

A photograph of the San Francisco City Hall dome, a large, ornate, light-colored stone structure with a prominent central dome and a tall, slender spire. The building is set against a clear blue sky. A dark teal rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title text.

Operational Improvements

Commission Streamlining Task Force

November 19, 2025

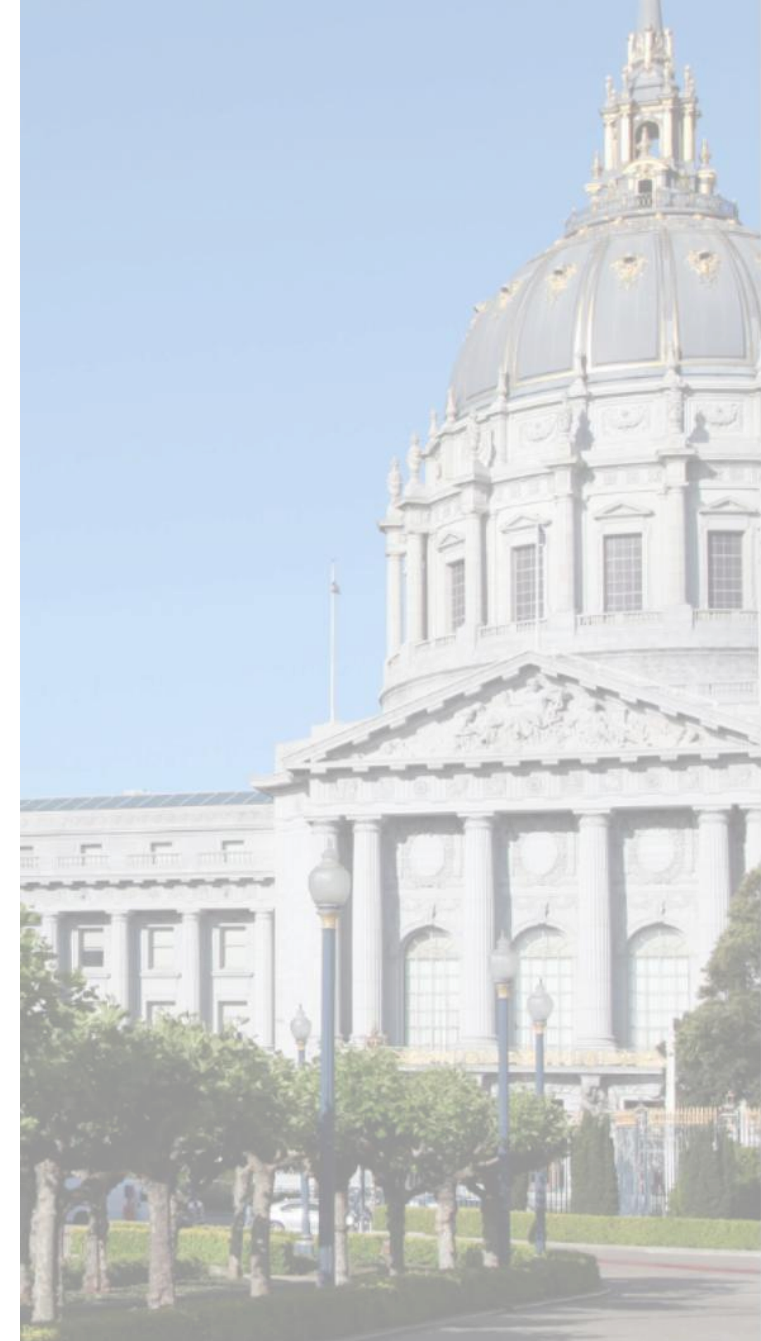
Operational Improvements for Commissions

Working Session Overview

On October 20, 2025, Task Force staff gathered the insights from 65-85 clerks, secretaries, and staff from all types of commissions and public meeting bodies to...

- Uncover and uplift mutual challenges commissions and public meeting bodies experience.
- Discover what citywide process improvements and modifications could be made to support and improve commission and public meeting body administration.
- Provide a forum to share best practices commission staff already use to effectively and successfully manage commissions and other public meeting bodies.

The working session discussed onboarding and training, mission and commission scope management, and strengths and best practices.



Mission and Scope



Mission and Commission Scope

Current practices commission and public body staff use to ensure commissioners understand their roles



Clearly defined mission 👍 28



One on one meetings with commissioners and staff 👍 2



Regular communication of jurisdiction 👍 26



Supporting staff present at meetings 👍 1



Documented role descriptions 👍 19



Trainings 👍 17

Does the Task Force have additional ideas to ensure commissioners understand their roles?

