

The BLA's Charter Reform Analysis: Draft Versus Final

Comparison and assessment of the Budget and Legislative Analyst's draft report to Supervisor Shamann Walton on Mayor Lurie's November 2026 Charter amendments, and

*Comparison to Initial October 1, 2026 Generative AI Report
"What Walton Asked, What the BLA Said, and What It Ducked"*

Prepared for Patrick | October 13, 2026

Documents compared

- **Draft:** BLA's "**DRAFT Policy Analysis Report**," undated (the date line still reads "[Date of publication]"), 50 pages, packaged with the Clerk's July 15 transmittal and Supervisor Walton's July 14, 2026 letter of inquiry. Its "Executive Summary" was the office's unfilled template text, so the draft effectively had none.
- **Final:** BLA's "**Policy Analysis Report**," dated October 8, 2026, signed by Fred Brousseau, 57 pages, with a new Executive Summary and Conclusion on pages 1 through 6.

Two preliminary notes

The earlier review. This revised edition incorporates an earlier October 1 generative AI summary of the BLA's draft, "*What Walton Asked, What the BLA Said, and What It Ducked*." Part Three is new. It tracks which of that generative AI summary's criticisms the final fixed, which it deleted rather than fixed, and which still stand. Several rows in Part One and the timing section in Part Five were also updated.

The Roman numerals. The final report now labels its own sections by ballot letter: Section I is Proposition F (Executive Branch Management), Section II is Proposition E (City Administrator and City Contracting), and Section III is Proposition D (Ballot Measure Process). I've kept the Roman numerals as you asked. Proposition A (Department, Board, Commission, and Advisory Body Updates) is not covered by the BLA in either version.

Part One: Changes to the Body of the Report

This part excludes the new Executive Summary and covers everything from the Table of Contents through the appendices.

Bottom line

The final reverses none of the draft's core conclusions, and every headline estimate survives in roughly the same order of magnitude. But this was more than a proofreading pass. I count about a dozen factual or arithmetic corrections, several material additions, and, most worth your attention, several deletions of draft material that cut against the measures' stated rationale. The final also introduces a few new errors and internal inconsistencies. The net effect on tone is that the body now

reads as somewhat more even-handed toward proponents than the draft did, even though its findings didn't move.

The most significant changes at a glance

- **Deleted (I):** the draft's finding that only one of 26 department-head departures since April 2022 was involuntary, along with the research it cited showing that changes in administration raise senior career-staff turnover by up to one-third.
- **Deleted (II):** the Department of Human Resources' statement that it knows of five major training platforms, not the 20 the measure claims.
- **Deleted (II):** the draft's explicit finding that the City Administrator removal-language change is non-substantive. That finding corrected a premise in Supervisor Walton's own letter.
- **Deleted (II):** the draft's closing recommendation that policymakers pursue specific procurement reforms rather than rely on a governance change.
- **Not fixed (I):** the severance method. Spreading three severance payments across all 26 departures understates the cost of each added firing. Done properly, the BLA's own doubling scenario costs about \$708,000 a year, not \$267,629.
- **Corrected (I):** the turnover period went from five years to 4.3, the annual cost baseline from \$225,013 to \$267,629, and moving expenses from "none paid" to \$58,026.
- **Corrected (I):** the draft's false statement that commissioner health costs could "rise by more than \$1 million annually." The increase is about \$351,000.
- **Corrected (II):** City Administrator tenures went from an impossible "17, 11, and 5 years" to "5, 5.5, 9, and 5.7 years."
- **Added (II):** a statement that no comparable public review process exists for contracts below the proposed thresholds.
- **Added (II):** Proposition E would move procurement rulemaking authority out of the Administrative Code, where the Board can revoke it, and into the Charter, where it cannot.
- **Added (III):** Proposition D also changes how the Board places measures on the ballot. This is disclosed in one sentence and not analyzed.
- **New error (III):** a new bullet says 70 percent of collected signatures are invalid, contradicting the body text, which says 70 percent are valid.

Section I: Changes to Executive Branch Management

I.1 Appointing and removing department heads

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Turnover period	"Five-year period," April 2022 to July 2026; 5.2 separations per year	4.3 years; 6.05 per year (shown as 6). Notes that 24 left City service and two moved departments	The draft's arithmetic was wrong. Every downstream cost rises about 19 percent.
Recruitment-firm costs	\$631,492 total; \$70,166 average per firm-assisted search	\$599,204 total; \$66,578 average	An unexplained \$32,288 drop in what both versions call DHR's "actual" costs.

