

November 26, 2025

## **Restructuring City Commissions Will Expand to at Least Two More Areas Streamlining Task Force, Nearing End, SPUR's Voters**

**Wholesale Destruction of San Francisco's Checks and Balances.  
Of the Initial 43 Boards and Commissions in the City Charter,  
26 May Be Chopped, Potentially Leaving Just 15 in the Charter.**

### **Who Elected SPUR?**

by Patrick Monette-Shaw

The Commission Streamlining Task Force isn't just making stuff up and failing as it goes along, it's responding to its failures by moving the goalposts, with SPUR's help.

Here in our River City, we have a new trouble, but it doesn't start with a capital "P" for *pool*, meaning *billiards*. Rather, we have a new adjective, with the unique spelling of "*SPUR'ned*," having the definition: "*Participatory governing of democracy rejected with contempt or disdain, replaced with ineffective recommendations.*"

It's used here to describe San Francisco voters being *SPUR'ned*, with help from the Commission Streamlining Task Force.

The "*Commission Streamlining Task Force*" created following our November 2024 election is nearing the end of its duties. It was scheduled to issue its draft report of recommendations on December 18, just a month from now, but Deputy City Attorney Jon Givner indicated in November we may see a "*sneak peek*" of the report on December 3.

Because previously deferred decision-making by the Streamlining Task Force is taking longer than expected, the Task Force has revised its meeting calendar slowing down its two meetings in January down by one week, and adding a third meeting in February.

It's possible that the scope of the Task Force's recommendations for both potential Board of Supervisors ordinances and the Charter changes for a November 2026 ballot measure may expand greatly, given SPUR's interventions.

Worse, some of the decisions the Task Force is making are growing more extreme.

When I submitted my *Westside Observer* [article](#) on October 26 for its November issue, I was aware the Commission Streamlining Task Force's November 5 meeting agenda to make initial decisions about the last 23 specific boards and commissions (out of 150 total) would involve contentious decisions, but I didn't know how contentious they would prove to be. I address more of them below.

My November article waded into changes being recommended by the *Prop. E* Commission Streamlining Task Force that are as pernicious as the Heritage Foundation's *Project 2025* on behalf of President Donald J. Trump. I noted the Streamlining Task Force has become Mayor's Lurie's own "*Project 2025*." What I didn't know then is that the Streamlining Task Force is just the first step, with other steps rapidly to follow in 2026 — driven by demands SPUR is making to move the goalposts.

As a reminder, Task Force Chair Ed Harrington, and the Streamlining Task Force's inaugural Vice Chair (before her sudden resignation) was Jean Fraser, both of whom are on SPUR's Board of Directors. In addition, Mayor Lurie's Chief of Infrastructure, Climate and Mobility (a "*deputy mayor*," of sorts) and was the former head of SPUR, is Alicia John-Baptiste. It's clear SPUR is driving Lurie's charter reform and the Task Force's agenda!



**The Commission Streamlining Task Force** is going further off the rails, driven by what SPUR is doing to move the goalposts of what a November 2026 ballot measure will seek to accomplish.

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It's becoming increasingly clear Harrington and the other four members of the Streamlining Task Force are willfully implementing SPUR's agenda — which closely matches the “*Prop. D*” provisions its sponsor, Kanishka Cheng, and backers of “*Prop. D*” including *TogetherSF Action* had put forward in November 2024, but which voters rejected by passing “*Prop. E*” instead.

“*Prop. E*” is being completely hijacked, against the will of San Francisco's voters, largely driven by SPUR.

## November 5 Meeting Debacle

In my November article, I noted two of the most troubling policy bodies to be discussed on November 5 included the *Citizens' General Obligation Bond Oversight Committee*, and the *Sunshine Ordinance Task Force*.

Support staff to the Streamlining Task Force from the City Administrator's Office had recommended the Citizens' General Obligation Bond Oversight Committee (CGOBOC) be aligned to the Task Force's advisory committee template by establishing a three-year sunset date, potentially having CGOBOC take over the functions of the SFMTA Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (SFMTA RBOC), and stripping the seat-level member qualifications to serve on CGOBOC.

The Streamlining Task Force did take away CGOBOC's highly specific seat-level membership qualifications, and made them merely “*desirable*” rather than mandatory and made them “*body-level*” qualifications rather than for specific seats, and added a four-term limit for three terms (for a maximum of 12 years of member service). Making the qualifications body-level and merely *desirable* requirements will make it harder for appointing authorities to find candidates to serve on CGOBOC with the requisite knowledge and experience to provide meaningful oversight over hundreds of millions of dollars in general obligation bond spending approved by the voters!

And instead of forcing CGOBOC to take on the duties of the SFMTA RBOC, the Streamlining Task Force simply eliminated the RBOC, without assigning the SFMTA's RBOC's functions to any other body, or to SFMTA staff. There goes the oversight of those revenue bonds, as I and other observers (including my *Westside Observer* colleague, Brian Browne) had been concerned about.

