

From: [William Ortiz-Cartagena](#)
To: [commissionstreamlining](#)
Subject: William Ortiz-Cartagena Small Business Commission
Date: Thursday, January 8, 2026 11:08:48 AM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors and Task Force on Commission Reform,

I am writing to share my serious concerns regarding the recent recommendations to restructure the San Francisco Small Business Commission (SBC). While I recognize the goal of improving efficiency within City government, the proposed changes would ultimately weaken small business representation, undermine institutional continuity, and erode public trust in the City's stated commitment to supporting small business owners.

The recommendation to remove the SBC from the City Charter and instead place it solely within the Administrative Code—subjecting it to an automatic sunset every three years—creates unnecessary instability. The SBC has long served as a consistent and reliable advocate for small businesses, providing policy continuity, institutional memory, and a formal channel for small business voices to be heard in City decision-making. Introducing uncertainty around the Commission's very existence places additional strain on a sector already navigating rising operating costs, post-pandemic recovery, and ongoing neighborhood disinvestment.

I am also deeply concerned by the proposal to eliminate the Commission's oversight role in the hiring and removal of the Department head and to transfer approval authority for Legacy Business Registry applications to Office of Small Business staff. These changes would reduce transparency and limit meaningful public participation in decisions that have lasting economic and cultural consequences. The Legacy Business Registry was intentionally designed as a public process to honor and preserve San Francisco's small business heritage. Shifting these determinations away from a public commission risks turning a community-centered program into an internal administrative function.

Additionally, I strongly oppose the recommendation to remove the existing qualification requirements for service on the Small Business Commission. Requiring that a majority of commissioners be small business owners, operators, or individuals with direct experience supporting small businesses ensures that policy decisions are informed by lived experience and practical understanding. Weakening these standards risks transforming the Commission into a symbolic body rather than a substantive advocate for neighborhood-based businesses and economic diversity.

Serving on the Small Business Commission has also allowed me to function as a critical conduit between City departments and communities that have historically lacked direct access or experienced strained relationships with government, particularly neighborhoods such as the Mission, Excelsior, and Bayview. For many small business owners in these communities—often immigrant, working-class, and BIPOC entrepreneurs—the Commission has served as a trusted entry point into City processes that previously felt inaccessible or unresponsive. Through the Commission, I have been able to elevate community concerns directly to multiple departments, facilitate cross-department coordination, and help rebuild trust where inequities

and disinvestment had long shaped the relationship between the City and these neighborhoods. Diminishing the Commission's authority or independence would disproportionately harm communities that rely on this structure as a bridge to fair treatment, accountability, and inclusion.

At a time when San Francisco is working to revitalize commercial corridors, strengthen community-based entrepreneurship, and rebuild confidence in local government, the independence, expertise, and stability of the Small Business Commission are more important than ever. I urge you to reconsider these recommendations and preserve the Commission's charter status, authority, and composition to ensure that small business owners—particularly those in historically underserved communities—continue to have a meaningful and consistent seat at the table.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
William Ortiz-Cartagena