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Moving costs	“DHR reports that no moving expenses were paid.”	\$58,026 for three transitions, including pre-approved amounts	A flat reversal of a factual statement attributed to DHR. Worth asking which answer was wrong and why.
Cost per separation and baseline	\$43,272 each; \$225,013 a year; doubling adds \$225,013	\$44,262 each; \$267,629 a year; doubling adds \$267,629	Still “modest,” but higher.
Involuntary removals	Only one of 26 departures was involuntary (0.2 a year). A fivefold increase in removable heads “suggests” involuntary separations may rise. Cites Bolton, de Figueiredo and Lewis (2021): administration changes raise senior career-staff turnover by up to one-third.	Paragraph and footnote deleted.	The single most relevant data point for a measure about firing power is gone. The deletion also erases, rather than reconciles, a contradiction: DHR counted one involuntary departure, yet three departures drew severance, which is paid for involuntary separations. The final’s 25, 50 and 100 percent turnover scenarios now float with no empirical anchor.
Severance per added firing (persisting)	Spreads \$247,225 in severance across all 26 departures: \$9,509 each	Same method. The conclusion now adds that doubled turnover assumes “the same rates of retirements, involuntary separations, and voluntary transitions”	At-will power adds involuntary departures, the kind that trigger severance. The three severance cases averaged \$82,408. Adding the final’s \$34,753 in recruitment and staff time puts each added firing near \$117,000. Under the BLA’s own doubling scenario, that’s about \$708,000 a year, not \$267,629, roughly 2.6 times the BLA figure. The new parenthetical makes explicit the very assumption an at-will measure would break.
Onboarding (persisting)	Never costed, nor interim acting-director pay, vacancy duration or lost institutional knowledge	Same	Walton named onboarding explicitly.
Shortlist practice	Not discussed	Adds a May 7, 2024 City Attorney memo: the Mayor may appoint from fewer than three nominees, and sometimes signals a preference so the commission forwards that one person.	Shows the “three qualified applicants” safeguard is already often a formality. Proposition F would write the practice into the Charter.
Added removal authority	“Removal authority for 20 departments”	“22 additional departments”	Corrects the draft (27 minus 5 is 22).
Page 8 sidebar	Not present	Doubled turnover adds “roughly \$230,000 annually”	Contradicts the body (\$267,629) and the Executive Summary (\$268,000). It’s a leftover of the draft figure.
Human Resources Director (Appendix A)	Current: Mayor selects from commission shortlist	Current: shortlist and Board of Supervisors confirms . Proposed: shortlist, no Board confirmation	If the appendix is right, Proposition F quietly ends Board confirmation of the HR Director, which the text never mentions. Exhibits 1 and 3 weren’t updated to match, so either the appendix

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
			or the exhibits are wrong. Worth a direct question to Brousseau.
Turnover could fall	Not stated	“Costs could also decrease if turnover were to decrease.”	A small balancing addition.

1.2 Reinstating deputy mayor positions

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Size of Mayor’s Office	177.58 FTE of “Mayor’s office staff”	Same total, but 124.8 FTE belong to MOHCD, leaving 52.78 FTE in the Mayor’s Office proper	The draft overstated the Mayor’s own staff by more than three times.
A fifth Chief	Not mentioned	Footnote: a Chief for Strategy and Performance was added in 2025 and is currently vacant	A conversion could involve five positions, not four.
Board budget role	Not stated	Added deputies would be “subject to budget approval by the Board of Supervisors”	The one remaining Board check is through the budget, not the Charter.
Boston scenario	Mentioned; only four or seven positions modeled	New Exhibit 10: 14 deputies cost \$3,989,678, an added \$3,047,438 in salary	Answers a gap the October 1 generative AI summary flagged, but only on salary. See the next row.
Benefits	Footnote: fringe adds 30 to 35 percent	Same	Using the BLA’s own fully loaded figure of \$370,470 per deputy (salary plus 30 percent), converting four Chiefs adds about \$257,000, not \$198,000, and the Boston scenario adds about \$3.96 million, not \$3.0 million.
Named individuals	Restates Walton’s request without his clause on the prior compensation of individuals named for these posts	Same omission	Walton asked; the BLA narrowed the question in both versions without saying so.