As readers may recall, the SFPUC's separate 23-year-old Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC) created to provide transparency and accountability over revenue bonds to support the City's utility upgrades and SFPUC's infrastructure needs was simply allowed to be sunsetted by San Francisco's Board of Supervisors in January 2025.

Unlike letting the PUC's RBOC quietly sunset into the night, the Streamlining Task Force simply eliminated the MTA's RBOC to get rid of it as quickly as possible, when the Task Force could just as easily have applied a sunset date, [as it has](#) to 12 other advisory boards and commissions. Or it could have chosen *not* to sunset the SFMTA RBOC, as it chose *not* to apply a sunset date to 12 other advisory boards and commissions, plus 8 governance and regulatory bodies, as *exceptions* to the Streamlining Task Force's own “*template criteria*,” as the *Westside Observer's* updated tracking log of the Streamlining Task Force's major [decisions](#) shows.

Eliminating the SFMTA RBOC was so much *easier* for the Streamlining Task Force! That's how little they value the benefits of transparency and accountability. [Note: Why the Task Force and the Mayor chose to eliminate the MTA RBOC before going to beg voters to pass another General Obligation Bond to bail out SFMTA again in November 2026 may have been a foolish, shortsighted political mistake. Do they think voters won't remember this when the Streamlining Task Force's charter change measure is placed on the same ballot?]

Thankfully, the Streamlining Task Force did **not** apply a sunset date to the CGOBOC.

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**“ The Task Force also simply eliminated the SFMTA's Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (RBOC), without assigning the RBOC's functions to any other body to get rid of it as quickly as possible. ”**

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The Streamlining Task Force similarly took its meat cleaver to the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force's (SOTF) member qualifications and nominating requirements. The Streamlining Task Force was in a tizzy that there are external organizations authorized by the Sunshine Ordinance to nominate SOTF members, including three members nominated by the NorCal Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, one of which must be a lawyer and two of which need to be journalists.

Another member must be nominated by the League of Women voters. Four members must be members of the public who have an interest in, or experience with, issues of citizen access and participation in local government. Two members must have experience in consumer advocacy, and one member must be physically handicapped. All qualification requirements are tied to one of the 11 member seats, as a seat-level requirement.

The Streamlining Task Force eliminated both the nominating requirement, and the seat-level member qualifications. It's thought the Streamlining Task Force only eliminated the external nominating authority from just one more of the 80 other bodies it has kept.

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The Streamlining Task Force did so to the SOTF, despite the fact that it's own Advisory Body template it had developed didn't specifically *prohibit* specific body-level criteria that might mirror specificity such as in seat-level qualifications criteria that are best left to the advocates who created the bodies. And the Advisory Body template does not specifically prohibit specifying requirements that can be considered to be “*desirable*.”

The Streamlining Task Force did say that the qualifications should be desirable for the SOTF. The Board of Supervisors could — and should — overrule the Streamlining Task Force and retain the current requirements as they are!

And the Streamlining Task Force only changed or removed seat-level qualifications for just 18 of the 81 boards and commissions they kept. What's more, the Streamlining Task Force has made numerous exemptions for many boards and commissions, and allowed them **not** to have to strictly conform to the Task Force's templates. The Streamlining Task Force could just as easily have granted the SOTF an exemption from the seat-level prohibition, but it stubbornly chose not to.

Again thankfully, the Streamlining Task Force did not apply a sunset date to the SOTF.

## More Damage November 5

The Streamlining Task Force made several other damaging decisions on November 5, including:

- **Civil Service Commission:** Removed from the membership qualifications for appointment to the Civil Service Commission that two members must be women, with no clear reasons offered why this was a problem worth addressing. Staff had recommended applying the “*at-will*” member removal to Commission members, but the Task Force's “*Decision Log*” doesn't state whether the recommendation was adopted, or whether removal from the Civil Service Commission remains removal only “*for cause*.”
- **Health Services Board:** This seven-member body administers the health services benefits for City employees and City retirees. One member of the Board is appointed by the President of the Board of Supervisors, two members are appointed by the mayor, one member is appointed by the City Controller, and three members are elected by current and retired City employees. Of the seven “seats,” only the Mayor's two appointees have specific membership qualifications: one must be someone that consults regularly in the health care field, and one must be a medical doctor. The Streamlining Task Force voted to make those mandatory seat-level requirements merely “*desirable*,” instead, and apply them as a body-level requirement rather than for a specific seat. This opens the door for political appointees to be appointed who have no knowledge of, or interest in, health insurance plans for City employees.
- **Retiree Health Care Trust Fund Board (RHCTF):** The Streamlining Task Force deferred adopting the Staff recommendation to move the Trust Fund from the City Charter into the Administrative Code. A formal recommendation on whether to do so remains a deferred and unsettled decision, pending an analysis of the implications of doing so.

