



**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING 6:00 PM**



**JANUARY 28, 2026**

**COMMISSIONERS**

Courtney Davis (Chair)  
Demetra Stall-Nash (Vice Chair)  
Nona Cohen-Bowman  
Brandon Greene  
Melvin Jones  
Jerelle Medearis  
Marissa Serafino

**HYBRID MEETING**  
[www.Cityofvallejo.net](http://www.Cityofvallejo.net)

**Council Chambers  
555 Santa Clara Street  
Vallejo, CA 94590**

<p><b>NOTICE:</b> Members of the Public will be able to participate in-person or remotely via Zoom</p>	<p>City Hall and the Council Chambers will be open to members of the public 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.</p>
<p><b>PUBLIC COMMENT:</b> Members of the Public may provide public comments during the Meeting in person or via ZOOM (<a href="https://ZoomRegular.Cityofvallejo.net">https://ZoomRegular.Cityofvallejo.net</a>), or via phone, by dialing (669) 900-6833.</p>	<p>For additional instructions on how to speak remotely during public comment, please visit, <a href="http://www.cityofvallejo.net/publiccomment">www.cityofvallejo.net/publiccomment</a></p>
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<p>Any supplemental writing related to an agenda item for an open session of a regular meeting that is distributed to all or a majority of all members of the Commission less than 72 hours before the meeting will be posted concurrently on the City’s website at <a href="http://www.cityofvallejo.net/agendas">www.cityofvallejo.net/agendas</a> Written material distributed during the meeting, will be available at the meeting if prepared by the City or after the meeting if prepared by someone else. Such materials may be obtained from the Commission Secretary.</p>	
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## AGENDA

**1 CALL TO ORDER**

**2 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3 ROLL CALL**

**4 REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE/BOARD**

**5 COMMUNITY FORUM**

*Anyone wishing to address the Council on any matter for which another opportunity to speak is not provided on the agenda, and which is within the jurisdiction of the Council to resolve, is requested to submit a completed speaker card to the City Clerk. When called upon, each speaker should step to the podium, state his /her name, and address for the record. Each speaker is limited to three minutes pursuant to Vallejo Municipal Code Section 2.20.300.*

**6 CONSENT CALENDAR AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**A APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Recommendation: By motion, approve the agenda for the January 28, 2026 Regular Meeting.

Contact: Jason Ackley, Staff Secretary (707) 648-4577  
[jason.ackley@cityofvallejo.net](mailto:jason.ackley@cityofvallejo.net)

**7 INFORMATION CALENDAR**

**8 ACTION CALENDAR**

*NOTICE: Members of the public wishing to address the Council on Action Calendar Items are requested to submit a completed speaker card to the City Clerk. Each speaker is limited to five minutes pursuant to Vallejo Municipal Code Section 2.02.420.*

**A DISCUSSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF A 2026 WORKPLAN**

Recommendation:

Contact: Jason Ackley, Staff Secretary (707) 648-4577  
[jason.ackley@cityofvallejo.net](mailto:jason.ackley@cityofvallejo.net)

**B COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING MRG REPORT**

Recommendation: Hold a discussion on the topic and provide feedback to staff.

Contact: Jason Ackley, Staff Secretary (707) 648-4577  
[jason.ackley@cityofvallejo.net](mailto:jason.ackley@cityofvallejo.net)

**9 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

A 2026 Goals Discussion

**10 ADJOURNMENT**



**ADDITIONAL CITY INFORMATION**

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I, Jason Ackley, Staff Secretary do hereby certify that I have caused a true copy of the above notice and agenda to be delivered to

Courtney Davis (Chair)  
Demetra Stall-Nash (Vice Chair)  
Nona Cohen-Bowman  
Brandon Greene  
Melvin Jones  
Jerelle Medearis  
Marissa Serafino,

at the time and in the manner prescribed by law and that this agenda was posted at City Hall, 555 Santa Clara Street, CA at

Dated:

*Jason Ackley*

Jason Ackley, Staff Secretary



# City of Vallejo

## Boards, Commissions, and Committees Assessment Report

March 25, 2024

Revised August 25, 2025

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*Prepared by*  
**Ashwini Kantak**  
**MRG, LLC**  
March 25, 2024  
Revised August 25, 2025



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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Vallejo (City) is located in Northern California and is one of the most diverse cities in California, with a population of over 123,500 residents. Vallejo is a charter city with a Council-Manager form of government in which the City Manager makes program, policy, and budget priorities recommendations and the City Council develops legislation and adopts policies. The City charter provides that the City Council may create Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCCs) which could serve as advisory, policy, appellate and/or rule making bodies.

BCCs serve a valuable role as conduit between the City and the community providing expertise, oversight, and opportunities for community engagement and participation. They can also prepare members to take on additional leadership roles in the community. The City currently has nineteen (19) active Council appointed Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCCs). The City Clerk administers the appointment process for BCCs and the City Council interviews and makes appointments to the BCCs. Each BCC is supported by an assigned staff secretary from the relevant department and a staff person from the City Attorney's office.

Recruiting for and supporting the BCCs requires a significant amount of time commitment from the Council and staff. Additionally, the City has been having challenges retaining and attracting Commissioners. The City has hired MRG, LLC consultants, to conduct a thorough assessment of current BCCs along with associated practices, policies, and procedures, and to develop recommendations based on a combination of interviews, surveys, document review, and benchmarking. The desired outcome is to identify opportunities for consolidation and recommend best practices to maximize effective community service while ensuring efficient use of City Council and staff time.

MRG solicited input on several aspects of BCCs through Mayor, Councilmember, and executive staff interviews, and a staff survey. MRG also reviewed existing policies and procedures for BCCs in Vallejo and six other cities across three counties: El Cerrito, Fairfield, Milpitas, Palo Alto, Richmond, and Sunnyvale.

Based on the interviews, surveys, document review, and practices from other cities, MRG has developed recommendations across six key areas: recruitment process, membership and terms, potential changes to the number and roles of BCCs, workplans and budgets, staff functions and time commitment, training and resources, as well as a miscellaneous category covering various items.

In order to ensure a smooth implementation, MRG recommends conducting a Council Study Session to discuss the purpose and role of each BCC as an immediate next step. This study session could also serve as a public forum to solicit input from the community. MRG recommends implementing changes in two phases with the first phase focused on developing resources and training to enable staff and Commissioners to be more effective and making process improvements. The second phase should be focused on implementing changes to the



BCCs that could include refining the purpose and roles of BCCs or potential consolidation and/or elimination of BCCs over the next 12 to 18 months.

Based on the findings thus far, MRG is recommending reducing the number of BCCs from 19 to 14. These recommendations could be further informed by community input and Council discussion at the Study Session. Any material changes to the BCCs should ideally be implemented in a manner that allows time for Commissioners on BCCs slated to be either consolidated or eliminated, to transition to another BCC where possible or to serve for up to a 12-month period of their current BCC term.



**Annual Commissioner Recognition Event**

## II. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The City of Vallejo is located in Northern California and is one of the most diverse cities in California, with a population of over 123,500 residents. The City’s charter provides for a Council-Manager form of government in which the City Manager makes program, policy, and budget priorities recommendations and the City Council develops legislation and adopts policies.

The City of Vallejo’s charter also provides that the City Council may create, by ordinance, boards and commissions. These boards and commissions may serve as advisory, policy, appellate and/or rule making. The enabling ordinance for each board and commission is codified in the Vallejo Municipal Code, Title 2. The City Council may also, by resolution, establish advisory committees to advise the Council on various issues. Advisory bodies serve a valuable role as conduit between the City and the community. They can also prepare members to take on additional leadership roles in the community. For the purpose of this report, Boards, Commissions, and Committees will collectively be referenced as BCCs.

