 weeks in advance
- Significant engagement from members of the public:

27
public meetings
(including 1 community meeting in the Bayview)

600+
total public comments

320+
unique speakers

700+
written comments

1,200+
average monthly webpage views

Process Overview

- The Commission Streamlining Task Force had one year to conduct a public process to evaluate each body.
- The final report and draft legislation before the BOS today are the result of thousands of staff hours and hundreds of pages of memos and analysis.
- Process to date:
  - **January-August 2025:** Compiled list of bodies; heard from subject matter experts; Identified active and inactive bodies; Developed standards for different types of bodies
  - **September-November 2025:** Reviewed each body one-by-one, grouped by policy area (e.g., housing, public health); Made initial decisions for each body
  - **December 2025:** Reviewed decisions already made, revisited deferred decisions, and checked for consistency
  - **January 2026:** Draft final report and submit to Mayor/BOS by Feb. 1st
  - **February 2026:** Draft ordinance and Charter amendment and submit to BOS by March 1st

Criteria for Evaluating Bodies

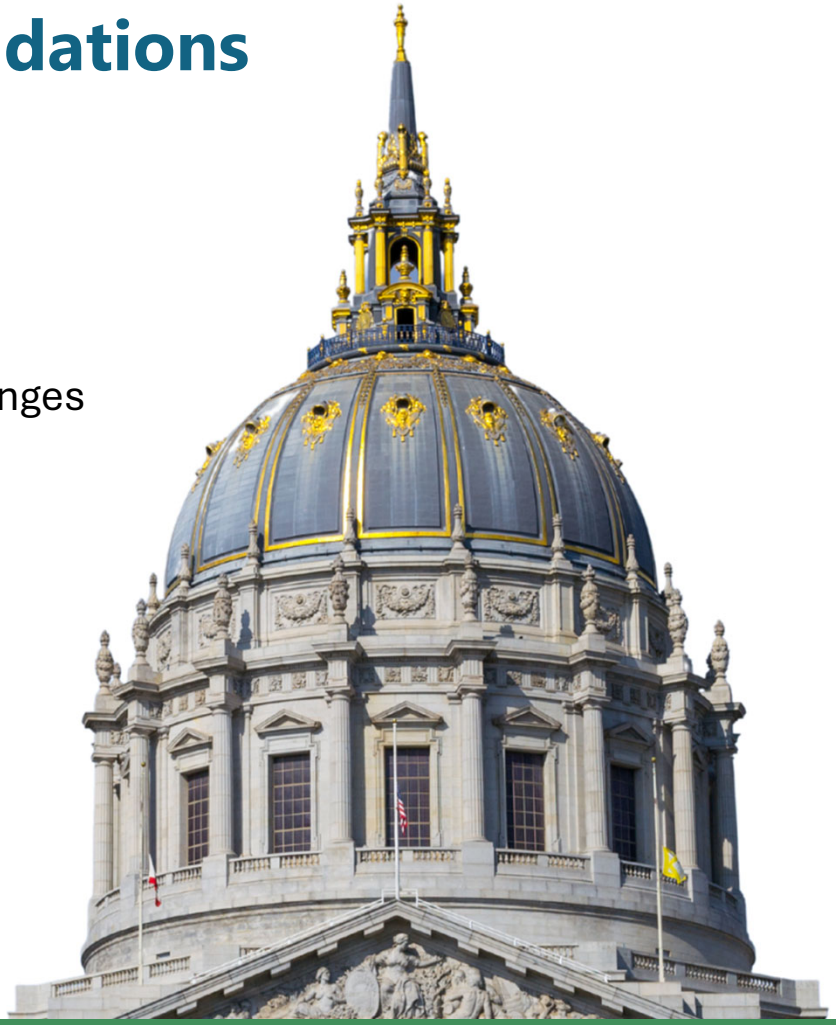
- The Task Force asked objective questions about each body to help it arrive at its preliminary recommendations.
- The questions included, but were not limited to:
    1. *Legal Requirements:* Does state or federal law require the existence of this body or its functions?
    2. *Activity:* How often has the body met in the past year? How many members and vacancies are there?
    3. *Overlap:* Do other bodies cover a similar topic or policy area?
    4. *Breadth:* Is this body focused on a single funding source, neighborhood, age/demographic group, or narrow topic? Could these interests be adequately represented by City staff or other bodies with a broader scope?
- **This process was supplemented by staff analysis, public input, and Task Force deliberations.**

Full evaluation criteria available at sf.gov/CommissionStreamlining

Recommendations

Overview of Task Force Recommendations

1. Strengthen meaningful public engagement by consolidating boards and commissions.
2. Increase the City's flexibility to adapt to new challenges by moving bodies to the Administrative Code.
3. Improve accountability by updating and clarifying commission responsibilities.
4. Make government more consistent and understandable by standardizing commission structure and membership.