RHCTF is an irrevocable trust fund that provides a funding source to defray the City's and other participating employer's obligations to pay for retiree health coverage. The RHCTF Board was created to oversee the administration of the fund, and investment of trust assets, which are managed separately from assets in the San Francisco [City] Employees' Retirement System (SFERS). Still under consideration may be combining the RHCTF and SFERS into a single body. And it's not yet known if the Streamlining Task Force may alter the seat-level qualifications for members of the RHCTF Board.

- **Elections Commission:** The Streamlining Task Force voted to change Elections Commission member removal from "for cause" to "at will," threatening the independence of Elections Commissioners.
- **Ballot Simplification Committee:** The Ballot Simplification Committee is charged with writing voter guide summaries of all local ballot measures at the 8th grade reading level so ballot measures are easily understandable for voters.

Members of the Ballot Simplification Committee have highly specific expertise that the Elections Commission members lack. For the Ballot Simplification Committee, Mayoral appointee nominations are required from **external** organizations: Of the five members, the Mayor appoints two, one is nominated by the Northern California Newspaper Guild and one by the Superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District, who must be an educational reading specialist. For the Board of Supervisors three appointees: Two nominees must be from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences or the Northern California Chapter or the Northern California Broadcasters Association, and one must be nominated by the League of Women Voters of San Francisco.

The recommendation was to move the Ballot Simplification Committee from the Elections Code to the Administrative Code, because of the Task Force's initial direction that all public advisory bodies be located in the Administrative Code.

The City Administrator's staff recommendation to the Streamlining Task Force specifically stated:

*"The Task Force should **not** modify the appointment process or qualifications. While it is unusual to explicitly task outside organizations with nominating members, the approach appears to be effective in maintaining the Committee's independence and nonpartisan character. Additionally, the current qualifications promote public confidence that members are selected for their professional expertise."*

Just as the Streamlining Task Force had been in a tizzy that external organizations were authorized to nominate members to the SOTF, they voted to potentially change the nominations for the Ballot Simplification Committee members and also modify its member qualifications and nomination provisions — ignoring their own staff's recommendation against doing so. As of November 19, the Staff had not yet provided recommendations about those changes, which remain unresolved.

This was the only other body besides the SOTF that had its external organization nomination ability removed.

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- **Ethics Commission:** Still undecided is whether to remove the Ethics Commission's ability to place measures on the ballot independently. Other decisions about this body weren't made, and its not on the December 3 meeting agenda.
- **Commission Streamlining Task Force:** In agenda item 5, "*General City Administration*," the Streamlining Task Force considered the Staff's recommendation to keep the Streamlining Task Force in the City Charter, even though it has a voter-mandated sunset date in January 2027, and even though it is just an advisory committee that belongs in the Administrative Code. During their discussion, Chair Harrington let the cat out of the bag, stating (at 1:53:07 on [audiotape](#)) that:

*"You [this Task Force] will be getting a report from SPUR in the next few weeks, and that report will talk about refreshing the whole Charter — not just the [Boards and] Commission portion of it*



[the Charter] — *and they believe the City should have a process on a regular, on-going basis to refresh the whole Charter. And so we may want to include that in our final report.*”

Harrington knew that, of course, because he is a Board Member of SPUR, and probably knew SPUR would release the report five days later on November 10.

The Task Force deferred making any decision on November 5 on whether to accept the Staff recommendation to keep the Streamlining Task Force in the City charter, or move it instead to the Administrative Code, and whether to apply any of the Advisory Body template provisions to their own body, opting to wait to get a further report back from the City Administrator’s support staff.

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There you have it: San Franciscans are being *SPUR’ned*, with help from the Streamlining Task Force. Harrington’s **blabbing** revealed on November 5 that the Streamlining Task Force intends to make recommendations to revise the City Charter far **beyond** the Task Force’s purview of focusing **only** on the City’s boards and commissions!

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**“San Franciscans are being *SPUR’ned*, with help from the Streamlining Task Force. Harrington’s **blabbing** revealed the Task Force intends to revise the City Charter far **beyond** the Task Force’s purview of focusing **only** on the City’s boards and commissions!”**

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The list of egregious major [decisions](#) made by the Streamlining Task Force grew again during its November 19 meeting.

## November 19 Meeting Failures

The Streamlining Task Force’s November 19 meeting was supposed to revisit 31 decisions it had deferred during its previous meetings, and perform so-called “*consistency checks*” on its previous decisions. Little was accomplished during that six- hour meeting, revisiting only 6 of the 31 decisions. And it added an additional 6 decisions to revisit on November 19, essentially creating a wash.

That delayed decision making even further and is now leading to the potential the Task Force may have to schedule **weekly** meetings to complete its work developing proposed ordinances and the promised Charter amendment language by the deadlines imposed by passage of “*Proposition E*.”

The Task Force did make some major decisions on November 19:

- **Sheriff’s Department Oversight Board:** The Sheriff’s Department Oversight Board (SDOB) was created by San Francisco voters in November 2020 through the approval of “*Proposition D*,” a City Charter amendment, which passed with nearly 67% of the vote. It was introduced and passed to provide independent oversight and accountability for the Sheriff’s Department, following a series of scandals involving allegations of inmate abuse. The SDOB’s main functions include appointing an Office of Inspector General (OIG) to investigate misconduct, review complaints, and recommend policy changes regarding the city and county jails.