1.3 Department reorganizations

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Planning’s intentions	“The Department plans to transition all DBI core services” if the measure passes	“The Mayor could transition DBI core services”	Softened from a stated plan to a possibility. Yet Exhibit 11b, Planning’s own chart, still shows a “Charter Reform November 2026” step leading to a FY 2028 “Fully Integrated Permitting Department.”
Mayor’s assurance	Cites the Mayor’s statement that commission changes would defer to the	Statement deleted; now says only that the Task Force recommended	The Mayor’s on-record assurance no longer appears in the report.

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
	Commission Streamlining Task Force	retaining the Building Inspection Commission	
\$3 million savings	“Expected to produce approximately \$3 million”	“The Mayor’s office estimates” \$3 million a year	Correctly attributed. It’s the Mayor’s number, not the BLA’s.
What Prop F adds	Implied	Explicit: other than eliminating the DBI director (up to \$393,000), the amendments would generate no savings beyond the status quo for the DBI-Planning merger	The showcase consolidation doesn’t need Proposition F except to delete one job.
Transition costs	More consolidations would not necessarily produce more savings	Adds “but would most likely incur transition costs”	A firmer caution.
Whole-department mergers	Not stated	The Charter does not currently allow the Mayor to merge entire executive departments	Clarifies how large the change is.
Savings basis	\$393,000 (salary plus 35 percent fringe) versus \$221,000 to \$416,000 (salary only)	Same	Mixed bases. The Executive Summary repeats the salary-only range as “savings.”

1.4 Board and commission removal, stipends and health insurance

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Commission count	Uses both 42 and 44	44 throughout	Fixes an inconsistency.
50 percent scenario	Costs “could rise by more than \$1 million annually”	“Roughly \$350,000”	The draft misstated a total as an increase.
Citations and labels	Rent Board stipend under “Charter Section 37.4”; Exhibit 13 titled “Increased”	Administrative Code Section 37.4; Exhibit 13 titled “Decrease”	Clean-ups.
New footnote 19	Not present	“Proposition E defines San Francisco’s commission system...”	Apparently means the 2022 Proposition E that created the Task Force, not 2026’s Proposition E. Confusing in this report.
Scope	Walton asked about mayoral appointees	Both versions give totals for all commissions	Not answered as asked.
Total cost (persisting)	Health (\$702,723) and stipends (\$442,601) reported separately	Same	Walton asked for the total. Neither version adds them: about \$1.15 million a year.

Section II: City Administrator and City Contracting

II.1 Checking the measure’s factual claims

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Training systems	DHR could not verify 20 but is “aware of five major platforms” and discussing consolidation	Only: “We could not verify the claim that 20 training systems exist Citywide.”	The draft had affirmative evidence that the measure’s figure is four times the known count. The final drops it.
Format	Narrative	Each claim set out under “Proposition findings and declarations claim”	Cleaner presentation; same verdicts.

II.2 City Administrator term from five to ten years

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Tenure history	“17, 11, and 5 years (still in progress)”	“5, 5.5, 9, and 5.7 years (still in progress)”	The draft was impossible (33 years in a 26-year span). The corrected record shows no City Administrator has ever served ten years.
Removal language	A full subsection finds “approval” to “concurrence” non-substantive; the Mayor gains no unilateral removal power	Subsection deleted, though the Discussion still says Board concurrence for removal is retained	Walton’s letter said Proposition E made the City Administrator “removable only by the Mayor rather than requiring Board concurrence.” The draft said plainly that was wrong. The final no longer says so directly.
List of duties	Drawn from SPUR’s 2024 report	Drawn from Charter Section 3.104; adds preparing bond measures	Better sourcing.
Exhibit 14	Five years “sufficient” for administrative services	Five years “may be insufficient” for longer real estate and technology initiatives	A modest tilt toward the ten-year term.
Peer table	Called a “California peer cities assessment”	Same, plus a definition of “internal city services”	Still mislabeled: the table includes Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.
Research cited (persisting)	Corruption findings from a review of merit-system tenure protections	Same	That literature concerns career civil servants, not a politically appointed executive. It doesn’t fit the question.
Paired powers (persisting)	Term analyzed alone	Same	The same measure hands the office sweeping procurement powers. A ten-year appointee could outlast the appointing Mayor while writing procurement law. Neither version connects the two.