### Active Boards, Commissions, and Committees

The City currently has nineteen Council appointed BCCs. Of the nineteen BCCs, fourteen BCCs have 7 members, four have 5 members, and one has 11 members. Two BCCs have two and three alternates, adding up to a total of 134 Commissioner seats. The City Clerk administers the appointment process for all BCCs, including advertising vacancies and receiving applications, which are forwarded to the City Council for their consideration. The City Council interviews and makes appointments to the BCCs.

The nineteen active BCCs are listed below. See **Appendix A** for detailed information on each of the BCCs.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission | • Marina Advisory Committee                           |
| • Building Standards Code Appeal Board            | • McCune Collection Commission                        |
| • Beautification Commission                       | • Measure P Oversight Committee                       |
| • Civil Service Commission                        | • Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee          |
| • Code Enforcement Appeals Board                  | • Police Oversight and Accountability Commission      |
| • Commission on Culture and Arts                  | • Planning Commission                                 |
| • Design Review Board                             | • Sister City Commission                              |
| • Economic Vitality Commission                    | • Surveillance Advisory Board                         |
| • Housing and Community Development Commission    | • Vallejo Tourism Business Improvement Advisory Board |
| • Human Relations Commission                      |   |



Of the nineteen BCCs, five BCCs are quasi-judicial: Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission, Building Standards Code Appeal Board, Civil Service Commission, Code Enforcement Appeals Board, and the Planning Commission; all other BCCs act as advisory bodies on specific topic areas. Quasi-judicial bodies render decisions that are binding whereas the role of advisory bodies is to advise and make recommendations that the City Council may consider. Each BCC is supported by an assigned staff secretary from the relevant department and a staff person from the City Attorney's office.

### **Prior Work Related to Boards, Commissions, and Committees**

In March 2015, the City Council created an Ad-Hoc Committee on Commissions (AHCC), comprised of then Councilmembers McConnell, Miessner, and Sampayan and was supported by the Assistant City Manager and City Clerk. The AHCC met from June – December 2015.

On January 12 and April 26, 2016, the City Council discussed the AHCC report and recommendations. Based on the AHCC recommendations, the City Council eliminated three advisory bodies, re-established two advisory bodies, changed the name of one advisory body, and broadened membership of another advisory body. The Council did not take action on other recommendations including the elimination or consolidation of four advisory bodies. See **Appendix B** for a summary of AHCC's recommendations and a link to the full report. Since 2016, six (6) additional BCCs have been established.

### **Project Background and Scope**

Based on our benchmark analysis, the number of active BCCs appears to be relatively high compared to other cities. Recruiting Commissioners and supporting the BCCs requires a significant amount of Council and staff time including posting vacancies, reviewing applications, and conducting Commissioner interviews as well as developing agendas, minutes, and following up on Commissioner requests. The recruiting efforts are further exacerbated by an ongoing high number of resignations, and it has been challenging for the City to attract qualified applicants. Additionally, over time, the original purpose of some of the advisory BCCs has evolved and led to inadvertent scope overlap between the BCCs. Although BCCs play a very important role in community engagement and provide future community leadership opportunities, the City wants to ensure that BCCs are being used in an effective and efficient manner.

The City has hired MRG, LLC consultants (MRG) to conduct a thorough assessment of current BCCs along with associated practices, policies, and procedures, and the development of recommendations based on a combination of interviews, surveys, document review, and benchmarking. For the purposes of this assessment, only BCCs comprised of community members were included, Council subcommittees or committees comprised of staff were not part of the assessment scope.



The desired outcome is to identify opportunities for consolidation and recommend best practices to maximize effective community service while ensuring efficient use of City Council and staff time.

### III. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Ashwini Kantak of MRG, LLC, solicited input on several aspects of BCCs through two (2) individual interviews, five (5) group interviews, and a staff survey. See **Appendix C** for interview and survey questions.

The Mayor, Vice Mayor, five (5) Councilmembers, the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Assistant to the City Manager, City Clerk, City Attorney, and the Senior Leadership Team members were interviewed in January and February 2024. A survey was sent to the secretaries of the BCCs on February 9, 2024, and with additional subsequent reminders sent to all survey recipients. The survey was closed on February 16, 2024, and had a 66% response.

Interviews were conducted with the Mayor and members of the Council in groups of 2 or 3 between February 19-23, 2024. No Commissioners nor members of the community were interviewed or surveyed.

The existing City policies and procedures for BCCs were reviewed. A similar effort was undertaken for six other cities across three counties – El Cerrito, Fairfield, Milpitas, Palo Alto, Richmond, and Sunnyvale.

### IV. KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM INTERVIEWS AND SURVEY

The takeaways below were compiled based on input provided to MRG during the interviews and through the BCC staff secretary survey. The Mayor and Councilmembers provided robust feedback during the interviews about current challenges and potential opportunities for improvement. Almost all the current members of the City Council have previously served on an advisory body and provided insight both as former Commissioners and current members of the Council. They recognize the important role of the advisory bodies and would like to see improvements that maximize the effectiveness of the BCCs, honor the roles of the Commissioners, and use Council and staff time efficiently.

The interviews and survey responses from staff provided valuable insight into the functioning of the BCCs, the level of staff support needed, and suggestions for improvements in several areas.

#### Recruitment Process

**Mayor and Council:** The City Council spends a considerable amount of time interviewing candidates for the BCCs. With the current high rate of turnover on the BCCs, ongoing recruitments and interviews are not an efficient use of Council and staff time. The Mayor and



City Council offered suggestions to improve the recruitment process including keeping lists active for a period of time, ensuring that applicants understand the role and commitment required from a Commissioner, and leveraging the City Council’s social media channels to advertise vacancies by providing them with materials in jpeg and pdf formats.

**Staff:** As noted earlier in the report, the City Clerk’s office posts vacancies, accepts and reviews applications, and provides information to the City Council for interviews and appointments of Commissioners. Currently, recruitments occur throughout the year and require a significant amount of staff resources to ensure positions are filled in a timely manner. Staff suggestions included conducting recruitments twice a year to make the process more efficient and reducing the number of Commissioners in each BCC to address the issue of a lack of interested candidates.

### Membership and Terms

**Mayor and Council:** Some members of the Council suggested including alternate Commissioner seats for some advisory BCCs to ensure the BCC is able to meet quorum despite vacancies and absences. Another area of suggested change was to disallow Commissioners from applying for another BCC until they have completed their term on the BCC they were currently serving on.

**Staff:** Given current challenges in recruiting, some staff commented that adding alternate Commissioner seats on BCCs will not add much value. Some staff suggested shortening the terms of service to encourage more applicants.

### Potential Changes to Number and Roles of BCCs

**Mayor and Council:** The Mayor and Councilmembers were generally supportive of some BCC consolidation or elimination and acknowledged that any changes would need to be planned and implemented in a thoughtful manner. Members of the Council suggested various criteria for evaluating the BCCs for changes, including role of the BCC (advisory versus quasi-judicial), purpose of the BCC and scope overlap with other BCCs, and number of meeting cancellations due to a lack of quorum. BCCs suggested for evaluation and potential changes included: Beautification Commission, Design Review Board, Human Relations Commission, McCune Collection Commission, Marina Advisory Committee, Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee, and Sister City Commission.