But due to the City’s foot-dragging under then-Mayor Breed, the SDOB wasn’t fully seated until December 2021, and it inexplicably wasn’t convened until the first time in August 2022, nearly two years after voter passage. The Mayor and Board of Supervisors have slow-walked funding the SDOB, and it still has not received full funding yet, now five years after passage. The initial budget that was passed for the SDOB did not fully anticipate the costs of personnel, office space, and supplies needed to get the OIG operational.

The SDOB, along with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), is currently seeking full funding through the budget process to become fully operational. The Inspector General was appointed in late 2023 and officially started in January 2024, but the OIG is still in the process of being built. In the meantime, the Department of Police Accountability continues to handle investigations of serious misconduct through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Police Accountability.

The Budget and Legislative Analyst’s “*Financial Analysis Report*” of the costs of the City’s Boards and Commissions

claims the SDOB costs \$1.3 million annually, but its not known how much of the \$817,727 in part-time “*soft costs*” for the SDOB’s commission support is padded by costs associated with the MOU with the Department of Police Accountability, which might vanish if the OIG was fully operational.

On November 19, the Streamlining Task Force voted to essentially eviscerate the SDOB, and voted to convert the SDOB to an advisory body, move it from the Charter to the Administrative Code, **not** to apply a sunset date as an exception to the Task Force’s Advisory Body template, change member removal from “*for cause*” to “*at will*,” change the SDOB membership qualifications and change them from mandatory to “*desirable*,” remove the SDOB’s budget and contract approval authority, and remove subpoena power from the SDOB or its Inspector General.

The SDOB was essentially gutted. And once it is formally in the Admin Code, there’s no stopping a future Board of Supervisors, a useful village idiot, or a future Streamlining Task Force from then applying a sunset date.

But again, the Streamlining Task Force still couldn’t make up its mind and punted deciding on November 19 whether the SDOB will be allowed to hire its own Inspector General, creating yet another deferred decision that had first been deferred on September 17. Apparently, despite thinking about its deferred decisions involving the SDOB for fully two months, the Task Force still couldn’t make up its collective mind, choosing to continue quibbling over this.

This may be because City Hall really doesn’t like **any** meaningful oversight of elected officials or oversight of the “*City Hall Family*,” voters wishes be damned!

- **Revising Previous Preliminary Decisions:** Shockingly, during agenda item 6 on November 19 about revisiting their previous decisions, the Task Form weirdly were still quibbling over “*reflecting*” on their logic behind which decision-making bodies they had retained in the Charter, vs. moved into the Administrative Code. The meeting minutes actually report “*Several members expressed difficulty identifying a consistent rationale*” behind their previous decisions.

Community observers have also noted the glaring inconsistencies in the fluctuating rationales! No wonder they’re now doing “*consistency*” checks at the last minute!

The minutes also report Member Sophia Kittler had read SPUR’s November 10 “*Charter for Change*” report and she had concerns about SPUR’s recommendations.

Notably Doug Engmann, a principal member of the “*Proposition E*” campaign in November 2024 criticized the Task Force for having larded up an excessive volume of changes proposed in the single agenda item. The *Westside Observer* had noted the agenda item covered 32 pages in a 49-page presentation covering dozens and dozens of critical issues, and that it was totally unfair to members of the public who may have wanted to comment on several of these distinct issues, but were restricted to a single two-minute period to testify. That material should have been broken down into several separate agenda items.

The Task Force’s list of the 150 boards and commissions (formerly the “*Commission Workbook*”) shows that at the outset of their work, there were 43 boards and commissions in the City Charter, but the current recommendation is to leave just 15 in the Charter, meaning they will have chopped 26 bodies out of City Charter protections. That’s because their initial recommendations had been to move 19 into the Admin Code, but they are still deciding what to do about another 11 bodies, which may happen on December 3. Remarkably, one of the bodies they are still debating is moving the Health Commission — which has oversight of both SFGH and Laguna Honda Hospital — to the Admin Code. They’re also considering moving the Airport Commission to the Admin Code, and potentially the Fire Commission, too.

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**Once it’s in the Admin Code, there’s no stopping a future Board of Supervisors from then applying a sunset date!”**

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Part of the problem is that once bodies are moved to the Admin Code, all bodies face having a three-year sunset date forced on their existence, placing their long-term viability at the risk of whims of future members of the Board of Supervisors simply **not** extending their sunset dates — driven by the whims of the Mayor or SPUR.

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The Task Force made a slew of other decisions on November 19, not described here. They’re available in the meeting [minutes](#), and in the Task Force’s 28-page “[Decision Log](#).”

