

Recommendations from the Community Working Group

Based on the Goals and Objectives established by the City Council, the purpose of the Boards, Commissions & Task Forces Community Working Group (CWG) was to provide a comprehensive review of all boards, commissions and task forces in consultation with the City Clerk, City Manager and City Attorney, and bring back to Council recommendations and suggestions for best practices, including but not limited to the consolidation of boards and commissions with duplicate or similar purviews, establishing guidelines as to the roles and duties of members and drafting consistent bylaws and policies across all boards and commissions.

The overarching goal of the CWG was to promote participation in the City's boards and commissions based on inclusion, diversity and equity. The CWG supports good governance and believes participation in boards/commissions provides members the opportunity to develop leadership skills.

Our Goals were as follows:

Goal 1: *Self-Assessment Survey of Current Board, Commission and Task Force Members*

Submit a survey to current members and perform an analysis of the results to assist in the evaluation and formulation of recommendations.

Goal 2: *Evaluate Board Structure, Effectiveness, and Best Practices*

Evaluate the City's current board, commission, and task force structure, effectiveness, and best practices and provides recommendations and suggestions.

Goal 3: *CWG Report*

Create a report on all recommendations and suggestions from the CWG on the structure, effectiveness and best practices for City boards, commissions, and task forces. Items for recommendation in the CWG report must contain, but are not limited to, the following:

- Determining differences between boards, commissions, and task forces, to then appropriately categorize each current body;
- Revisiting and updating all board and commission bylaws to establish uniform rules of order consistent with City Council direction;
- Establishing guidelines as to the roles and duties of board, commission, and task force members;
- Reviewing existing boards, commissions and task forces to see if there is an overlap among their responsibilities and, if so, considering consolidation that could benefit all represented constituents and better align with the City's Framework priorities;
- Reviewing term limits and whether those limits should differ between different boards and commissions, as well as considering increasing the time limit between serving on the same board or commission;

- Considering possible different methods for Council to make appointments;
- Establishing consistent policies regarding absences and attendance;
- Establishing roles, expectations and budgets for department staff and liaisons that would be consistent across all boards and commissions; and
- Proposing a periodic comprehensive review of all advisory bodies to occur every five to six years (non-election years).

Based on the established criteria, below are the Recommendations from the Community Working Group.

❖ **Every City Board, Commission, and Task Force should have consistent bylaws established by resolution, which includes the following:**

- 1) Officers should rotate and should serve a one-year term as Chair, in order to promote diversity and provide a leadership opportunity for more members of the community.
- 2) Election of officers shall take place in July after the annual appointments.
- 3) Year-end appointments in December shall be moved to June to align with the annual appointments.
- 4) A rule should be added to include that all bodies produce an annual board and commission workplan to set priorities for the year and should align with the City department's workplan.
- 5) Required trainings for the year should happen immediately after the appointments in July.
- 6) All Boards, Commissions, and Task Forces should adopt the same order of business on their agendas. If a rule does not apply to a Board, Commission, or Task Force, it should be noted in the agenda.
- 7) Attendance requirements should be included in the bylaws, they should be consistent, and clarify the rules for what is considered an excused and an unexcused absence.
- 8) The latest start time for any meeting should be 7:00 p.m.
- 9) Accommodation language should be included in the bylaws template after consultation from the Disabilities Commission.
- 10) The Task Force on the Environment should have term limits since there are now more people with environmental expertise as opposed to when the task force was originally created. The status of the Task Force on the Environment should change to a permanent commission with the same term limits as other boards and commissions.

11) All existing Boards, Commissions, and Task Forces should review their current bylaws to remove outdated information and/or procedures and utilize the bylaws template to be consistent with the City Council format.

- ❖ Consolidate the commissions relating to social services (Commission on the Senior Community, Commission on the Status of Women, Disabilities Commission, and the Social Services Commission), into a singular commission named the Human Services and Equity Commission. Creation of subcommittees or ad hoc committees would alleviate the issue of time constraints, as well as allow more diversity, equity and inclusion of the community to participate in more specific topics.
- ❖ Consider possibly combining the Task Force on the Environment and the Urban Forest Task Force.
- ❖ Term limits shall remain the same allowing members to serve two consecutive terms and may request a third term from the City Council. However, members who term out must wait two years before applying to another board or commission.
- ❖ Members who have two unexcused absences out of six consecutive meetings shall automatically resign. An absence is considered unexcused when a member does not communicate their absence to the Chair or liaison of the body prior to the scheduled meeting. If a member has more than two excused absences, they will receive a warning from the Chair. If another two meetings are missed, then the liaison shall inform the City Clerk's office, who will then inform the City Council. Special meeting shall not count towards unexcused absences.
- ❖ Staff liaisons are expected to do the administrative work for Boards and Commission and not intensive research. Instead staff research should be limited to information that the department uniquely has access to and should align with the department's workplan.
- ❖ Budgets for Boards and Commission shall come out of the department's budget.
- ❖ A seat shall be added, or if necessary dedicated, to every board and commission for a member between the ages of 18-29, with a one-year term and the possibility of reappointment.
- ❖ Explore all means to enhance diverse representation that reflects the Santa Monica community that includes:
 - 1) Increase the use of social media to reach and encourage community members to get involved.
 - 2) Consider involvement at fairs or booths at festivals, such as COAST, for interested applicants to meet active board and commission members and City Council members to learn more about each board and commission and have an opportunity to build connections.
- ❖ A comprehensive review of all advisory bodies should occur every five years.
- ❖ Consider updating board and commission applications every five years.
- ❖ Consider training sessions on running meetings, participation during meetings, parliamentary procedure, and other trainings. Such trainings would be for Commissioners but could also be open to general public (members of community groups, non-profit boards, etc).

Other items of discussion but no recommendations made:

- ❖ Definition and differences between Board, Commission and Task Forces.
- ❖ Consider combining the Urban Forest Task Force with the Task Force on the Environment or creating it as a subcommittee under the Recreation and Parks Commission.
- ❖ Consider the Architectural Review Board becoming an advisory body of the Planning Commission.