**Staff:** Feedback received through the interviews and survey indicates overlap between some of the BCCs as well as a lack of clarity of purpose for some BCCs. This offers opportunities for both, further refinement of the purpose and duties of BCCs as well as potential consolidation of BCCs with overlapping scope.



There was strong staff support for decreasing number of BCC's, and only one suggestion to add a BCC related to homelessness. Staff suggested the following for potential changes to BCCs

- Incorporate Design Review Board into Planning Commission
- Explore consolidating Surveillance Advisory Board with Police Oversight and Accountability Commission; (subsequent staff feedback indicates that this may not be advisable, given the differences between the two bodies).
- Incorporate Commission on Culture and Arts and Marina Advisory Commission into the Economic Vitality Commission (subsequently renamed to Economic Development Commission)
- Eliminate McCune Collection Commission; eliminate Sister City Commission, appoint a Council liaison to the Sister City Association
- Evaluate scope and meeting frequency of the Human Relations Commission; evaluate scope of Beautification Commission; evaluate the purpose of the Vallejo Tourism Business Improvement Board

### Workplans and Budget

**Mayor and Council:** The Mayor and Council expressed unanimous support for requiring a workplan for each BCC. It was suggested that either the Council liaison or the Commission Chair take the lead on developing the workplan for each BCC. They also expressed a desire to have the Commissioners present the workplan to the City Council on an annual basis and were open to the idea of establishing a budget for each BCC, based on their workplans.

**Staff:** There was mixed support from staff regarding mandatory workplans for each BCC, this was related to concerns that mandatory workplans could potentially increase staff workload. However, staff acknowledged that if budgets were to be provided to the BCCs, workplans would have to be mandated.

### Staff Functions and Time Commitment

**Staff:** The primary functions performed by the BCC secretaries are preparing agendas and reviewing them with the City Attorney and BCC Chair, publishing agendas, attending BCC meetings, preparing meeting minutes and bookmarking the agenda video, and following up on Commissioner inquiries, including doing research and preparing responses. The staff secretary role is filled by a wide variety of job classifications.

Survey respondents typically spend between 8 to 10 hours performing a variety of functions to support BCCs, however, depending on the type of BCC, the time spent can be upwards of 20 hours. Some staff support multiple BCCs, thus the cumulative time spent on supporting BCCs could be as high as 30-40 hours a month.



### Training and Resources

Commissioners are provided with the code of ethics and code of conduct and have to acknowledge receipt of both documents. The BCCs use Rosenberg’s Rules of Order, the City Clerk and City Attorney are currently developing related training for Commissioners. Training is provided to the staff secretaries, however, there are no standard templates for agendas and minutes available for use<sup>1</sup>. There is also no comprehensive reference guide for BCC members and staff such as a BCC Handbook.

**Staff:** The majority of staff acknowledged that the training currently provided is inadequate; this was especially a key challenge for staff who are new in their role supporting a BCC. Staff expressed the need for a centralized repository of information and resources related to BCCs, potentially with the dedicated web page. Staff also requested standard templates for agendas and minutes.

### Miscellaneous

**Mayor and Council:** In addition to the areas noted above, it was noted that Councilmembers need to serve on various regional boards and committees and time commitment related to these regional bodies should be taken into account while evaluating the number of City BCCs, which also require their time as Council liaisons. There was a suggestion that stipends be considered for Commissioners that serve on BCCs that require a significant time commitment. Currently, stipends are only provided for Commissioners serving on three quasi-judicial BCCs.

**Staff:** Several staff provided input that the purpose of certain BCCs was not clear. One of the challenges encountered was the inability to schedule meetings because of inadequate meeting space. Some staff supported Commissioners taking on administrative tasks to decrease the workload for staff while others did not. Some staff also suggested that any applicants for BCCs should be required to attend BCC meetings before applying so that expectations and roles were clearly understood.

## V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REVIEW

The City’s Municipal Code is the governing document for all except one of the BCCs. See Appendix A for a complete listing of all BCCs with links to their governing documents. Although the purpose and duties are described for each BCC in the Vallejo Municipal Code and in some instances, in Council resolutions, these documents are broad and only provide general direction on the scope of work for each BCC. As stated earlier, there is no Handbook that provides comprehensive information on the purpose of the BCCs, roles of Commissioners, relevant City policies and procedures, and meeting frequencies and protocols.

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<sup>1</sup> Subsequent to the completion of the original report in March 2024, the City implemented a new agenda management system which provides templates for meeting materials

Each staff secretary is responsible for coordinating the BCC agenda with the City Attorney's office, Commission chair and other relevant staff. There are no standard templates for agendas and minutes, which results in a lack of consistency across BCCs. Also, on occasion, agenda coordination with the City Attorney is not done in a timely manner, which results in the removal or deferral of agenda items after the agenda has been posted. Additionally, since BCCs are not required to do workplans, managing roles and purview of advisory BCCs can be challenging for the staff secretaries, especially those that are relatively new to supporting BCCs.

## VI. BENCHMARKING

The policies and practices for Boards, Commissions, and Committees in six cities across three counties were reviewed: El Cerrito, Fairfield, Milpitas, Palo Alto, Richmond, and Sunnyvale. See **Appendix D** for a detailed summary.

The six cities varied in size in terms of population and the number of BCCs. The city of Fairfield, with a population of about 120,000, has the fewest number of BCCs at seven (7). The city of Richmond, with a population of about 116,000, has the highest number of BCCs at 24. The other four cities have standing BCCs ranging from eight (8) to thirteen (13). Five of the six cities either have a Handbook or a Council policy that provides comprehensive information on all the BCCs. Three of the six cities require annual workplans for all BCCs, two cities require annual workplans for some BCCs, and one city makes workplans optional. Commissioner appointments are made by the City Council, however in only two of the six cities are the applicants interviewed by the City Council.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the review of the City's policies and procedures and those of the six benchmarked cities, Mayor, Councilmember, and executive staff interviews, and the staff survey, MRG is recommending improvements in seven categories, including a miscellaneous category which captures various improvements.

### Recruitment Process

1. Conduct Commissioner recruitments twice a year.
2. Keep the list of candidates interviewed and found to be acceptable by City Council for a specific BCC, active for a period of six months or until next recruitment period, whichever is sooner; do not require candidates to apply and interview again if a vacancy opens up on that BCC.
3. Consider the use of alternate Commissioner seats to allow a longer period of time to fill vacancies.
4. Provide annual attendance records to Council to help inform the selection process.



5. Leverage City, Mayor, and Councilmembers’ social media channels; provide promotional material to member of the Council in user friendly formats.
6. Leverage City events to promote BCC accomplishments and service opportunities.
7. Require Commissioners to complete their terms on a BCC before considering them for a vacant position on another BCC.

## Membership and Terms

1. Reduce number of Commissioners on all advisory BCCs from seven members to five members and 2 alternates.
2. Solicit input from the community about whether shortening terms to 3 years will encourage more applicants.

## Potential Changes to BCCs

Consider reducing number of BCCs from 19 to 14 over a period of 12 to 18 months as outlined in this section. However, before finalizing any changes to existing BCCs, the City Council could conduct a Study Session to review the purpose of each of the Boards, Commissions, and Committees in order to validate the proposed recommended changes. If the City wished to conduct this review in phases, the first phase could include the BCCs recommended for elimination or consolidation with another BCC including the Marina Advisory Committee, Design Review Board, Sister City Commission, and the McCune Collection Commission. Clarifying the purpose of the Beautification Commission, Human Relations Commission, and the Vallejo Tourism Business Improvement District Board would also be beneficial to include in the first phase of review. It is important to note that this report did not incorporate feedback from the community. Soliciting community input at the Council Study Session could provide useful insight and help further refine the proposed plan.