Mission and Commission Scope

Current practices to ensure commissions focus on their designated purview without getting pulled into extraneous topics

Agendas

- Pre-planned, when possible, based on calendared topics
- Drafted in advance
- Topics agreed upon by staff, Chair(s), and City Attorney
- Strict adherence to agenda during meeting
- New business/future meeting topics item for un-agendized topics to be flagged

Strong Chair

- Manages conversation during meetings to ensure the body stays on agendized topics
- Prepared for discussions in advance of the meeting
- Agenda drafting collaborator

Meeting Preparation

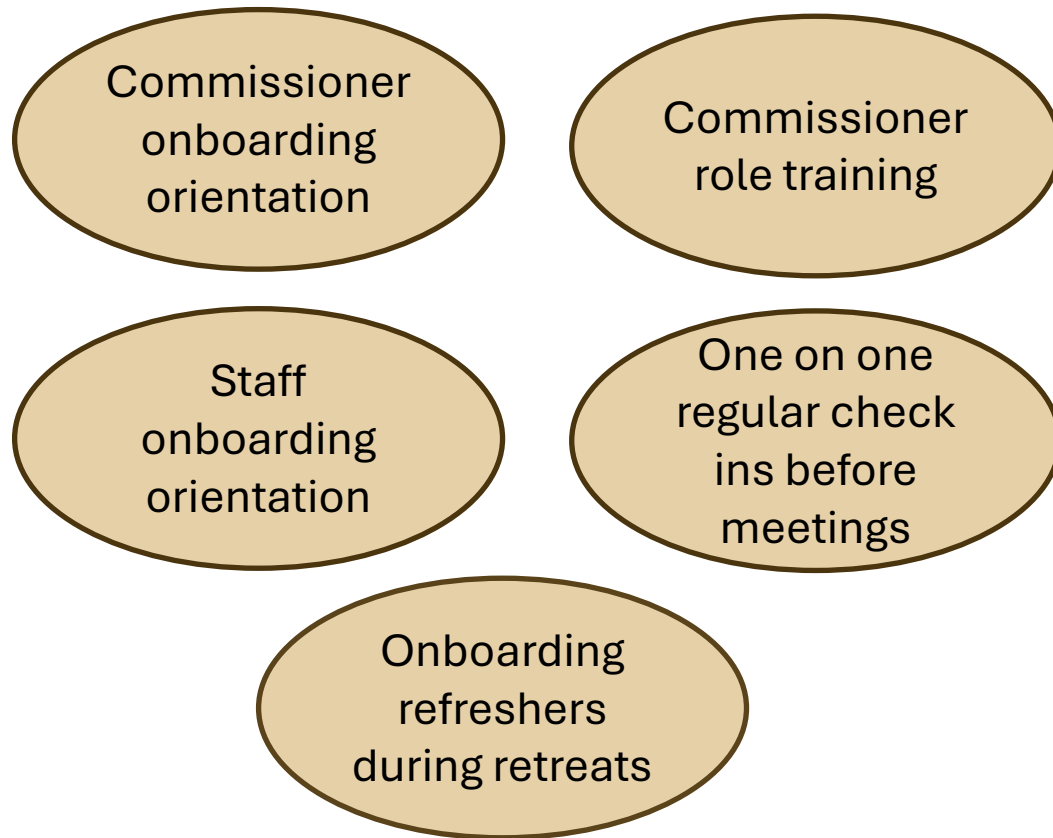
- Staff brief Chair(s) on meeting topics
- Secretary briefs Chair(s) on sample language to direct meeting
- Staff guide commissioners and brief officers before and after meetings to make sure they understand the agenda

Onboarding and Training



Onboarding and Training

Current Approaches



Requested Opportunities from Commission Staff

Regular, recurring brown bags led by City Attorney on **Brown Act, Roberts Rules, and Good Governance** compliance

Advisory bodies powers and duties overview for public body staffers

Regular, recurring **best practices** working session for **department staffers** on managing their interactions with commissions – i.e. public affairs skills, body operations 101

Regular, recurring **best practices** working sessions for **secretaries and clerks** – i.e. Mayor's Office meet ups



Onboarding and Training

Other noted opportunities...