## Operational Improvements

Also on the November 19 meeting agenda was a discussion of so-called “*operational improvements*.” Because the Task Force was reduced to having a bare quorum with just three of its five members present, some decisions were again deferred until their next meeting perhaps with the full Task Force. Again, only a few of those *improvements* are described here, since several of them are relatively minor and still subject to changes.

The big “*improvements*” debated on November 19 include:

- **Creating a New Body:** The Task Force considered a proposal to create a new body to take on the Streamlining Task Force’s work after it dissolves, since “*Proposition E*” imposed a mandatory date to sunset this Task Force in January 2027 following the planned charter change ballot measure being placed before voters in November 2026. The discussion on November 19 centered on the fact that the Civil Grand Jury’s “*Commission Impossible*” [report](#) in July 2024 had recommended a new body be charged with periodic and systematic evaluation of all boards and commissions that are retained. But the Streamlining Task Force was reluctant, and decided against including in their report’s recommendations another oversight body, even though SPUR itself thinks this should be done.
- **Ditching Commission Executive Secretaries:** City Charter §4.102-9 states each appointive board or commission shall “*Appoint an executive secretary to manage the affairs and operations of the board or commission.*” One Task Force member stated during the November 19 meeting (at 5:36:00 on [audiotape](#)):

*“It also begs the question of the Charter provision that allows commissions to appoint their own commission secretary, and whether or not we want to allow flexibility for a greater pool of resources for more centralized City functions and centralized support for these bodies.”*

Minutes later, Deputy City Attorney Jon Givner sought clarification (at about 5:47 on audiotape) from the mere three Task Force members present asking for guidance to start writing draft language for a Charter amendment, regarding the question of Executive Secretaries for commissions. Member Kittler pipped up and said from the perspective of her day job [as the Mayor’s Budget Director] that “*I would strongly prefer that [Commission Secretaries] **not** be in there, so we can explore other staffing options.*”

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Obviously, focusing primarily on her Mayor’s Budget Director day job of pinching pennies hunting for any potential cost savings, of course **Kittler — who is *not* qualified to hold the Streamlining Task Force’s seat as an “expert” in open and accountable government** — wants to eliminate Commission Secretaries that are mandated in the City Charter with managing the affairs of their respective Commissions.

**Kittler is *not* qualified to hold the Task Force’s seat as an ‘expert’ in open and accountable government.**

It’s another example of pound-wise, penny foolish!

The idea Commissions shouldn’t have a dedicated Commission Secretary to manage their Commission’s affairs, and rely instead on a centralized “*floating*” pool of secretaries is a terrible idea, because “*institutional knowledge*” about a given Board’s or Commission’s current affairs would vanish.

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- **Annual Reports:** The Task Force did vote to *eliminate* requiring all bodies retained, whether in the Charter or in the Administrative Code to submit annual reports, as currently required by City Charter §4.103, apparently deciding to strip the current requirement out of the City Charter. They did so, despite the fact that the Civil Grand Jury itself had recommended several criteria that should be included in board and commission annual reports that are supposed to be prepared as separate and distinct from the annual reports each City Department submits.

The Task Force did vote to eliminate the annual reports, after Task Force member Natahsa Mihal (the City Controller's appointee to the Task Force), lamely asserted on November 19 that even annual reports "*may be too frequent*," and asserted that if members of the public want to track down the performance of a given board or commission, they can comb through a board or commission's web site, and pore through the meeting minutes of the body's meetings. **That's sheer nonsense!**

That's impractical, because the Health Commission, for instance, holds two meetings of the full Commission each month, and once-per-month meetings of three or four separate Health Commission subcommittees. That suggests that to gauge the performance of the Health Commission's accomplishments in a given year, members of the public would have to hunt down approximately 80 meeting minutes to read through. More brazenly, Mihal suggested the "*intended audience for [annual reports] is unclear*." It was brazen, precisely because Charter §4.103 clearly states that **each** board or commission "*shall file such report with the Mayor and the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors*." **If Mihal doesn't know who the intended audience for annual reports has been all along, she should not have been appointed to the Streamlining Task Force**, since her motion that was approved will deprive the Mayor and Board of Supervisors with this clear performance-based assessment tool.

And it would be a labor of love not just for members of the public. 11 members of the Board of Supervisors who might be interested in assessing the effectiveness and accomplishments of the 80-plus boards and commissions that may be retained would all have to go through the same nonsense, rather than being able to locate a single annual report. This is the *opposite* of the "*efficiency*" the Streamlining Task Force claimed it was looking for in a more responsive City government, right? The Streamlining Task Force also chose not to include a recommendation in its final report describing how the meeting minutes of each board and commission prepares following each of their meetings be prepared. That failure would clearly make having to hunt through meeting minutes to assess the performance of a specific board and commission more difficult lacking specificity in preparing meeting minutes.

Eliminating the current Charter provision requiring annual reports runs contrary to the principle that although San Francisco requires annual performance appraisals for each City employee, there's no appraisal of, or self-assessment by, the boards and commissions. That's bonkers!