II.3 Raising Board approval thresholds

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Origin of \$10 million	Not stated	Set by Proposition G in 1988; \$25 million “reflects an inflation adjustment”	Adopts the proponents’ framing without showing the math. By the same 2.5-to-1 ratio, the \$500,000 amendment trigger would become about \$1.25 million, not

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
			a 50 percent cumulative trigger. On the BLA's own \$30 million example, that's \$15 million in amendments before the Board sees it.
How contracts are monitored	Not present	New subsection: departmental monitoring, the Controller's nonprofit monitoring program (16 departments), the BLA review process, and: "There is no comparable public process" below the thresholds	The strongest new sentence in the final. It doesn't appear in the Executive Summary.
Cost of Board review	Not present	Board review adds about two to three weeks plus staff time	A new counterweight for proponents.
Accountability wording	"An accountability mechanism that incentivizes"	"An additional accountability mechanism that further incentivizes"; adds "in the case of contract amendments"	Softened.
Peer comparison	Peers may review in batches	Adds consent calendars; notes none of the peers is a combined city-county	Concedes the comparison is imperfect.
Persisting error	Revenue threshold described as "proposed changes to the Administrative Code"	Same	It's the Charter.
Persisting gap	Three years of data; projection to 2037	Same	Walton asked for five years of data and a 10-to-20-year projection.
Amendment creep (persisting)	Not addressed	Same	Neither version says whether a contract approved below \$25 million could grow past it through a series of sub-50 percent amendments with no Board review at all.
"Freed capacity" upside (persisting)	Fewer items could allow deeper review of the rest	Same	The BLA's own Exhibit 20 shows the problems were found in exactly the mid-sized contracts that would no longer reach the Board.

II.4 City Administrator procurement authority

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Introducing ordinances	City Administrator added to the list of introducers	Same, plus: today the City Administrator needs a Supervisor or the Mayor to sponsor legislation, and Proposition E bypasses that	Clarifies what's lost.

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Rulemaking	City Administrator could set Citywide procurement rules	New: some rulemaking already exists under Administrative Code Chapter 21 (Ordinance 156-99), which the Board can modify or withdraw. Proposition E puts it in the Charter, beyond the Board's reach, and deletes Section 3.104(7)	Significant. It converts a revocable delegation into a permanent Charter power.
Other review layers	Not stated	Contracts still pass through the City Attorney, Contract Administration, the Controller and commissions	A counterweight.
Competition	Not stated	More competition could produce added savings	A counterweight.
Recommendation	"Policymakers should pursue specific procurement policies and operational changes..."	Deleted	The draft's only affirmative recommendation in this section is gone.
Persisting error	Exhibit 22 sourced to SPUR's "Designed to Serve (2024)"	Same	The \$25,000 figure comes from SPUR's 2025 "Purchasing Power."
Persisting gap	Walton's examples (inclusionary TAC; SFAC/GFTA/Film Office consolidation) not addressed	Same	Not answered.
Lopsided veto (persisting)	Described without comment	Same	The Mayor alone can stop a City Administrator procurement ordinance by notice; the Board needs a majority motion. In practice the Mayor and his appointee would control procurement law.

Section III: Changes to the Ballot Measure Process

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Board-placed measures	Board may submit measures "by majority vote"	Board now needs four votes; Proposition D would require a majority	A second major change in Proposition D, disclosed in one sentence and never analyzed. The draft had the current rule wrong.
Methodology	Interviews mentioned	Interview approach explained	An improvement.
Signature validity	About 70 percent of collected signatures are valid	Body unchanged, but a new bullet says "70% of acquired signatures are invalid"	New error. At 70 percent invalid, the 160 percent collection target would fall far short.

Item	Draft	Final	Why it matters
Admin-cost increase	50 percent	“Conservatively” 50 percent	A word added, with no support added.
Clean-up	A garbled sentence citing “\$398,594”	Deleted; a new typo, “rise from . approximately”	
Persisting	\$320,000 in administrative costs for an all-volunteer campaign at 2 percent	Same, unsourced	Higher than the \$186,653 average total petition spending in the BLA’s own Exhibit 24.
Persisting	Research on spending, independent expenditures and turnout: one citation	Same	Largely unanswered.
Persisting	Organizing capacity not quantified	Same	Walton asked about capacity as well as cost. Neither version estimates volunteer hours or headcount.
In neither version	Withdrawal provision	Withdrawal provision	Public summaries (Ballotpedia) say Proposition D also lets proponents withdraw an initiative up to 102 days before the election. Neither BLA version mentions it. Worth confirming in the legal text.