### Recommended Changes

1. **Rename Economic Vitality Commission to Economic Development Commission (EDC)<sup>2</sup>, incorporate the functions of Marina Advisory Committee into the EDC**

The purpose of the Economic Vitality Commission (EVC) is to advise the City Council on issues that can enhance job growth, increase private investment, assist with business retention and attraction activities, and assist with the implementation of the economic development element of the General Plan. This Commission recommends policies that can incentivize job growth and investment by businesses and maintains relationships



<sup>2</sup> This change has been implemented since the draft report was submitted

with the Chamber of Commerce and regional and state economic development organizations. Since the main focus of this Commission is economic development, changing its name to Economic Development Commission better aligns with the purpose of the Commission.

The purpose of the Marina Advisory Committee (MAC) is to advise the City Council on all matters related to the Marina and to help enhance occupancy and stimulate growth at the Marina. Since the overall purpose of this Committee is to also support a thriving economy in a vital part of the City, including it under the umbrella of the Economic Development Commission is recommended.

The EVC has 7 members that are either residents or employees/owners of businesses. MAC also has 7 members, 4 of which are berthers at the Marina, and 3 are residents. If the MAC were to be incorporated into the proposed EDC, the City could consider having a berther be one of the 7 members, to ensure direct representation from the Marina.

## **2. Explore consolidation of the Surveillance Advisory Board with Police Oversight and Accountability Commission in the future**

The Surveillance Advisory Board (SAB) advises the City Council and staff about the acquisition, deployment, and use of surveillance technology within the City. Commissioners must demonstrate interest and experience in civil and privacy rights.

The purpose of the Police Oversight and Accountability Commission (POAC) is to improve relations between law enforcement and the community and to foster good relations between the police and the diverse community they serve. Since both BCCs are focused on ensuring the public interest related to law enforcement, there may be some merit in combining these two BCCs in the future<sup>3</sup>.

## **3. Incorporate Design Review Board into Planning Commission**

The Design Review Board (DRB) acts as an advisory body to the Planning Commission (PC) on topics related to architectural design, landscape design, and urban design. The



<sup>3</sup> Subsequent to the initial staff engagement, concerns have been raised about this consolidation due to the significant differences between the two advisory bodies.

DRB also conducts design review and approves or denies plans for projects in downtown and other districts related to the waterfront design guidelines.

The PC is responsible for adopting a comprehensive long-term General Plan and for approving or making recommendations to the Council on development projects, zoning code, and other policies related to long term planning. Since the DRB advises the PC on elements of projects that the PC ultimately has to act upon, it is recommended that the role of the DRB be incorporated into the duties of the PC.

The DRB has 5 members that must have demonstrated competence and interest in architecture, landscape architecture, or urban design. While incorporating the DRB into the PC, the City could consider changing the criteria for Planning Commissioners and requiring one or two seats to be filled by Commissions with competence and interest in architecture, landscape architecture, or urban design.

**4. Eliminate Sister City Commission, appoint a Council liaison to the Vallejo Sister City Association**

The City has long-standing relationships with six Sister Cities. The Sister City Commission (SCC) plans and recommends to the City Council a Sister City program and helps stimulate and sustain participation and community support for the program. The SCC acts as a liaison with Sister Cities International and promotes events to foster friendly relationships between Vallejo and its sister cities.

Vallejo Sister City Association is a volunteer community group that has been involved with Sister Cities International since 1971. This group works closely with the Mayor, Council, and staff, through the SSC, to support relationships with six Sister Cities and three Friendship Cities. Since the purpose and mission of this group is very closely aligned with the SSC, it is recommended that the SSC be eliminated, and a Council Liaison be appointed to the Board of the Vallejo Sister City Association. This will ensure continued collaboration and support from the City while minimizing duplication of efforts on two bodies with a similar purpose and mission.

**5. Eliminate McCune Collection Commission (MCC), explore partnership with Library and Naval Historical Museum**

The McCune Collection Commission advises the Council and City Manager on matters related to the McCune Collection facilities, properties, and the endowment fund. The MCC also investigates and makes advisory reports related to the McCune Collection.



The City Attorney's Office is currently researching archived documents to determine if there are any legal obligations related to the endowment that requires the City to keep this Commission active. Based on the review of available documents, and contingent upon the findings from the legal review, it is recommended that this Commission be eliminated. If the MCC were to be eliminated, the City could explore partnerships with the Library and/or the Naval Historical Museum to act as a steward for the McCune Collection, as suggested by some members of the Council.

**6. Clarify purpose and role of Beautification Commission and Human Relations Commission; evaluate purpose and scope of Vallejo Tourism Business Improvement Board**

The purpose of the Beautification Commission (BC) is to support the beautiful appearance of public properties and public right of way. The BC is supposed to advise the Council on policies and programs and engage the community in supporting departmental efforts to enhance the appearance of infrastructure and landscaping. The scope of the BC is broad and general and does not provide adequate guidance to the Commissioners or staff. It is recommended that a workplan with actionable goals be developed so that the BC can focus on one or more specific projects or programs that will enhance the appearance of public properties and the public right of way.

The purpose of the Human Relations Commission (HRC) is to promote equal treatment of all individuals, eliminate discrimination, make recommendations to alleviate tension and conflict in the community, and advise on issues involving relationships between law enforcement, the justice system, and the community. The HRC is also supposed to make recommendations to staff, labor groups, Civil Service Commission, and the City Council, to promote equal employment opportunities and fair contracting practices. The scope of this Commission is extremely broad and does not provide specific guidance in terms of areas of focus for this Commission. It is recommended that the purpose and scope of this Commission be re-evaluated and more narrowly defined. Using an example from the City of Sunnyvale, the role of the HRC could be modified as follows:

- Should focus on policy issues and not interfere with City operations
- Study, evaluate, and advise the Council on policies and programs related to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion
- Celebrate and encourage Vallejo's rich cultural diversity
- Promote regular, civil, and authentic engagement with diverse groups of residents



- Advise on increasing accessibility and transparency of local government policies, programs and services

In addition to re-defining the scope, an annual workplan should include specific events or programs that this Commission would be leading or supporting.

The purpose of the Vallejo Tourism Business Improvement District Advisory Board is to make recommendations to the City Council on the expenditure of revenues derived from the levy of assessments within the Vallejo Tourism Business Improvement District. Since this BCC does not meet on a regular basis, the City may want to evaluate its purpose and scope to ensure its effectiveness. Since this BCC was created by a statute, any desired changes will need to be closely coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

## 7. Youth Involvement

Some members of the City Council expressed a strong interest in resurrecting the Youth Commission, which is currently suspended. If the City does not wish to add another Commission that would require additional staff support, the City could consider a model for youth involvement that is being used in the city of Milpitas. A non-voting youth commissioner seat for students in grades 9-12 could be added to all advisory BCCs. This would not only allow several opportunities for high school students to get involved in BCCs and become familiar with a variety of topic areas that support local government but would also facilitate youth representation on all advisory BCCs.