The Charter's annual reports for boards and commissions is separate from the City's Administrative Code §2A.30 that requires each City Department head to submit an annual report about activities and accomplishments of their **department**. Why would you assess the department's performance, and individual employee's performance, but not the board or commission's performance?

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**"The November 19 meeting minutes states the Task Force removed annual report requirements *only for decision-making bodies*, but the draft Charter change language shows the annual reports requirement will be removed from *all* boards and commissions, not just decision-making bodies."**

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- And although the November 19 [meeting minutes](#) now available clearly states on page 13 that the Task Force had removed the annual report requirements apparently *only* for decision-making bodies, the [sample draft](#) Charter change language City Attorney Jon Giver is presenting to the Streamlining Task Force on December 3 shows the annual report requirement will be removed from **all** boards and commissions, not just decision-making bodies.

## Major Decisions Made and Coming

Remarkably, the November 19 meeting minutes report that Task Force member Sophia Kittler: “... mused that the Task Force’s templates have been useful as a decision-making framework, but may not be helpful as a messaging tool going forward.” It’s essentially an admission that **all** of the decisions this Task Force has made based on its templates may have been flawed at the very outset, at least from a “messaging” standpoint. If it’s not good messaging, why should San Franciscans be assured they have been valid decisions?

If it isn’t good messaging, why would voters pass a charter change ballot measure based on them in November 2026?

Since the *Westside Observer*’s last article, our list of the Task Force’s major decisions to date linked above reveals that of the bodies being evaluated by the Streamlining Task Force:

- 15 will be kept in the City Charter.
- 30 will be moved from the City Charter to the Administrative Code. That will allow the Board of Supervisors to make changes to the Admin Code without needing voter approval. Additional bodies may be moved too, driving it up to potentially 40 moving up to 45 bodies to the Code.
- 14 will be kept as governance bodies.
- 23 will lose their authority to hire and fire department heads, and were initially reduced to having “*consultative roles only*” in hiring decisions. But the Task Force sprung on members of the public on November 19 that the “*consultative*” roles have been changed to being an “*optional*” requirement, suggesting the Mayor will be able to escape consulting about hiring decisions with the Commissioners that are supposed to provide oversight of a given department and department heads, before the hiring offer is made.
- 10 *may* their retain authority to hire and fire department heads. That’s apparently still subject to being changed.
- 12 bodies are having three-year “sunset” dates applied to them, portending that the Board of Supervisors will be allowed to **not** extend their continuing re-authorizations to exist when the scheduled sunset date is reached. The initial sunset dates were to occur in 2029, but between November 19 and December 3 their sunset dates were magically changed to sunset in 2028, chopping off a full year, without explanation for the sudden change.
- 20 bodies are recommended for changing removal of member appointees from *for-cause only* to *at-will* removal. This will hand the Mayor, and/or the respective member’s “*appointing authorities*” subject to the Mayor’s political pressure, *carte blanche* authority to get rid of any board or commission member for any reason, no reason whatsoever, or for having cast a specific policy body vote that the Mayor or appointing authority doesn’t like.
- 19 bodies will have qualifications for member appointments changed, ranging from eliminating any specific qualifications whatsoever, to changing from “*seat-specific*” to “*body-level*” qualifications, and all of them “*desirable*” rather than mandatory qualifications for appointment. This, too, hands more power to a “*strong Mayor*” form of government. The Task Force plans to revisit member qualifications changes on December 3 for 51 more bodies.

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**The Task Force’s major decisions to date linked above reveals that of the 150 bodies being evaluated, 23 will lose authority to hire and fire their department heads and will only have *optional* ‘consultative roles’ in hiring decisions, 20 bodies are recommended for changing removal of member appointees from ‘for-cause only’ to ‘at-will’ removal, and 19 bodies will have qualifications for member appointments changed.**

**This illustrates how San Francisco voters have been *SPUR’ned* under ‘Prop. E’.**

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This illustrates how San Francisco voters have been *SPUR’ned* under “*Proposition E*,” with the complicity of the Streamlining Task Force. And more changes are yet to come during the Task Force’s meetings in December and January. Stay tuned.

## December 3 Meeting

Here we go again with another clown-car meeting that is so jam packed it will easily be another six-hour-plus meeting. The SPUR-driven Task Force has become a clown-car, like Lurie's initial appointment of Beya Alcaraz as D-4 Supervisor. It should humiliate him.

The meeting agenda lists seven bodies to wade through on previously deferred decisions. But the Staff's "*Deferred Decisions*" list in its running "*Decision Log*" still lists at least 30 yet unresolved specific decisions, and that's not including potentially revisiting member qualifications changes on December 3 for 35 to 51 more bodies it had not previously discussed seat qualifications for members of the various bodies.

