

From: [Christopher White](#)
To: [commissionstreamlining](#)
Subject: Comment regarding draft report
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Dear Members of the Commission Streamlining Task Force,
Thank you for all the work and rigor you've brought to your task.

I write on behalf of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition and our thousands of members and constituents, regarding the recommendations in your draft report.

We have already submitted a letter in support of maintaining the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and repeat that feedback here. While the SFMTA has staff dedicated to advancing bicycle projects, the BAC serves a different purpose: providing a consistent, knowledgeable voice from people who actually bike the city's streets every day. While SFBike works to turn members out to important meetings and hearings to give public comment, such meetings are often in the middle of the workday and inaccessible to many to whom bicycling is a vital link to friends, family, recreation, and economic opportunity. Having a dedicated, informed committee to represent those voices ensures that people who bike are well considered in the city's decisions.

We also disagree with the recommendations regarding the SFMTA Board of Directors. While the Board should certainly be maintained, we strongly recommend that board member removal remain as for cause, not at will, and that the Board continue to have a central role in hiring and firing of the department head. Introductory remarks in the report state, "The Task Force recommends that most appointments be at-will, unless additional protection is needed to insulate decision-making bodies from political influence." We see time and time again that the SFMTA Board needs such protection. In San Francisco, street usage is hotly contested, even though the city has clear mandates that it must follow (such as the Transit First policy that has existed since 1971). However, political meddling can dissuade the Board from making difficult decisions to advance the city's priorities. In fact, one of the primary rationales for creating the SFMTA and merging it with the Department of Parking and Traffic over 20 years ago was to insulate it from political interference.

Similarly, the head of the SFMTA needs to be held accountable to the decisions made by the SFMTA Board, and to remain free from excessive political interference. If the Mayor can remove the Director of Transportation for following the decisions of the agency's board, the entire agency can very quickly become dysfunctional. While the city has multiple mandates to improve safety on our streets and to encourage that people choose "priority" modes (transit, biking, and walking), we know that inertia and lobbying sometimes causes political opposition to advancing these goals. An independent SFMTA Board and Director of Transportation make it more likely that San Francisco will be able to achieve its transportation goals.

Thank you for your consideration.
Kind regards,

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Christopher White

Executive Director

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San Francisco Bicycle Coalition

Promoting the Bicycle for Everyday Transportation

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