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Cc: [Ionin, Jonas \(CPC\)](#); [So, Lydia \(CPC\)](#); [Moore, Kathrin \(CPC\)](#); [Campbell, Amy \(CPC\)](#); [McGarry, Sean \(CPC\)](#); [Braun, Derek \(CPC\)](#); [Williams, Gilbert A \(CPC\)](#); [Imperial, Theresa \(CPC\)](#); [Matsuda, Diane \(CPC\)](#); [Tsern Strang, Gayle \(CPC\)](#); [Baldauf, Hans \(CPC\)](#); [Cox, Eleanor \(CPC\)](#); [Vergara, Robert \(CPC\)](#); [Foley, Chris \(CPC\)](#); [Baroni, Dan \(CPC\)](#)
Subject: Commission Streamlining Task Force: Housing and Economic Development
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Attachments: [image.png](#)

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26 September 2025

Ed Harrington, Chair, Commission Streamlining Task Force

Re: September 19, 2025 Criteria-Based Outcomes and Associated Analysis for Housing and Economic Development Bodies

Dear Chair Harrington, and Members of the Commission Streamlining Task Force,

The Race & Equity in all Planning Coalition, San Francisco (REP-SF) is a coalition of more than 40 organizations and coalitions from throughout San Francisco. REP-SF's mission is to build a future in San Francisco with diverse communities, stable, affordable housing and equitable access to resources and opportunities.

REP-SF strongly objects to the recommendations made by the Commission Streamlining Task Force for reforming the Planning Commission. The recommendation to remove the split appointment structure of the Planning Commission and transfer all appointment authority to the Mayor, along with expanding "at-will" removal powers, and eliminating confirmation hearings will politicize the Planning Commission and will undermine the Planning Commission's role in land use policy and decisions. Politicizing land use decisions by which land owners and developers stand to make extraordinary profits can only lead to corruption.

The current system of split appointments between the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors provides essential checks and balances in one of the most consequential areas of city government: land use, housing, and development. San Francisco's Planning Commission has broad powers over zoning, neighborhood character, and project approvals.

Consolidating appointment authority under a single office risks politicizing these decisions and undermining the Commission's independence. Commissioners ideally are San Franciscans who bring their expertise and community experience to their roles on the Planning Commission, rather than being beholden to the Mayor's political agenda.

By design, split appointments, and the Board of Supervisors' confirmation role, ensure diverse representation that reflects the perspectives of both the executive and legislative branches, as well as the residents and neighborhoods these branches of government serve. Eliminating this structure would reduce accountability, weaken public trust, and silence important community voices that come through the Board of Supervisors' appointment process.

Similarly, moving from "for cause" removal to "at-will" undermines the stability and independence of commissioners, who must be able to make difficult decisions based on long-term planning and community needs, not short-term political pressure.

Removing the Commission's role in hiring and firing key staff risks eroding the public oversight that has historically been vital to ensuring transparency and accountability within the Planning Department.

Additionally the recommendation to fold the Historic Preservation Commission into the Planning Commission fails to recognize the unique expertise of Historic Preservation Commissioners (HPC) in evaluating architectural design in its social and cultural context. The expertise needed for HPC Commissioners is distinctly different from the expertise required for Planning Commissioners who need to make project level and plan level land use decisions. When these two disciplines overlap, the current procedure of calling for a joint Planning Commission and HPC hearing is the most effective way for these two very different disciplines to coordinate for the best outcome.

The Commission Streamlining Task Force's charge is to improve efficiency without sacrificing transparency or equity. The proposed changes, however, would concentrate power, increase corruption, reduce accountability, and erode the democratic principles that San Francisco voters have repeatedly affirmed in Charter provisions.

We urge you to maintain the existing split appointment structure, independent HPC, for-cause removal standard, Board of Supervisors' confirmation process, and Commission oversight authority, rather than adopting the staff recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

Race & Equity in all Planning Coalition, San Francisco

cc: Planning Commissioners

Housing Preservation Commissioners

co-founder of [People Power Media](#)

[Creators of PRICED OUT](#)

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