Guiding Principles

- ✓ Create clear lines of accountability
- ✓ **Use public resources efficiently and responsibly**
- ✓ **Make government easy to understand**
- ✓ **Elevate and coordinate public input**

Recommendation #1:

Strengthen meaningful public engagement by consolidating boards and commissions.

- Instead of spreading input across 152 bodies that may have overlapping responsibilities, **the Task Force recommends retaining 87 bodies with well-defined scopes** that will act as more robust venues for public participation.

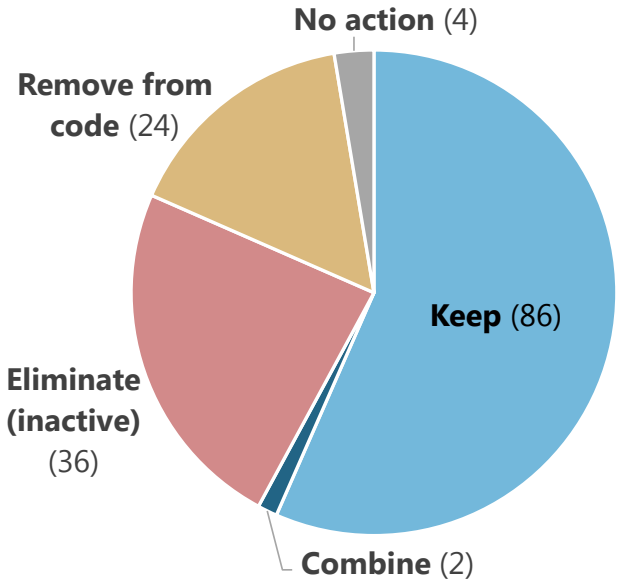
✓ **Keep 86 active and effective bodies**

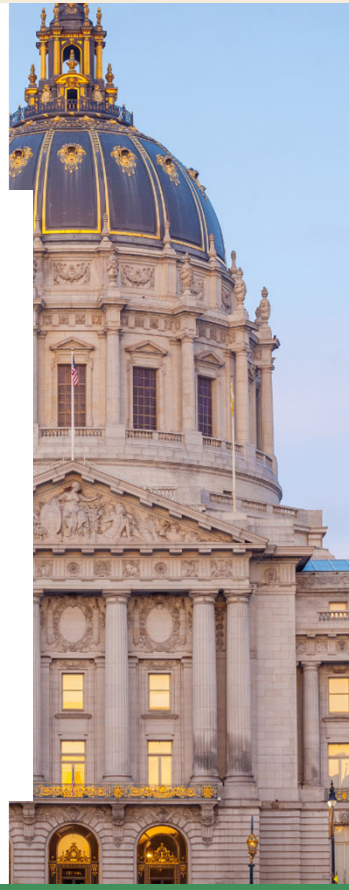
↔ **Combine 2 bodies into one**

× **Eliminate 36 inactive bodies**

× **Remove 24 additional bodies from code**

∅ **Take no action on 4 bodies**





The Task Force's **final report** (available at sf.gov/CommissionStreamlining) has detailed recommendations for each public body.

Recommendation #2:

Increase the City's flexibility to adapt to new challenges by moving bodies to the Admin. Code.