Item #8 (page 34) in its "*Deferred Decisions and Consistency Checks – Part 2*" 43-page PowerPoint [presentation](#) suggests four options on whether to further update and change seat qualifications for body members. The options are 1) That all bodies require either **no** seat qualification, or seat qualifications that are merely "*desirable*" at the body level; 2) Group bodies by type of body or type of department and apply qualifications by group type; 3) Revisit the list of bodies one-by-one to decide body-specific qualifications; and 4) Just uphold all decisions previously made while considering other changes to the bodies in context.

It would be irresponsible to adopt either the first or second option, since there would be no discussion of the functions of each individual body, and no context of other changes that were initially made to the bodies on what to re-decide. As well, Option 1 might radically change previous targeted *exceptions* made for a given body. Three other bodies need additional clean up on who appoints the body's members, and two other bodies need to be "*standardized*" because of previous inconsistent decisions.

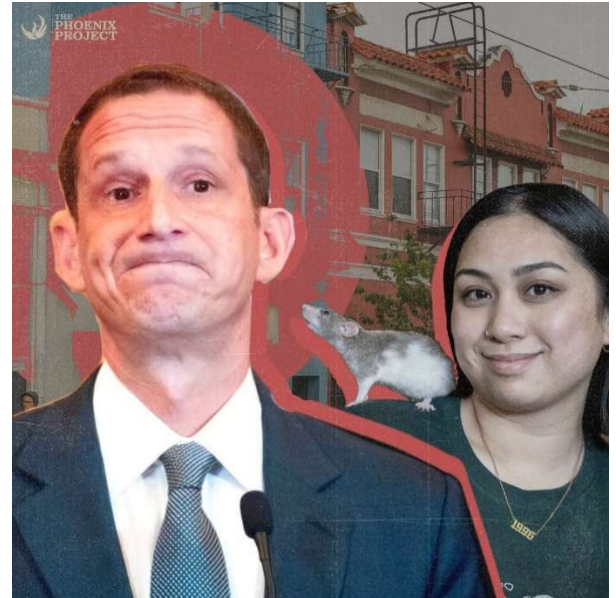
The so-called "*sneak peek*" of proposed Charter Amendment language being developed by the City Attorney is also on the agenda. The "*sneak peek*" samples include amending: Charter §3.100 that the Mayor appoints and removes all department

heads unless specified elsewhere in the Charter; §4.101 applying the Task Force's template rule that members of **all** commissions and advisory bodies serve "*at the pleasure of*" their appointing authorities, a euphemism for the harsher "*at-will*" removal; §4.101.5 applying the 60-day holdover limit to all boards and commissions, whether in the Charter or in the Administrative Code; §4.101.6 establishing term lengths and term limits for all Commissioners; §4.102 eliminating commission nominations of department heads, eliminating commission removal of department heads, removing the annual statements of purpose, and removing the requirement to hire a commission secretary; §4.103 removing the annual report requirement; and other "*clean-up*" Charter amendments.

Other items may also be brought up for decisions on December 3.

### SPUR's "*Charter for Change*"

SPUR — the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association — is a nonprofit organization started in San Francisco focused on urban policy, but has spread its tentacles to having regional offices in San José and Oakland.



**The Commission Streamlining Task Force's** clown-car decisions — like Lurie's initial clown-car appointment of Beya Alcaraz as D-4 Supervisor — should humiliate him.

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**"The '*sneak peek*' of proposed Charter Amendment language being developed includes amending: Charter §3.100 that the Mayor appoints and removes all department heads; §4.101 members of all commissions and advisory bodies serve '*at the pleasure of*' their appointing authorities; §4.102 eliminating commission nominations of department heads, eliminating commission removal of department heads, removing the annual statements of purpose, and removing the requirement to hire a commission secretary; §4.103 removing the annual report requirement; and other '*clean-up*' Charter amendments."**

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As mentioned above, SPUR's November 10 "*Charter for Change*" [report](#) will worsen what the Streamlining Task Force has been preparing for the November 2026 Charter change ballot measure — going way beyond **just** commission reforms.

The report contains 10 recommendations, involving potential massive restructuring of City departments and moving many of them to the Administrative code; granting expanded powers to the City Administrator (who is an appointed, not elected, department head) to serve as the City's "*Chief Operating Officer*," set City policy, and expanding the five-year term to a ten-year term; giving the green light for the Mayor to hire four or five "*deputy mayors*"; eliminating the prohibition mayoral staff can't earn more than 70% of the Mayor's salary; updating the bargaining process for unions representing all City employees; revise how ballot measures can be placed before the voters; create more "*flexible*" government via reorganizing City departments into so-called "*agencies*" having more than one City department; shift City operational rules from the Charter to the Administrative Code; and create greater flexibility in the City budget by reducing, freezing, or eliminating so-called "*budget set-asides*" and "*baseline funding*" requirements, many of which have been voter mandated at the ballot box.

SPUR's report claims it wants these 10 changes incorporated into the Charter change recommendations the Streamlining Task Force will place on the November 2026 ballot, which election is now just 11 months away and will need to be prepared and finalized just eight months from now, by August 2026.