Appendices. Apart from the Human Resources change noted under I.1, the only change is a footnote explaining that departments were included if they appear in the Mayor’s budget book.

Part Two: The New Executive Summary

What it says

The summary opens with a framing section, then takes each measure in turn: the proposal, Walton’s question restated, and a “What We Found” paragraph. It closes with a one-page Conclusion.

Framing

- All three amendments qualified by voter petition and need a simple majority.
- They were promoted as establishing clearer lines of authority and greater efficiency, and as aligning San Francisco’s initiative requirements with other cities.
- “As you requested, our review covers only select aspects of each measure.”
- A paragraph lists the proponents’ claimed benefits.
- Propositions F and E would reduce the authority of boards, commissions and the Board of Supervisors and increase that of the Mayor and City Administrator. Proposition D mainly affects citizen initiative proponents.
- Because effects depend on how the Mayor and City Administrator use new powers, many estimates are given as ranges or scenarios.

Section I findings

- Mayoral removal authority rises from five of 62 department heads to 27; sole appointment authority from five to 11. Doubled turnover would add about \$268,000 a year.
- Deputy mayors with supervisory power have been barred since 1991. The measure allows an unlimited number, with authority over departments run by the City Administrator, elected officials, or boards and commissions. Converting the four Chiefs adds about \$198,000; 14 deputies, as in Boston, add about \$3.0 million “before benefits.” The pay is comparable to public and nonprofit peers and below private-sector equivalents.
- Mergers could eliminate the absorbed department’s head, saving \$221,000 to \$416,000 a year less severance, offset by systems, facilities and staffing costs. No other savings are mandated. The DBI-Planning merger plans no staff reductions for several years, though the Mayor’s Office projects \$3 million eventually.
- Commissioners now removable mainly for official misconduct would become removable at will. Health costs could rise \$175,681 (25 percent more participation) or \$351,362 (50 percent), or fall by the same amounts. Stipends wouldn’t change.

Section II findings

- A ten-year term fits capital and debt horizons, but the office’s other duties aren’t long-term. Reappointment review is halved; removal with Board concurrence remains. Research doesn’t favor either term, and “peer jurisdictions in California” generally have no fixed term.
- Board review would have fallen from 304 to 115 expenditure contracts in 2023 through 2025, leaving \$2.5 billion unreviewed, “including agreements where Board review resulted in reduced funding levels or prompted audits.” San Francisco’s current threshold already exceeds its peers’.
- The City Administrator gains exclusive power to introduce most procurement ordinances, which the Board couldn’t amend and which would take effect in 60 days unless disapproved; sole rulemaking power; and Citywide authority over information technology. “No new oversight or audit mechanism is proposed.” A 5 to 30 percent efficiency gain would save \$3.8 million to \$23.0 million a year, but no procedural change is required.

Section III findings

- Required signatures rise from 10,615 to 42,460, and the estimated cost of qualifying a grassroots initiative from \$320,000 to \$1.5 million.

Conclusion

Authority over department heads, reorganizations, commissioner removals and procurement would concentrate in the Mayor’s and City Administrator’s offices, with the Board and commissions relatively diminished. Deputy mayors would add to mayoral control. Initiatives would need four times the signatures. The closing sentence frames the central question as whether clearer executive accountability and faster administration justify fewer independent checks, and it singles out three losses: Board review of a large number and dollar value of contracts, the City Administrator’s exclusive control of procurement legislation, and the higher bar for citizen initiatives.

Does it change the preliminary evaluation?

No, not significantly. The Executive Summary adds no new findings of substance; it condenses the body. Measured against the draft, it cuts both ways.

Where it is sharper than the draft

- The Conclusion names the tradeoff more plainly than anything in the draft: fewer independent checks in exchange for executive efficiency, with three specific losses identified. That passage, from a neutral source, is the most quotable language in either version and supports your critique.
- It says plainly that the number of deputy mayors would be unlimited.
- It answers Walton directly: “No new oversight or audit mechanism is proposed.”
- It ties the \$2.5 billion in unreviewed contracts to real cases where Board review cut funding or triggered audits.