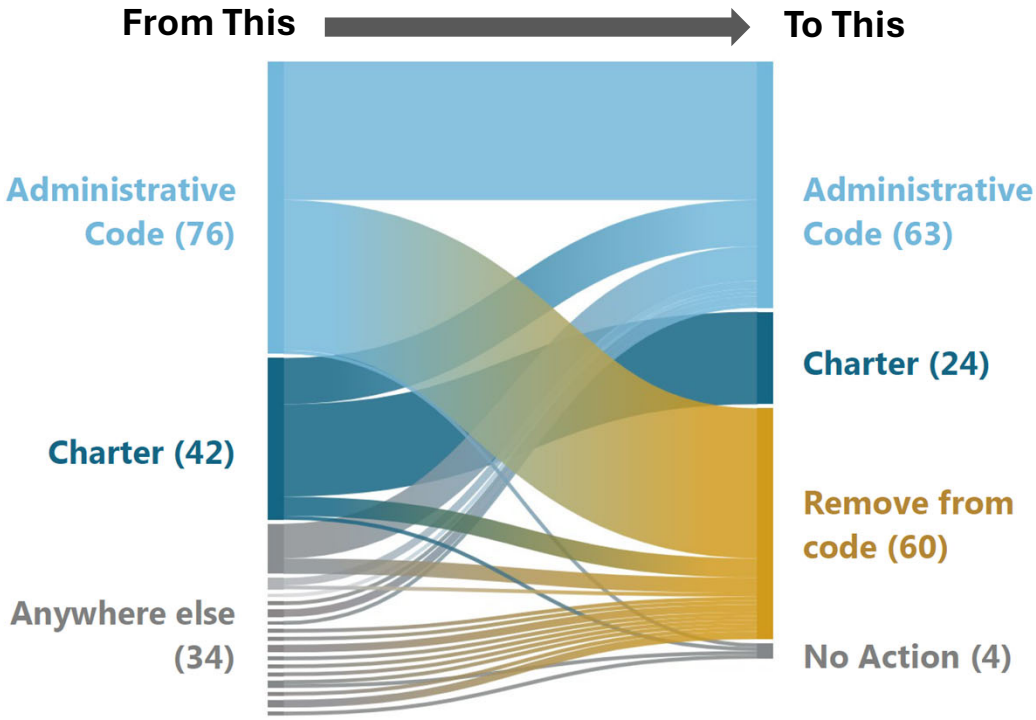
Guiding Principles

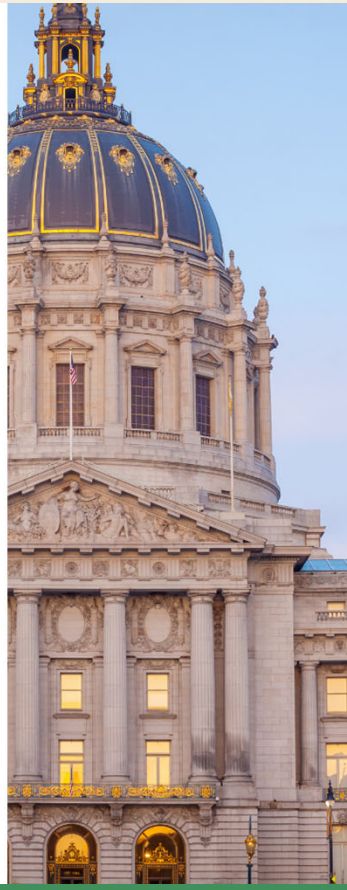
- ✓ Create clear lines of accountability
- ✓ **Use public resources efficiently and responsibly**
- ✓ **Make government easy to understand**
- ✓ Elevate and coordinate public input

Move many bodies, including all advisory bodies, **from the Charter to the Administrative Code.**

Why?

Only voters can amend the Charter. Making changes means costly political campaigns, so many bodies remain outdated as the City evolves.





Guiding Principles

- ✓ **Create clear lines of accountability**
- ✓ **Use public resources efficiently and responsibly**
- ✓ **Make government easy to understand**
- ✓ Elevate and coordinate public input

Recommendation #3:

Create clear lines of accountability by clarifying and updating commission responsibilities.

- Allow the Mayor to **hire and fire** most department heads, with commission input.
- Streamline the **appointment and removal process** for commission members.
  - *Example:* **Appointments should be effective immediately** (with no affirmative confirmations), except where required by state law.
- Define **"commissions"** and **"advisory bodies"** in the Charter.
  - Clarify that advisory bodies' role is to provide valuable expertise and shape citywide policy.

Why?

Voters expect to be able to hold the Mayor accountable for departmental performance. However, the Charter assigns oversight of certain City departments to appointed boards and commissions, which diffuses accountability.