- Controller's Office City Services Auditors consultant ([Community at Work](#)) for training on successful retreat and meeting facilitation for commissioners and staffers
- Clerk and secretary 101 overview provided by the City Attorney, Clerk of the Board, or an external body to empower the drivers of commissions and public bodies with key operational and administrative knowledge
 - Training could be on demand or held regularly in person
 - Accompanying checklist of how to onboard and offboard commissioners, include general instructions for how to post an agenda and meeting minutes, and frequently used documents like the Oath of Office

Does the Task Force have more onboarding and training ideas?

Commission Meetings



Commission Meetings

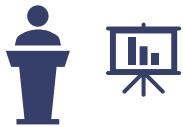
Factors leading to effective and successful commission meetings



Preparing commissioners in advance of the meeting, i.e. facilitation guides for the chair(s), drafting scripts for the secretary or clerk, and meeting with commissioners to answer questions in advance of the session 👍 23

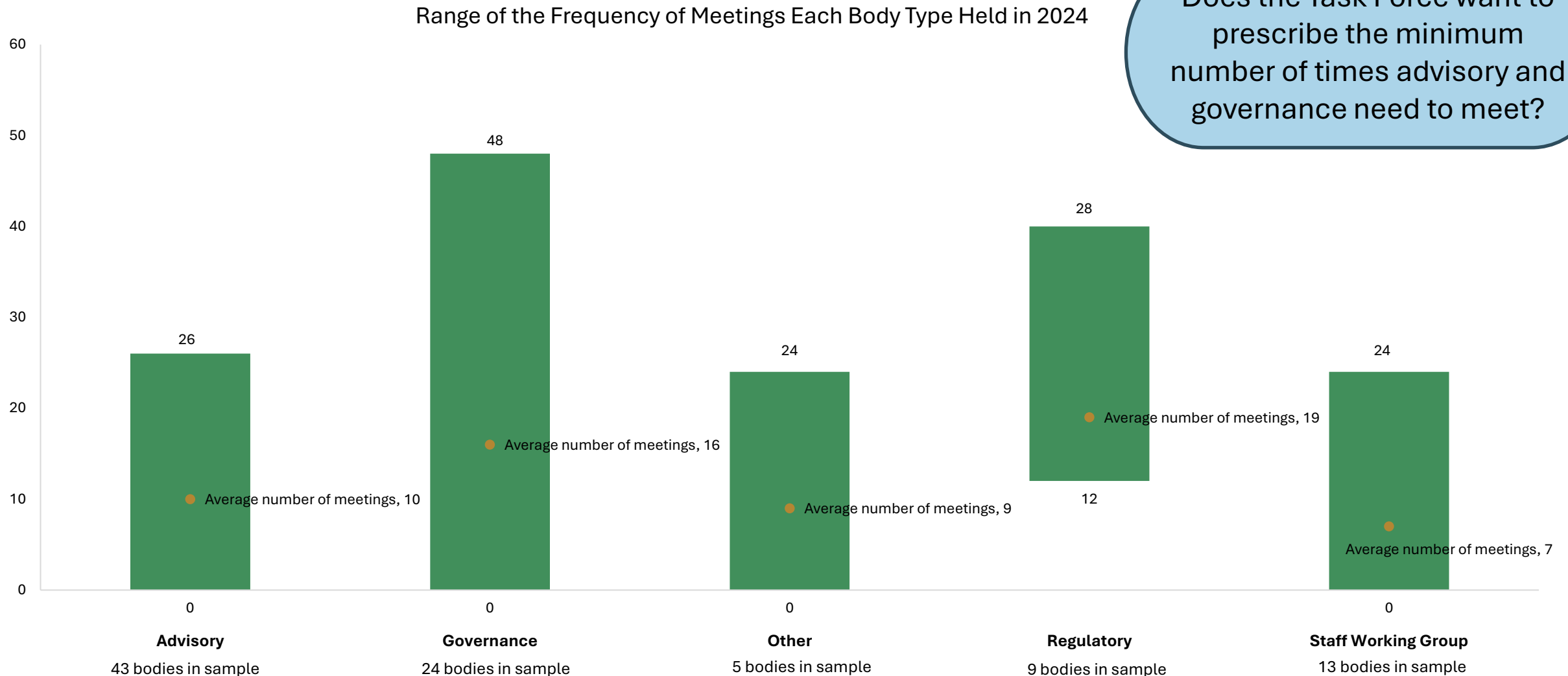


Commission discussion management, i.e. agenda flow time management, and maintaining discussion within the commission's purview 👍 18



Staff presentations 👍 16

Commission Meeting Frequency



Does the Task Force want to prescribe the minimum number of times advisory and governance need to meet?

