



## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Council and the Public

**FROM:** Councilmember Janani Ramachandran and Council President Kevin Jenkins

**DATE:** March 10, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Receive an Informational Report on Recommendations from the Mayor's Charter Reform Working Group

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of Oakland is currently evaluating potential amendments to the Oakland City Charter. The Charter functions as the governing document for the City and establishes the structure, authority, and responsibilities of elected officials and administrative leadership.

In response to ongoing concerns regarding governance clarity, accountability, and decision-making processes within City government, a Charter Reform Working Group was convened by Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee to review the current structure and develop recommendations for potential amendments to the Charter.

The purpose of the reform effort is to clarify roles within City government, improve transparency and accountability, strengthen financial oversight, and ensure more effective delivery of public services. Any proposed amendments to the Charter would ultimately require approval by Oakland voters through a ballot measure.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Oakland City Charter establishes the framework for the City's governance, including the authority of the Mayor, City Council, City Administrator, and other elected officials. Over time, questions have arisen regarding the clarity of roles between elected leadership and administrative functions, as well as the efficiency of decision-making processes.

To examine these issues, a Charter Reform Working Group was convened by Mayor Lee to review the current governance structure and consider potential reforms. The Mayor's Charter Reform Working Group includes representatives from civic organizations and community stakeholders, who engaged in public outreach and policy analysis to develop a set of proposed recommendations.

### **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

The Mayor's Charter Reform Working Group has examined the current distribution of authority between the Mayor, City Council, and administrative leadership. The goal of this review is to determine whether adjustments to the governance structure could improve accountability and operational effectiveness.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The Charter Reform Working Group engaged community stakeholders and civic organizations to gather feedback on governance priorities and potential reform proposals. Public input was gathered intended to inform the development of final recommendations.

Public engagement and community feedback were incorporated into the Charter Reform process through outreach conducted by the working group and participating civic organizations. The Charter Reform Working Group has finalized recommendations for potential amendments to the Oakland City Charter. Any proposed Charter amendments would require placement on a future municipal ballot and approval by Oakland voters.

## **COORDINATION**

Staff monitored the reform process and provided updates to the Council as additional information was made available.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

This informational report has no direct fiscal impact. Any future Charter amendments may require additional analysis of potential fiscal implications.

## **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITES**

The Charter Reform process represents an opportunity to evaluate and potentially modernize the governance structure of the City of Oakland. Continued review and community engagement will inform whether proposed amendments are advanced for voter consideration.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive an information report on the recommendations of the Mayor's Charter Reform Working Group.

2 attachments-

1. Mayor's Working Group proposed recommendations proposed recommendations.
2. PowerPoint presentation

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