A closer look at Recommendation #3:
Defining different types of public bodies

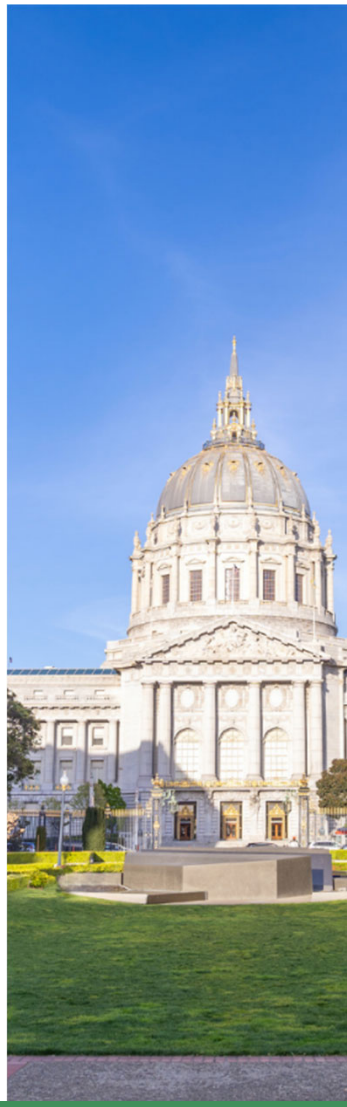
- To facilitate decision-making, the Task Force categorized public bodies as either "decision-making" or "advisory."
- They serve different but important purposes:

Decision-Making Bodies

- **Examples:** Fire Commission, Health Commission
- Oversee and help **direct the work of City departments** and/or **uphold and enforce the law**
- Formulate departmental goals, objectives, policies, and programs
- Approve departmental budgets
- Provide input to the Mayor on appointing and removing department heads
- Provide a forum for public input and transparency

Advisory Bodies

- **Example:** Citizens' Advisory Committees (CACs), Immigrant Rights Commission
- **Advise City departments**, elected officials, or decision-making bodies
- Shape citywide policy by contributing subject-matter expertise
- May advise departments or elected officials on budget priorities and funding allocations
- Provide a forum for public input and transparency



Guiding Principles

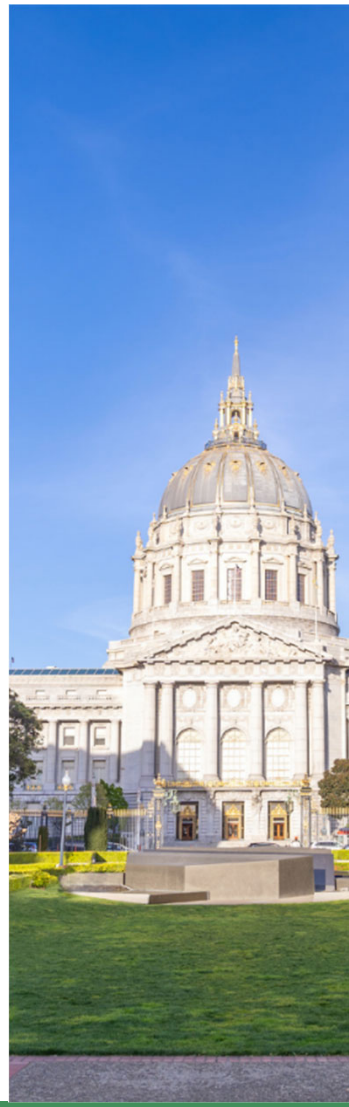
- ✓ Create clear lines of accountability
- ✓ Use public resources efficiently and responsibly
- ✓ **Make government easy to understand**
- ✓ **Elevate and coordinate public input**

Recommendation #4:

Make government easier to understand by standardizing commission structure and membership.

- **Align most bodies to set standards,** including:
  - Making most seat qualifications desirable (not required) to make it easier to fill seats and increase opportunities to serve on the body
  - Adding three-year sunset dates to most advisory bodies to enable regular evaluation of their effectiveness
  - Adding term lengths and term limits

A closer look at Recommendation #4:
Member removal process



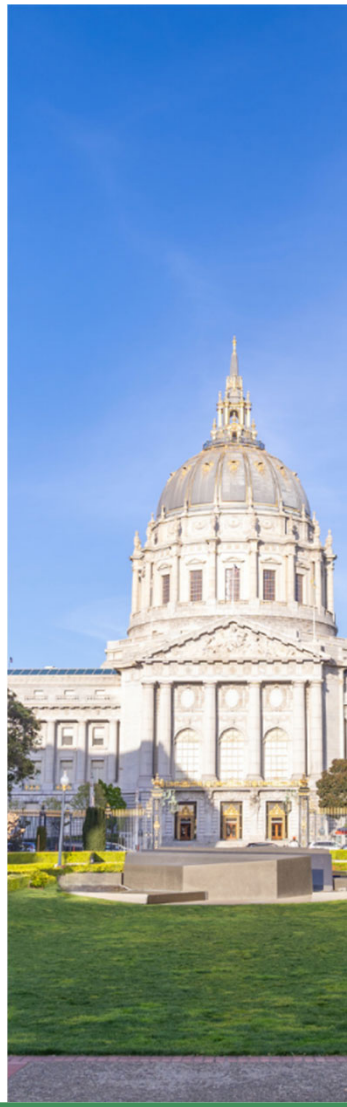
- **Task Force recommendation:**
  - Most commissioners' appointments should be **at-will** – whoever appointed a member may remove them for any reason at any time.
  - Limit **for-cause** removal to bodies that need additional insulation.