Where it softens or leaves things out

- It leads with the proponents’ claimed benefits and offers no parallel paragraph of concerns; the Conclusion only partly fills that gap.
- It calls added turnover costs “modest,” about \$268,000, a figure that rests on the flawed severance method and lacks the one-of-26 involuntary-removal data the body no longer contains either.
- It gives deputy mayor costs “before benefits.”
- It headlines \$3.8 million to \$23.0 million in procurement savings, though the body says the fiscal effects “cannot be estimated” and calls the \$25,000 base figure non-authoritative.
- Its Section III summary omits the Board-vote change, and neither summary nor body mentions the reported withdrawal provision.
- The body’s strongest new line, that no comparable public process exists below the thresholds, is missing.
- It repeats “peer jurisdictions in California,” though the peer table includes Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Claims in the summary that the body doesn’t support

- “The City Administrator would be granted authority for directing and supervising the City’s information technology across the City.” I can find no discussion of this in the body. If accurate, it’s a significant, unanalyzed power.
- It says the \$500,000 amendment threshold has applied “since 1988.” The body ties only the \$10 million threshold to 1988’s Proposition G.
- It repeats the claim that the measures align San Francisco with other cities’ initiative requirements, but nothing in the body tests that claim.

Scope

The generative AI summary says the review covers “only select aspects of each measure” “as you requested.” Walton’s letter asked the BLA to tell him which items needed narrowing; neither version documents any agreement to drop items. Left unanswered: the Potrero Yard NOFA case study (the

465-unit housing proposal versus the roughly \$1 billion yard rebuild); prior compensation of named individuals; added staffing, overtime and administrative burden across departments; developer commentary from the inclusionary TAC process and the SFAC/GFTA/Film Office consolidation; five years of contract data (three were used); a 10-to-20-year projection (ten years were given); and research on campaign spending, independent expenditures and turnout (one source). It's worth asking Natalie Gee whether Walton's office agreed to drop these.

Part Three: The October 1 Critique, Revisited

The October 1 generative AI summary of the draft raised roughly three dozen specific criticisms. Measured against the final, they sort into three groups. Several of the fixes match points in that generative AI summary; whether the BLA saw your critique, I can't tell from the documents.

Fixed in the final

- The turnover denominator (five years corrected to 4.3), and the "20 departments" error corrected to 22.
- The misleading "rise by more than \$1 million" health-cost statement.
- The 42-versus-44 commission count.
- The City Administrator tenure figures, which the generative AI summary suspected counted pre-2000 service.
- The Boston deputy-mayor scenario is now modeled, though on salary only.
- The \$398,594 misstatement of Proposition C's cost, deleted along with the garbled sentence.
- Ballot letters now appear, the date is filled in, and there is a real Executive Summary.

Deleted rather than fixed

- The one-involuntary-departure finding, and with it the unreconciled conflict with three severance payments.
- DHR's count of five training platforms against the measure's 20. The generative AI summary credited this as one of the BLA's better findings.
- The finding that Walton's premise about City Administrator removal was wrong. The generative AI summary reported it; the BLA's final report dropped the explicit statement.

Still standing

- Severance spread across all departures instead of applied to added firings, the largest analytical error in Section I.
- Onboarding, interim pay and vacancy costs never estimated.
- The named-individual compensation question dropped, though the BLA used Form 990s, the same public source that would answer it, for Exhibit 9.
- Deputy mayor benefits left out of the headlines, and no analysis of deputies supervising departments the Charter assigns to commissions, the City Administrator or elected officials.

- The DBI-Planning case study still illustrates nothing about the new expedited process. The final now effectively concedes this: apart from deleting one job, Proposition F adds no savings to that merger.
- The Mayor’s “no direct cost” and “\$3 million” claims still unverified, now merely attributed to him.
- Commissioner costs not limited to mayoral appointees, and health and stipends never totaled.
- No quantified costs or benefits for the ten-year term, research misapplied, the term analyzed apart from the new procurement powers, and no mention of San Francisco’s own contracting scandals.
- Three years of contract data instead of five, a ten-year projection instead of 20, contracts over ten years excluded, the “Administrative Code” mislabel, the amendment-creep question, and the weak “freed capacity” argument.
- Institutional uncertainty never answered; the non-authoritative \$25,000 figure still drives the savings table, still citing the wrong SPUR report; the lopsided veto never remarked on.
- Turnout and independent-expenditure research absent; organizing capacity unquantified; the \$320,000 baseline unexplained; the per-signature metric still masking a nearly fivefold jump in total cost.
- Two of Walton’s 14 questions, Potrero Yard and departmental staffing burden, still dropped outright, and others narrowed, with no explanation in either version.