Notes: 1. Meeting frequency samples of each body type were used to create the graph since staff were limited to known meeting frequency for individual bodies.

2. Body sorting reflects the Task Force's decisions on body type changes as of 11/04/2025.

Commission Performance and Data Maintenance

Commission Performance and Data Maintenance

Oversight of All Commissions

1

Commissions Oversight Body

The City could enact an ordinance to create a new body to systematically evaluate bodies' performance, as recommended by the Civil Grand Jury

- Acts as a neutral convenor of multiple leading City offices to ensure quality work is produced that addresses various questions
- Requires staff beyond commissioners; staff could ensure citywide reporting and coordination compliance
- Creates another body

2

Controller's Office City Services Auditors

The City Performance Unit could perform periodic or regular performance assessments

- Trained staff that already assesses City functions and performance
- Unlikely that City Performance has the capacity to take on an ongoing, significant project for all bodies

3

Appointing Authority

The appointing authorities could lead performance oversight of their body

- Adds responsibility to ensure appointed members are contributing to the body effectively
- Does not burden one office with evaluating all bodies
- Diversifies who oversees the evaluation process which could lead to different evaluation quality

Commission Performance and Data Maintenance

Standardization of Reports by Commissions

- Include statement of purpose
- Include description of activities and achievements
- Publication cadence, i.e. annually or quarterly
- Document number of meetings with links to minutes meeting recording
- Document commissioner names and qualifications, staff details

Does the Task Force want to standardize reporting requirements?

Standardization of Commission Meeting Minutes

The level of detail for meeting minutes varies greatly across bodies, some record commissioners' discussion at length and others provide minimal summaries

“The minutes shall state the time the meeting was called to order, the names of the members attending the meeting, the roll call vote on each matter considered at the meeting, the time the board or commission began and ended any closed session, the names of the members and the names, and titles where applicable, of any other persons attending any closed session, a list of those members of the public who spoke on each matter if the speakers identified themselves, whether such speakers supported or opposed the matter, a brief summary of each person's statement during the public comment period for each agenda item, and the time the meeting was adjourned” ([Administrative Code § 67.16](#)).

Does the Task Force want to standardize how detailed minutes should be? Perhaps by body type?

Commission Performance and Data Maintenance

Maintaining a Current List of Bodies

Existing lists of bodies maintained by...

- [City Attorney's Office](#)
 - Previously listed 135 bodies – cited their authorizing language and sorted bodies by whether members filed statements of economic interests with the Ethics Commission to indicate if they are decision making bodies or advisory bodies*
- [Clerk of the Board](#)
 - In compliance with the Maddy Act, annually publishes a list of all upcoming appointments to boards, commissions, and committees ([Cal. Gov. Code § 54972](#))
 - Passed by the California Legislature in 1976, the Maddy Act aims to maximize public awareness of appointments to local government bodies by requiring an annual public list
- City Administrator's Office [311 program](#)
 - A database of 100 bodies listing their mandates and authorizing language; however, database is supposed to reflect all appointments to all commissions and public hearing bodies ([Ordinance No. 265-10](#))
 - Mirrors Maddy Act language, aims to enhance local government by tapping into San Franciscans' expertise and talent by making the public aware of opportunities to serve on a commission or public hearing body

Which department or body should maintain the list of current bodies?

Civil Grand Jury recommended the City Attorney's Office maintain the list of current bodies to ensure one department is tasked with sharing centralized and complete information with the public

Should a new Commission Oversight Body be tasked with maintaining this list?

Miscellaneous





Requested City Support

Requested City support from commission and public body staff

- Faster, more consistent appointments
- Remove floating seat requirements, such as those requiring a specific percentage of membership to hold a particular quality or expertise
- More department-commission collaboration to enhance mission cohesion and engagement
- Centralized list of resources for secretaries, i.e. oath of office, and on- and off-boarding commissioners process checklist
- Additional support for all commissions from the Clerk of the Board and City Attorney
- Annual trainings for department staff to learn how to engage with commissions
- Lobby the state to allow for virtual meetings
- Clear livestreaming rules
- More SFGovTV availability and technology support
- Updated list of public meeting rooms and more available rooms

Questions?