- The Task Force also **defined a new process for for-cause removals:**
  1. The appointing authority would file charges,
  2. The member would be suspended upon service of charges,
  3. Removal would require a BOS majority vote, rather than the current standard of 9 votes.

A closer look at Recommendation #4:
Who can appoint commission members

- Task Force recommendation: **Maintain existing split appointments between BOS and the Mayor** for the bodies that already have them:
  - Board of Appeals
  - Children, Youth, and their Families Oversight and Advisory Committee
  - Entertainment Commission
  - Planning Commission
  - Police Commission

- Per existing standards, allow the BOS to veto these Mayoral appointees with a supermajority.

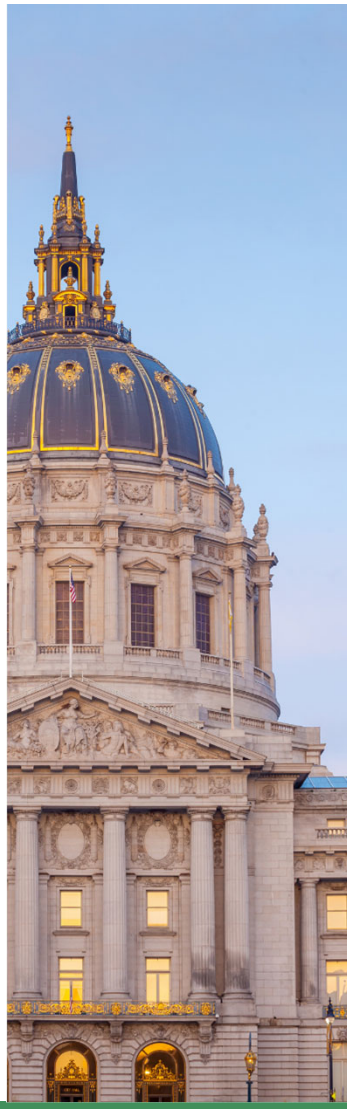


Housekeeping

1. ***Compensation and Benefits for Members of Public Bodies:*** The Task Force made no changes, leaving compensation and benefits decisions at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors.

2. ***Naming Conventions:*** The Task Force recommends renaming many bodies to align with the following conventions:

   - Decision-making bodies should generally be called **"commissions"** or **"boards"**
   - Advisory bodies should generally be called **"councils"**
   - **Exceptions to naming conventions:**
     - Commission on the Status of Women
     - Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District Public Financing Authority No. 1
     - Film Commission
     - Human Rights Commission
     - Immigrant Rights Commission
     - Sheriff's Department Oversight Board
     - Sunshine Ordinance Task Force
     - Youth Commission



Next Steps

Draft Legislation

- The City's public bodies are established in either the Charter or the Municipal Code (sometimes both)
- To implement the Task Force's recommendations, the City Attorney's Office has prepared:

1. A Charter amendment
2. An ordinance (to capture changes to the Municipal Code)

Legislation for Consideration (1/2)

Charter Amendment

The Charter amendment contains:

- Definitions and standard templates for public bodies (in Article IV)
- Proposed changes to any public bodies that are currently established in the Charter

Board of Supervisors action, per Prop E:

- A Supervisor or the Mayor may choose to introduce the Charter amendment, or a version of it.
- By July, BOS decides whether to place it on the November 2026 ballot.

Legislation for Consideration (2/2)

Ordinance

The ordinance contains:

- Definitions and standard templates for public bodies (Admin. Code sections 5.1-1 through 5.1-8)
- Proposed changes to public bodies that are currently established in the Municipal Code

Board of Supervisors action, per Prop E:

- May veto or duplicate/amend by 8 votes.
- Otherwise, it takes effect within 90 days.

Thank You

For more information, members of the public may visit **sf.gov/CommissionStreamlining**

or email **CommissionStreamlining@sfgov.org**