The pattern: the final fixed most of the errors that were embarrassing on their face, such as arithmetic, counts and impossible figures. It fixed almost none of the methodological and scope problems, which are the ones that shape what voters are told.

Part Four: Additional Judgments

- **The procurement “savings” are staff time, not cash.** The \$76.6 million baseline is SPUR’s estimate of staff time. In Section I, the BLA itself says staff time “does not represent an additional cash expenditure” but an opportunity cost. A 5 to 30 percent efficiency gain frees time; it saves budget dollars only if positions are cut, which is exactly the caveat the BLA applies to mergers in I.3. The Executive Summary’s “would save \$3.8 million to \$23.0 million annually” reads like cash. It isn’t.
- **The \$25,000 figure can’t bear the weight put on it.** The BLA multiplies a cost derived from professional-services and grant solicitations at three departments across all 3,065 competitive procurements over \$20,000, despite its own warning that the figure isn’t authoritative for all City contracts.
- **The per-signature metric hides the barrier.** “From about \$30 to \$35 per signature” sounds trivial. The real story is about \$1.18 million in new cash, which organizers told the BLA could approach a grassroots campaign’s entire budget. The paid-circulator line alone (\$1,019,040) is more than five times the average total petition spending of the eight campaigns in Exhibit 24 (\$186,653), and one of them, Reopen the Great Highway, qualified for \$2,439.

- **Proposition D nearly erases the gap between ordinance and Charter initiatives.** Charter amendments need signatures from 10 percent of registered voters under state law. At 8 percent for ordinances, a well-funded campaign would pay little extra to go straight to a Charter amendment, which can only be undone by another election. That pushes toward more Charter-locked policy, the opposite of the Commission Streamlining Task Force’s direction and of Proposition A. The report doesn’t consider this. It’s also worth noting that the BLA confirms the Mayor’s own three measures qualified by petition.
- **Propositions A and F interact, and nobody has analyzed it.** The BLA’s DBI case study rests on the Building Inspection Commission being protected by the Charter. Its own footnote notes the Task Force proposed moving that Commission into the Administrative Code, and Proposition A moves nine commissions out of the Charter. If the Building Inspection Commission is among them and both measures pass, its duties could be changed by ordinance, and Proposition F’s reorganization power could reach further than the case study suggests. Confirm whether it’s on Proposition A’s list.
- **Commissioner at-will removal was reduced to a health-insurance question.** The BLA answered the fiscal question it was asked. But premiums are the least of it; the real issue is the independence of oversight and quasi-judicial bodies once members serve at the appointing authority’s pleasure. The BLA even notes that coverage ends on removal without drawing the obvious conclusion: a commissioner who relies on City health insurance and can be fired without cause has a strong reason not to cross the Mayor. The same logic applies to department heads. The report also never lists which bodies fall outside “nearly all.”
- **The tenure correction undercuts the ten-year rationale.** In 26 years, no City Administrator has served ten. The longest tenure, nine years, is the one that ended in early 2021 as the federal public-corruption investigation of City officials widened. Please verify those dates before publishing, but if they hold, they speak directly to the accountability concern the Charter Reform Working Group member raised.
- **Planning’s chart assumes the outcome.** Exhibit 11b, a City Planning Department exhibit, maps a step labeled “Charter Reform November 2026.” Contingency planning is legitimate, but it’s fair to ask how much staff time is going into planning around a Mayor-sponsored measure that voters haven’t approved.
- **Ask about the timeline.** A report dated October 8 that was forwarded within an hour of your records request was plainly in hand. Reasonable questions: when was it transmitted to Walton’s office, was it copied to BOS@sfgov.org as the Clerk directed, has it been posted publicly, and why did it arrive a month after the September 8 deadline?

Part Five: Timing and the 22 Days Left

The calendar

Date	Event
July 14, 2026	Supervisor Walton issues the inquiry at the Board meeting
July 15	Clerk transmits it to the BLA with a September 8 deadline

Date	Event
September 8	Requested deadline passes
About September 17 to 24	Unfinished draft submitted to the Clerk, per the October 1 generative AI summary
September 23	Department of Elections posts the Voter Information Pamphlet; mailing begins that week
September 25	Draft becomes public with the Board's September 29 meeting agenda: no date, no Executive Summary, no ballot letters
October 2	Vote-by-mail ballots begin arriving; 37 drop boxes open
October 5	City Hall Voting Center opens
October 8	Date on the BLA's final report
October 12	You obtain the report by records request, on a City holiday
October 19	Last day to register and still receive a mailed ballot
November 3	Election Day