## Workplans and Budgets

1. Require workplans and annual reports for every BCC. This may require a change to the City's municipal code.
2. Provide Commission Chairs with the opportunity to present workplans to the Council on an annual basis. The City may want to consider adding two special sessions a year, specifically focused on discussing BCC work plans and reports.
3. Provide templates for workplans and reports, require consistency in format and content across BCCs.
4. Workplans should have a maximum of 3-5 goals with specific deliverables and lead Commissioners for each goal identified.
5. Goals should be aligned with adopted Council and community priorities.
6. Consider a modest annual budget of \$1,000 for each BCC, exceptions could be made for any BCCs with significant workplan items. This may require a change to existing Council Policy 2024-01



7. Eligible and ineligible uses of the budget should be in accordance with Council Policy 2024-01.

### Staff Functions and Time Commitment

1. Staff should continue to prepare agenda and minutes, in coordination with the BCC Chair, City Attorney, and other staff; Commissioners should not be taking on this role. The City's Municipal Code may need to be revised to codify this change.
2. The City should evaluate the appropriate level of staff supporting the BCCs. The role of the staff secretary is not administrative; staff secretaries should be well versed in the programmatic areas under the BCC's purview. They should also be able to appropriately guide Commissioners on meeting protocols and Commissioner roles, ensure agenda topics align with the BCC's purpose and scope, and communicate Council and community priorities.
3. Use of standard document templates, centralized resources, ongoing training, and potentially fewer BCCs will allow staff to be more efficient in supporting BCCs; all BCC resources should be easily accessible through the City's website and intranet.

### Training and Resources

1. Develop a BCC Handbook and Commissioner Onboarding packet, links to examples from other cities are included in **Appendix C**.
2. Commissioner Onboarding packet should include requirements related to ethics, sexual harassment, code of conduct, Rosenberg's Rules of Order trainings, and a BCC Handbook.
3. Link to Handbook and other BCC resources to be available on a dedicated BCC webpage.
4. City Clerk and City Attorney to develop training for Commissioners, provide live training once a year, with the recording available for viewing anytime.
5. CMO/City Clerk to develop templates for agendas, minutes, workplans, and annual reports<sup>4</sup>.



<sup>4</sup> The City has subsequently implemented an agenda management system that has addressed this recommendation.

## VIII. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation should be phased in to allow for adequate time to develop training resources and to allow consolidation through attrition and transition of commissioners from BCCs that may be slated for consolidation or elimination, to other BCCs.

### Phase I (approximately 3 months)

1. Develop templates for meeting agendas, minutes<sup>5</sup>, workplans, annual reports, and powerpoint templates.
2. Develop a BCC Handbook and Commissioner Onboarding packet.
3. Develop a training program for Commissioners and staff secretaries, including an annual live training that can be recorded for viewing by new Commissioners and staff as well as any Commissioners or staff needing a refresher.
4. Hold a Council Study Session to discuss the role and purpose of each Commission, solicit input from the community at the same Study Session.

### Phase II (approximately 12-15 months)

1. Develop a phased implementation plan for changes to existing BCCs based on Council discussion and direction.
2. Provide existing Commissioners of a BCC slated for consolidation or elimination, the opportunity to fill vacancies on another BCC, if eligible to serve on that BCC.
3. Commissioners on BCCs that may be incorporated into another BCC or eliminated, should be allowed to serve for up to a 12-month period of their current BCC term. Alternatively, they could choose to transition to another BCC, provided they meet eligibility requirements of that BCC.



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<sup>5</sup> The City has since implemented an Agenda Management system that addresses templates for meeting agendas and minutes.

## **IX. APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>Vallejo Boards, Commissions, and Committees Summary Report</b>
<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>2015-2016 Ad-Hoc Committee on Commissions (AHCC)</b>
<b>Appendix C</b>	<b>Interview and Survey Questions</b>
<b>Appendix D</b>	<b>Summary Report of Benchmarked Cities</b>



Appendix A

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**Appendix A - Vallejo Boards, Commissions, and Committees Summary**

Name	Membership	Purpose	Duties and Powers	Reference Documents	Meeting Frequency & Location	Council Liaison	Secretary
<b>Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission</b>	7 members appointed by Council, related background required	Preserve, protect, support economic value, foster civic pride, continued private ownership of historic structures	Conduct design review and hold public hearings, survey older buildings to identify historic structures, make policy recommendations to Council	<a href="#">Chapter 2.48 of Municipal Code</a>	Monthly, 3rd Thursday at 6:30 pm in Council Chambers	Peter Bregenzer	Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch (Planning)
<b>Beautification Commission</b>	7 members appointed by Council	Support the beautiful appearance of public properties and right of way	To promote and improve the quality of life, support departmental efforts through community involvement, advise the Council on policies and program, support programs that enhance the appearance of infrastructure and landscaping	<a href="#">Chapter 2.39 of Municipal Code</a>	Every other month, 1st Wednesday of even months at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers	Verder-Aliga	Shelee Loughmiller (Community and Volunteer Coordinator)
<b>Building Standards Code Appeal Board</b>	5 members nominated by staff and appointed by Council	Hear and decide appeals of orders, decisions, or determinations made by the chief building official or fire code official relative to the application and interpretation of the California Building Standards Codes	Hear appeals as described in Chapter 2.75 and Chapter 12	<a href="#">Chapter 2.75 of Municipal Code</a>	Meet as needed		
<b>Civil Service Commission</b>	5 members and appointed by the Council	Provide for the standardization and classification of all positions and employment in the classified service; competitive tests, rules and regulations - purpose is a little unclear	No specific duties and powers called out, rule making and appellate body	<a href="#">Chapter 2.43 of the Municipal Code</a>	2nd Monday of the month as needed, 5:15 pm in Council Chambers; at least one regular meeting to be held every two months.	Diosdado "JR" Matulac	Pleshetta Dauzart (Executive Secretary)
<b>Code Enforcement Appeals Board</b>	7 members appointed by Council	Act as and exercise duties, functions, powers of the "code enforcement appeals board" and as "hearing officer" and "abandoned vehicle hearing board"	Act as hearing officer, hear appeals and hearings about special assessments for administrative citations - property maintenance, vacant buildings, abandoned vehicles, abandoned shopping carts, weed and rubbish abatement; render report to the Council	<a href="#">Chapter 2.49 of Municipal Code</a>	4th Thursday of each month, 6-8 pm in Council Chambers	Diosdado "JR" Matulac	Dong Yoo, Sr. Code Enf. Officer, Sgt. Richard Wanzie
<b>Commission on Culture and the Arts</b>	7 members appointed by Council, shall represent cross-section of community interests and organizations	Serve as the official voice for the arts, serve as an advisory board in making referrals to appropriate groups and coordinating arts projects, identify problems experienced by local arts organizations and suggest solutions	Promote visual and performing arts groups, participate in publication and distribution of an events calendar, assist related groups, advise the City Council on public art projects, record decisions	<a href="#">Chapter 2.32 of the Municipal Code</a>	4th Monday of each month at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers	Tina Arriola	Annette Taylor, Sr. Community Development Analyst