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**“ SPUR’s November 10 ‘Charter for Change’ report will worsen what the Task Force has been preparing for the November 2026 Charter change ballot measure, including: Potential massive restructuring of City departments and moving many to the Administrative code; granting expanded powers to the City Administrator to serve as the City’s ‘Chief Operating Officer’; giving the green light for the Mayor to hire four or five ‘deputy mayors’; revising how ballot measures can be placed before the voters; and freezing, or eliminating so-called ‘budget set-asides’ and ‘baseline funding’ requirements; among others. ”**

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SPUR's report — that Task Force Chair Harrington and Member Kittler have heaped praise on — has wildly moved the goalposts of the Streamlining Task Force's mandate of focusing *solely* on Commission reform, to suddenly include broader changes to the Charter beyond just commission reform, without voter's pre-approval.

The majority of changes the Streamlining Task Force has made to date were all extremely popular with San Francisco voters, or voters would not have enacted so many Charter changes at the ballot box throughout the years. The Task Force has taken a wrecking ball to voter's past decisions regarding open and accountable government, eliminating many popular decisions that are disregarded by established elite groups, such as SPUR.

Unfortunately, that's not the end of what SPUR wants done. SPUR has its eyes set next on addressing San Francisco's electoral systems, campaign finance, human resources, and voting procedures, which are also set in the charter. SPUR claims additional areas would benefit from a separate, dedicated reform process, including additional Charter changes and simplifying the planning code, updating civil service and human resources procedures, and "*streamlining*" environmental, tax, and administrative codes.

What SPUR is recommending sounds less like exciting opportunities, and more like an ongoing nightmare for San Franciscans. The *Westside Observer* will have more to say about SPUR's plans in our next issue.

## **Make San Francisco Great Again?**

Mayor Lurie's own "*Project 2025*," is well underway, but must be defeated.

The *Mission Local* also [reported](#) on November 10 that Board of Supervisors Rafael Mandelman and Mayor Lurie are teaming up by putting together another task force (apparently separate from the Commission Streamlining Task Force) for city charter reform in November 2026. Reportedly, Mandelman says the new Task Force will be comprised of a "*broad selection of San Francisco leaders*" from businesses, labor, and nonprofits, along with an array of city staff, elected officials, and Lurie's current Chief of Infrastructure, Climate and Mobility who was the former head of SPUR, Alicia John-Baptiste; City Administrator Carmen Chu; and staff from the City Controller's Office and City Attorney's Office.

Noticeably absent will be any representatives in the new Task Force from neighborhoods, and run-of-the-mill everyday San Franciscans. The new Task Force is reportedly to conclude its work by February or March 2026, but it's not yet known who the actual members are, whether they have begun meeting, and whether they are meeting in public for citizens to attend and observe their deliberations. It's also not known if Board President Mandelman will schedule City Hall public hearings before the Board of Supervisors about what his Task Force is up to.

Why is there a sudden need for a second Task Force essentially performing parallel functions, but excludes members of the public from participating in? Shouldn't a new Task Force be subject to the Brown Act? Why hide behind the secrecy of a "*passive meeting body*"? Why have Lurie and Mandelman done so?

The majority of changes the Streamlining Task Force has made to date were all extremely unpopular with San Francisco voters, or voters would not have enacted to many Charter changes at the ballot box throughout the years. It's why voters rejected "*Prop. D*" in November 2024! The Task Force has taken a wrecking ball to voter's past decisions regarding open and accountable government.

If San Francisco's City Hall wants to understand why voters are so unhappy, there's no great mystery to unravel: Much of our unhappiness involves the many ways our City's democratic processes are under attack by elected City officials, astroturf groups like *Blueprint for a Better San Francisco* and *TogetherSF Action*, and outfits like SPUR.

"*We the People*," who are tired of being *SPUR'ned*, must reject this nonsense, by rejecting the Mayor's Charter change ballot measure for commission reform in November 2026. Just as we voted against "*Proposition D*" in November 2024, we need to be prepared to reject whatever this "*Proposition E*" Streamlining Task Force is apparently going to foolishly place on our ballot a year from now in collaboration with the Supervisor Mandelman-Mayor Lurie Task Force! Lurie must be handed his first ballot measure defeat next November.

After all, there have been 398 public speakers during the Streamlining Task Force's meetings through November 19, plus 529 letters submitted by members of the public to the Task Force so far, nearly all of which have opposed the Streamlining Task Force's decisions every step of the way. Hopefully, that momentum will be sustained.

*Monette-Shaw is a columnist for San Francisco's Westside Observer newspaper, and a member of the California First Amendment Coalition (FAC) and the ACLU. He operates [stopLHHdownsize.com](http://stopLHHdownsize.com). Contact him at [monette-shaw@westsideobserver.com](mailto:monette-shaw@westsideobserver.com).*

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**“ Board of Supervisors president Rafael Mandelman and Mayor Lurie are teaming up by putting together another task force (apparently separate from the Commission Streamlining Task Force) for city charter reform next November. ”**

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