In fairness, the substance was public about a week before ballots went out, when the draft surfaced with the Board's September 29 agenda. But it surfaced as an unfinished document with no summary and no ballot letters, buried in an agenda packet, which is not a form voters or most reporters use. The finished version missed every official voter-information channel. The Voter Information Pamphlet, with its Controller's statements, digests and arguments, was posted before either version was public. Ballots were in mailboxes six days before the date on the final report and ten days before you obtained it. Anyone who has already voted decided without the finished analysis. The remaining audience is late deciders, and for them the findings must travel through the press, endorsements and campaigns in three weeks, competing with 11 local measures, a regional transit measure, state propositions and a governor's race. A 57-page technical report is not voter-facing; for most reporters, the six-page Executive Summary will be the report.

Measure by measure

Section I (Executive Branch Management): the hardest. It bundles at least six distinct changes: appointment, removal, the shortlist, deputy mayors, reorganization power, and at-will removal of commissioners. Its effects run through two 62-department appendices. The dollar costs are small, so the case turns on judgment about governance rather than numbers, and the BLA's own conclusion is that the impacts depend on how future mayors use the powers. With little time, many voters will fall back on how they feel about the current Mayor, though the powers would outlast him. The most voter-friendly fact is buried in Appendix B: the heads of Police, Fire, Public Health, MTA, the PUC, the Airport and Recreation and Park would all serve at the Mayor's pleasure.

Section II (City Administrator and Contracting): moderately hard. The contract numbers are the most voter-friendly evidence in the report: 304 reviews falling to 115, \$2.5 billion going unreviewed, and three concrete cases where Board review caught problems. If publicized, they could move votes. The procurement-legislation mechanics (exclusive introduction, no amendments, automatic approval after 60 days, rulemaking locked into the Charter) are obscure. The ten-year term is easy to understand, but the BLA found little evidence either way.

Section III (Ballot Measure Process): easiest at the headline level, with the greatest risk of incomplete understanding. “From 2 percent to 8 percent” and “from \$320,000 to \$1.5 million” are simple. But the Board-vote change, and the reported withdrawal provision, aren’t analyzed by the BLA, so voters may think the measure is only about signatures.

Proposition A (Commission Updates): no independent analysis at all. It is likely to read as housekeeping. Voters have no BLA fiscal or governance analysis of it and nothing on how it interacts with Section I.

Taken together, the four measures restructure how City Hall is governed, yet voters must decide each separately with no analysis of their combined effect. The BLA’s report, however late, is the only independent analysis of three of them. Getting its Conclusion and the contract-review findings in front of reporters and readers this week, through your own outlets and by urging Walton’s office to release it publicly, is likely the most useful thing that can still be done.

Part Six: A Graduate-Seminar Grade

Graded as a policy analysis in a graduate government course, with the October 1 critique taken into account:

Standard	Grade	Basis
Responsiveness to Walton’s request	C	Strong original work on contract review. Against that: two of 14 questions dropped and several narrowed without explanation; the central Section I estimate understated by about 2.6 times through a method error that survived two versions; and the final fixed the surface errors but almost none of the substantive ones.
Public service to taxpayers and voters	D+	Unfinished draft public a week before ballots, finished version after them. Material unfavorable to the measures was trimmed, and the summary headlines savings the body says can’t be estimated. It stays above an F because it remains the only independent analysis of three measures, and its Conclusion states the core tradeoff honestly.
Overall	C-	The contract section proves the office can do this work well. The rest falls short of what that section shows it could deliver.

The usual caveat applies: I don’t know the office’s workload, what departments were slow to provide, or whether Walton’s staff agreed to narrow the scope. Any of those could explain part of the delay or the omissions, though none would fix the severance method.

Sources consulted beyond the two reports

- KQED Voter Guide, San Francisco Proposition A ([kqed.org/voterguide/sanfrancisco/proposition-a](https://www.kqed.org/voterguide/sanfrancisco/proposition-a))
- Ballotpedia News, “San Francisco voters to decide on 11 local ballot measures on Nov. 3, 2026,” August 27, 2026
- San Francisco Department of Elections, Voter Information Pamphlet announcement, September 23, 2026, and vote-by-mail announcement, October 1, 2026 (sf.gov)
- San Francisco Department of Elections, “November 3, 2026 Consolidated General Election” page (sf.gov)