**Appendix A - Vallejo Boards, Commissions, and Committees Summary**

Name	Membership	Purpose	Duties and Powers	Reference Documents	Meeting Frequency & Location	Council Liaison	Secretary
<b>Design Review Board</b>	5 members appointed by Council, all members have to have their primary residence (min. 4) or employment in the city; demonstrated competence and interest in architecture, landscape arch., or urban design	Acts as an advisory body to the Planning Commission and others related to matters of architectural design, landscape design, and urban design	Advises the Planning Commission when requested or when required by an ordinance, conduct design review and approve/deny plans for project in Downtown and other districts related to the Waterfront Design Guidelines; review and comment on other projects including site development plan applications, that may be referred to them; advise on the Design Guidelines themselves	<a href="#">Chapter 2.59 of the Municipal Code</a>	2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers	Charles Palmares	Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Planning Manager
<b>Economic Vitality Commission (renamed to Economic Development Commission since initial report was prepared)</b>	7 members appointed by Council, shall be a resident of the city or an employee/owner of a business with a city business license	Advise the Council on issues that can enhance job growth and increase private investment, assist with implementation of econ. Dev. Element of the General Plan, assist with business retention and attraction activities	can incentivize job growth and business investment, plan and conduct business retention and attraction programs, maintain relationships with Chamber, regional and state ED orgs., make recommendations about website and	<a href="#">Chapter 2.36 of the Municipal Code</a>	2nd Wednesday of even months at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers	Mina Loera-Diaz	Ivette Iraheta, Econ. Dev. Program Manager
<b>Housing and Community Development Commission</b>	7 members	Serves various functions in both, housing and community development	Review and make recommendations on all matters to come before the Housing Authority (except emergency matters) and on all agreements related to affordable housing that go to the Authority or Council. May perform advisory and appellate functions as may be delegated by the Council. Hold hearings related to mobile home parks rent control. Hold hearings related to CDBG and HOME program applications, recommend to the Council adoption of a 3 or 5 year comm. dev. plan, annual housing and community development program, hold hearings to assess progress and performance, and serve in an advisory capacity on implementation of various projects.	<a href="#">Chapter 2.46 of the Municipal Code</a>	1st Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers	Peter Bregenzer	Chari Barrera, Administrative Manager

**Appendix A - Vallejo Boards, Commissions, and Committees Summary**

Name	Membership	Purpose	Duties and Powers	Reference Documents	Meeting Frequency & Location	Council Liaison	Secretary
<b>Human Relations Commission</b>	7 members appointed by the Council, individuals with strong commitment to good human relations, fairness, ethnic diversity and group will reflect ethnic and other diversity of the community	Promote equal treatment of all individuals, prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, genetic info, marital status, sexual or gender orientation an identity, medial condition, political activities, military or veteran status, domestic violence victim, etc.	Inform and consult with Council to alleviate tension and conflict, consider issues involving relationships between police, justice system, community; make recommendations to staff, labor groups, civil service commission and City Council to promote equal employment opportunity and fair contracting practices	<a href="#">Chapter 2.40 of the Municipal Code</a>	4th Wednesday of Jan, Apr, July, Oct (if agenda items) at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers	Diosdado "JR" Matulac	Shawn Hadnot, Employee and Labor Relations Officer
<b>Marina Advisory Committee</b>	7 members, 4 (berthers from the Marina), 3 at-large; appointed by the Mayor; at-large members have to be residents	Make recommendations to the City Council on all policy matters related to the Marina, support communication between staff and berthers, stimulate growth and occupancy rates at the Marina	Make recommendations to Council and staff, assist staff in prioritizing projects in CIP, work with staff and community to enhance occupancy , improve communications, and develop solutions to address issues	<a href="#">Resolution No. 02-362 N.C.</a>	1st Thursday of the month, quarterly at 5:00 pm in City Hall, PW Conf. Room	Tina Arriola	Marina Walker
<b>McCune Collection Commission</b>	7 members appointed by the Council	Advise Council and City Manager on policy and other matters related to McCune Collection facilities and property, investigate and make advisory reports; advise on the Endowment Fund	Advise Council and City Manager on matters related to McCune, investigate and make reports	<a href="#">Ordinance No. 1729 N.C.</a>	1st Monday, bi-monthly at 4:30 pm at City Hall	Charles Palmares	Annette Taylor, Sr. Community Development Analyst
<b>Measure P Oversight Committee</b>	7 members to be appointed by each member of the Council (1 each), members shall be residents and appointed by Councilmembers to represent their respective districts. Member appointed by the Mayor may reside anywhere in the city	Act as a citizen oversight committee for Measure P (transaction and use tax measure)	Review and report on the City's proposed and actual expenditures from the Measure P tax and also on the required independent annual audit; report shall be discussed publicly	<a href="#">Chapter 3.09.150 of the Municipal Code</a>	At least twice each calendar year at a TBD time, in City Hall	TBD	Debbie Martir, Public Works Administrative Manager
<b>Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee</b>	11 members and 3 alternates, 1 from African American Alliance, 1 from NAACP, 1 from NCBW, 8 at-large;	Ensure that budget process is transparent, fair, and inclusive	Facilitate the budget (PB) process including recommending program rules, planning public meetings, and conducting outreach with diverse communities			Tina Arriola, Peter Bregenzer	
<b>Planning Commission</b>	7 members appointed by the Council, no member can serve more than 8 years	Responsible for adopting a comprehensive long-term general plan	Such powers and duties as prescribed by law and governed by the procedures provided by law	<a href="#">Chapter 2.44 of the Municipal Code</a>	1st and 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers	Charles Palmares	Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Planning Manager

**Appendix A - Vallejo Boards, Commissions, and Committees Summary**

Name	Membership	Purpose	Duties and Powers	Reference Documents	Meeting Frequency & Location	Council Liaison	Secretary
<b>Police Oversight and Accountability Commission</b>	7 members and 2 alternates (youth and community member) appointed by the Council, each Councilmember appoints 1 from their District, Mayor appoints 1 from any District, various eligibility criteria	Promote the health, safety and well being of all residents by utilizing the best possible practices and policies while ensuring effective, efficient, trustworthy, and just law enforcement. Improve relations between law enforcement and the community and foster good relations.	Review Independent Investigative reports and Internal Affairs reports and supporting evidence and opine on findings and conclusions and recommend further investigation if needed. Advise Mayor, Council, City Manager, and Chief of Police on police community relations issues. Conduct public outreach. See ordinance for additional duties and powers.	<a href="#">Chapter 18.03 of the Municipal Code, ___</a>	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Sister City Commission</b>	7 members appointed by the Council	Plan and recommend to the Council a sister city program and stimulate and sustain participation and community support for the program	Conduct research, act as liaison with Sister Cities international, promote events, tour groups, formal and friendly relationships between groups in both cities, maintain a translation committee, make recommendations on existing sister cities	<a href="#">Chapter 2.38 of the Municipal Code</a>	3rd Monday - bi-monthly at 5:30 pm in the Library	Rozzana Verder-Aliga	Erik Rzomp, Executive Assistant to the Mayor
<b>Surveillance Advisory Board</b>	7 members, 1 resident appointed by each member of the Council and Mayor - District specific when appointed by Councilmembers, members must demonstrate interest and experience in civil and privacy rights	Provide advice to the Council, City Manager, and departments about the acquisition, deployment and use of surveillance technology within the city	Advise the Council and staff on best practices to protect the safety, privacy, and civil rights of residents related to surveillance technology, conduct public meetings, and submit reports with findings and recommendations to the Council; review and respond to requests from staff on equipment or policies related to surveillance technology; may work with City Attorney to recommend model legislation related to surveillance technology	<a href="#">Ordinance No. 1859 N.C.</a>	3rd Thursday, bi-monthly, time TBD, in Council Chambers	Tina Arriola	Naveed Ashraf, IT Director/Chief Information Officer
<b>Vallejo Tourism Business Improvement District Advisory Board</b>	5 members appointed by the Council - chair and vice chair of the Vallejo convention and visitors' bureau board, 3 members who are owners or business managers of businesses being assessed	Make recommendations to the Council on expenditure of revenues derived from the levy of assessments with the tourism BID	Advisory body related to the tourism BID assessment expenditures	<a href="#">Chapter 2.41 of the Municipal Code</a>	Annually, Time TBA, in the Ferry Building	N/A	Annette Taylor, Sr. Community Development Analyst

Appendix B

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**CITY OF VALLEJO**

**2016 Boards, Commissions, and Committees Assessment Summary**

*(Excerpts from 1/12/16 and 4/26/16 City Council agenda reports)*

*Consultant – Ashwini Kantak*

*March 2024*



In March 2015, the City Council created an Ad-Hoc Committee on Commissions (AHCC), comprised of then Councilmembers McConnell, Miessner, and Sampayan and was supported by the Assistant City Manager and City Clerk. The AHCC met from June – December 2015.

The AHCC provided recommendations on the following topics related to Commissions:

- Number of Commissions/Changes to Commission roles
- Work plans of Commissions
- Procedure for Selecting Commissioners
- Recognition/Commissioner Appreciation
- Term Limits
- Education and Training
- Attendance Policy for Commissioners
- Commissioner Orientation
- Role of City Councilmember Liaisons to Commissions
- Role of City Councilmember to non-Commission Agencies
- Fund-raising by Commissions
- Broadcast and Access to Commission Meeting
- City Council Review of Commission Structure

On January 12 and April 26, 2016, the City Council discussed the AHCC report and recommendations. Based on the AHCC recommendations, the City Council eliminated three advisory bodies, re-established two advisory bodies, changed the name of one advisory body, and broadened membership of another advisory body, as listed below.

1. No changes to three (3) BCC bodies - Architectural and Landmarks Commission, Code Enforcement Appeals Board, Human Relations Commission, and Planning Commission.
2. Eliminated three (3) BCC bodies - the Commission on Aging, the Library Board, Mobile Home Rent Review Board.
3. Re-created a stand-alone Design review Board as advisory to the Planning Commission and re-established a Beautification Commission.
4. Changed the name of the Housing and Redevelopment Commission to Housing and Community Development Commission.
5. Broadened membership of the Vallejo Tourism Business Improvement District Board.

The City Council did not act on the following AHCC recommendations:

1. Continue suspension of the Commission on Culture and the Arts
2. Various changes related to the Economic Vitality Commission
3. Eliminate Marina Advisory Committee and instead establish an ad-hoc citizens committee when needed.

## APPENDIX B

4. Consolidate Sister City Commission with Sister City Association and appoint a City Council liaison.
5. Eliminate Youth Commission

The AHCC also made recommendations on the various topics mentioned earlier, however, the City Council chose to only accept a subset of the recommendations.

Appendix C

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### **CITY OF VALLEJO INTERVIEWS (Mayor and Council) Boards, Commissions, and Committees Assessment**

*Consultant – Ashwini Kantak*

*February 2024*



**Project Scope:** perform a comprehensive assessment of current Boards and Commissions along with associated practices, policies, and procedures, and develop recommendations based on a combination of interviews, surveys, document review, and benchmarking.

- 1. Before we begin with the interview do you have any questions or thoughts about the scope of the project?**
- 2. Have you served on any Commissions prior to being elected to the Council? If so, which Commissions and how long did you serve as Commissioner?**
- 3. Follow up if response to Q2 is yes. What drew you to serve as a Commissioner and did that experience help you decide to run for Council?**
- 4. Are you familiar with the Ad Hoc Committee's work on Boards and Commissions and the recommendations made to Council in 2016? If so, are there any lessons learned from that effort that we should be taking into consideration?**
- 5. The current recruiting process for Boards and Commissions can be time consuming and at times challenging due to a lack of applicants. Do you have any input on potential improvements to the current process?**
- 6. Boards and Commissions are currently not required to prepare annual workplans or reports. What are your thoughts on requiring annual workplans and reports?**
- 7. Based on your observations, do you see any opportunities for consolidation of any of the Boards and Commissions? Follow up question – do you have any insight of how consolidations could be successfully implemented?**
- 8. Are you aware of any best practices for Boards and Commissions that the City might want to evaluate as part of this assessment process?**
- 9. What else do we need to know to complete an effective assessment of the Boards and Commissions and make actionable recommendations?**

### **CITY OF VALLEJO INTERVIEWS (Executive Staff) Boards, Commissions, and Committees Assessment**

*Consultant – Ashwini Kantak*

*February 2024*



**Project Scope:** perform a comprehensive assessment of current Boards and Commissions along with associated practices, policies, and procedures, and develop recommendations based on a combination of interviews, surveys, document review, and benchmarking.

- 1. What is your role with respect to Boards and Commissions?**
- 2. What challenges do you typically encounter in your current role as it pertains to Boards and Commissions?**
- 3. Are you aware of any best practices for Boards and Commissions that the City might want to evaluate as part of this assessment process?**
- 4. Are you familiar with the selection process for Boards and Commissions and if so, do you have any input on potential improvements to the current process?**
- 5. Are you aware of any issues related to Boards and Commissions not meeting quorum? If so, do you have input on how this issue could be addressed, including potential changes to the attendance policy and inclusion of alternates?**
- 6. Based on your observations and your role as it relates to Boards and Commissions, do you see any opportunities for consolidation of any of the Boards and Commissions?**
- 7. Boards and Commissions are currently not required to prepare annual workplans or reports. What pros and cons do you foresee if annual workplans and reports were to be mandated?**
- 8. Are you familiar with the training provided to the Board and Commission members and if so, do you have any suggestions for improvements?**
- 9. Are you familiar with the Ad Hoc Committee's work on Boards and Commissions and the recommendations made to Council in 2016? If so, are there any lessons learned from that effort that we should be taking into consideration?**

## APPENDIX C

- 10. Based on your experience as it relates to the Boards and Commissions, do you think the current structure and process for Boards and Commissions serves the City Council and the Vallejo community effectively?**
  
- 11. What else do we need to know to complete an effective assessment of the Boards and Commissions and make actionable recommendations?**

**CITY OF VALLEJO STAFF SECRETARIES SURVEY**  
**Boards, Commissions, and Committees Assessment**

*Consultant – Ashwini Kantak*  
*February 2024*



You have been selected to participate in this survey because of your role as staff secretary for one or more of the Boards and Commissions in the City of Vallejo.

MRG has been retained to conduct a thorough assessment of current Boards and Commissions and to develop recommendations based on a combination of interviews, surveys, document review, and benchmarking. The desired outcome is to identify opportunities for consolidation and recommend best practices to maximize effective community service while ensuring efficient use of City Council and staff time.

Your input and observations are extremely valuable given your direct involvement with a Board and/or Commission.

Individual survey responses will not be shared with anyone, the results be presented in summary form. The survey will take 15-20 minutes to complete. We kindly request that you complete the survey no later than February 16, 2024.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact Ashwini Kantak, MRG Consultant, at [akantak@klarityconsulting.net](mailto:akantak@klarityconsulting.net).

Thank you for your feedback.

- 1. Do you serve as staff secretary for a City of Vallejo Board or Commission?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

For a Yes response, please provide name(s) of Boards and/or Commissions you support. This information is optional and may be provided at your discretion.

If the response is No, do not proceed with the rest of the survey

- 2. Please provide the name of your department and job title** (This information is optional and may be provided at your discretion).
- 3. How long have you been in the role of staff secretary for a Board and/or Commission?**
  - a. Less than one year
  - b. Between one and five years
  - c. More than five years
  - d. Not sure

## APPENDIX C

- 4. We are interested in learning about the key functions you perform as a staff secretary. For each Board or Commission you support, please provide a description of up to five key functions (a major task or regularly performed activity) that take up the most amount of your time, number of hours worked on each function in a month, and departments or divisions you work with for each function, if applicable).**
- 5. Are there any challenges you typically face in your role as staff secretary?**
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
- 6. If response to question 5 above was yes, please select all that apply.**
- a. I find it challenging to be familiar with all the rules and procedures associated with the Board/Commission I support
  - b. I do not have standard templates to prepare agendas and minutes
  - c. I am not able to meet the required timelines for Board/Commission agenda preparation and staff review due to workload issues
  - d. The Board or Commission I support does not have a clear understanding of its scope
  - e. Due to high turnover on the Board or Commission I support it is challenging to onboard and train new members on an ongoing basis
  - f. Other

If Other, please provide additional details

- 7. Have you had to cancel a Board or Commission meeting due to a lack of quorum in the past two years?**
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure

If yes, please provide number of cancellations

- 8. Annual workplans and reports are not currently required for any Board or Commission. Do you think requiring these will make the Board/Commission more effective?**
- a. Yes

## APPENDIX C

- b. No
- c. Not sure

For a Yes or No response, please include an explanation

**9. Based on your observations and your role as it relates to Boards and Commissions, do you see any opportunities for consolidation of any of the Boards and Commissions?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

For a Yes response, please describe potential opportunities

**10. Are you familiar with the Ad Hoc Committee's work on Boards and Commissions and the recommendations made to Council in 2016?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

For a Yes response, please include any lessons learned that we should take into consideration.

**11. Based on your experience as it relates to the Boards and Commissions, do you think the current structure and process for Boards and Commissions serves the City Council and the Vallejo community effectively?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

For a Yes or No response, please include an explanation

**12. Are you aware of any best practices for Boards and Commissions that the City might want to evaluate as part of this assessment process?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

## APPENDIX C

For a Yes response, please list best practices

**13. What else do we need to know to complete an effective assessment of the Boards and Commissions and make actionable recommendations?**

Thank you for taking the survey. We appreciate your time!

Appendix D

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**Appendix D - Summary Report of Benchmarked Cities**

City	Population	No. of Standing Boards/Commissions	Board/Commission/Committee Names	Membership	Term	Meeting Frequency	Recruitment Process	Workplans
El Cerrito	26,000	13	Arts and Culture, Citizens Street Oversight Committee, Civil Service Commission, Committee on Aging, Crime Prevention Committee, Design Review Board, Economic Development Committee, Environmental Quality Committee, Financial Advisory Board, Human Relations Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, Urban Forest Committee.	ACC, HRC, PRC, PC (7), CSOC, CSC, DRB, FAB, (5), COA, CPC, EDC, EQC, UFC (15)	Four year terms, Board, Commission, and CSOC limited to two consecutive full terms on each body. Committees - 3 consecutive terms on each Committee. Term of individual seat is fixed. Staggered terms.	11 BCCs meet monthly, one BCC meets three times a year, one BCC meets as needed	Terms commence on March 1. City Clerk manages the application process. Council interviews in a public meeting.	Workplan templates provided but workplans not required for every BCC
Fairfield	120,000	7	CDBG Advisory Committee, Golf Advisory Board, Landscape Oversight Committee, Measure P Oversight Committee, Planning Commission, Rockville Citizen Advisory Committee, Youth Commission	CDBG (5 + 1 PC and 1 YC rep), GAB (7), LOC (7), PC (7), Measure P OC (5), RHRPCAC (7)	YC - 3 years, GAB, PC, RHRPCAC - 4 years, LOC, Measure P - 5 years	One BCC meets twice a month, one BCC meets monthly, 3 BCCs meet quarterly, frequency for two BCCs varies and is as needed	Quarterly recruitments for YC,	No workplans required except for YC
Milpitas	84,000	13	Arts, Community Advisory, Economic Development and Trade, Energy and Environmental Sustainability, Library and Education Advisory, Measure F Oversight, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources, Planning, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Science, Technology and Innovation, Senior Advisory, Veterans, Youth Advisory	Planning (7), and PRCC (9 and 2 alternates), Youth (7 and 2 alternates), Arts (7, 2 alternates, 2 non voting youth members) all other Commissions (7 members, 2 alternates, 1 non-voting youth member)	3 year terms, no term limits	One BCC meets twice a month, six BCCs meet monthly, one BCC meets 4 times a year, four BCCs meet 5 times a year, one BCC meets quarterly	Applications are accepted throughout the year, appointments are made by Council in public meeting but no interviews.	Annual workplans and reports required to be presented to the City Council
Palo Alto	67,000	8	Architectural Review Board (5 members SMEs), Historic Resources Board, Human Relations Commission (5 members), Parks and Recreation Commission, Planning and Transportation Commission, Public Art Commission, Storm Water Management Oversight Committee, Utility Advisory Commission	ARB, HRC, PAC (5 members); HRB, PRC, PTC, SWMOC, UAC (7 members)	Max. 2 or 3 successive terms on the same board/commission; 2 year break before being appointed to same body	Three BCCs meet twice a month, five BCCs meet monthly	New appointments only once a year in spring; other appointments due to vacancies, as needed	Annual workplans due in June, up to 3 priorities. Chair presents workplan to Council - could be 1 year or 2 year workplans, status update to be presented on prior work; template for workplan provided

**Appendix D - Summary Report of Benchmarked Cities**

City	Population	No. of Standing Boards/Commissions	Board/Commission/Committee Names	Membership	Term	Meeting Frequency	Recruitment Process	Workplans
Richmond	116,000	24	Arts and Culture Commission, Community Police Review Commission, Commission on Aging, Design Review Board, Environmental Community Investment Agreement Transportation Oversight, Economic Development Commission, General Pension Board, Historic Preservation Commission, Housing Advisory Commission, Human Rights and Human Relations Commission, Library Commission, Personnel Board, Planning Commission, Police & Firemen's Pension Board, Recreation and Parks Commission, Reimagining Public Safety Community Task Force, Richmond Fund for Children and Youth Oversight Board, Richmond Rent Board, Shimida Friendship Commission, Urban forest Advisory Committee, Workforce Development Board, Youth Council, Zhoushan Friendship Commission	ACC, SFC, ZFC (11), CPRC, HRHRC, RPC (9), COA (13), DRB, HPC, HAC, PC (7), ECIATO, GPB, LC, PB, RRB (5), EDC (15), PFPB (4), PAAC (507), RPSCTF (21), RFCYOB (15), UFAC (7-11), WDB (35), YC (5-11)	Terms vary widely	Seventeen BCCs meet monthly, three meet once in two months, one BCC meets twice a month, three BCCs meet as needed	Ongoing recruitment	Optional yearly work program or goals statement, may be done in conjunction with the development of the relevant departmental work plan.
Sunnyvale	152,000	10	Arts Commission, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, Board of Library Trustees, Heritage Preservation Commission, Housing and Human Services Commission, Human relations Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Personnel Board, Planning Commission, Sustainability Commission	AC, BLT, HRC, PRC, PB (5); BPAC, HPC, HHSC, PC, SC (7)	Max, 2 consecutive 4 year terms	One BCC meets twice a month, eight BCCs meets monthly, one BCC meets every other month	Annual recruitment, appointments by Council but no interviews	Each BCC creates an annual workplan, advises Council on study issues and budget