



2026 CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

AGENDA

Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

500 County Center, 1st Floor

Manzanita Hall

Redwood City, California 94063

Zoom Participation: <https://smcgov.zoom.us/j/96567996612>

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment
This is an opportunity for members of the public to address the Committee on any Committee-related topics that are not on the agenda. If your subject is not on the agenda, the Chair will recognize you at this time.
3. Approval of March 17th, 2026, Minutes
4. Amend the meeting schedule to change the April 28th meeting to April 27th
5. Discussion of a proposal from Members Tom Adams and Karen Chapman regarding resilience against events of extreme weather
6. Preview of Recommendation from the “Procedures for Board Appointments to Fill Vacancies in Elected Office” Subcommittee
7. Preview of Recommendation from the “Annual Review of Board Governance Practices” Subcommittee
8. Preview of Recommendation from the “Row Officer Consolidation / Language Access & Equity” Subcommittee
9. Informational Reports: Ad Hoc Committees
 - a. *Independent District Lines Commission*
 - b. *Human Rights & Equity Commission*
10. Adjourn

Meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who need special assistance or a disability-related modification or accommodation (including auxiliary aids or services) to participate in this meeting, or who have a disability and wish to request an alternative format for the agenda, meeting notice, agenda packet or other writings that may be distributed at the meeting, should contact Kim Boverio, Assistant Clerk of the Board, at least two working days before the meeting at kboverio@smcgov.org. Notification in advance of the meeting will enable the County to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting and the materials related to it.

March 29, 2026

Honorable President Corzo and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

RE: 2026 Charter Revision Commission – Subcommittee Report for Adding Independent Redistricting Commission to the County Charter

I recognize that adopting an Independent Redistricting Commission asks elected officials to transfer an important responsibility away from themselves. That is not an easy decision.

But independent redistricting actually protects the Board of Supervisors as much as it protects the public.

When supervisors are responsible for drawing their own district boundaries, every map decision—no matter how well intentioned—can be viewed through a political lens.

Communities may believe boundaries were drawn to favor or disadvantage particular interests.

An independent commission removes that burden from elected officials. It ensures that the lines are drawn through a transparent public process governed by state law and constitutional standards, rather than political perception.

In other words, this reform does not weaken the Board—it strengthens the legitimacy of the decisions that follow.

Many jurisdictions across California have adopted independent commissions for exactly this reason: they protect both public trust and elected leaders from accusations of political map-drawing.

Ultimately, this proposal simply allows the voters of San Mateo County to decide whether they want this reform.

I respectfully ask that you give them that opportunity.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Jim Lawrence

Former Chairman, SMC Redistricting Advisory Committee, 2021

Mobile: 408-590-0429

April 1, 2026

San Mateo County Charter Review Committee
c/o Kim Boverio, City Selection Committee Secretary
County Executive's Office / Clerk of the Board
500 County Center, 5th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Subject: Support for an Independent Redistricting Commission

Dear Chair and Members of the Charter Review Committee:

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of North & Central San Mateo County and the League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County, we respectfully urge the Committee to recommend a Charter amendment establishing an Independent Redistricting Commission for supervisorial districts.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization founded in 1920 to empower voters and defend democracy. At the national, state, and local levels, the League has long been engaged in redistricting reform through advocacy, education, and community engagement. Locally, our Leagues serve communities across San Mateo County through voter education, candidate forums, and efforts to promote transparent and accountable government.

As reflected in the IRC subcommittee recommendation before you, the current process—where final authority rests with the Board of Supervisors—raises concerns about inherent conflicts of interest, even when advisory bodies and public input are included. Independent redistricting commissions are widely recognized as a best practice because they help ensure that district lines are drawn based on objective criteria rather than political considerations.

The League's national position supports vesting redistricting authority in an independent redistricting commission that reflects community diversity and operates through an open, transparent process with meaningful public participation. Redistricting should ensure equal population, protect minority representation, preserve communities of interest, and explicitly reject partisan advantage and incumbent protection.

Independent redistricting commissions can:

- Reduce conflicts of interest by removing direct control from elected officials
- Increase transparency and public trust
- Encourage broader and more inclusive community participation
- Produce fairer, more representative, and more defensible district maps

The League maintains that an independent redistricting commission promotes fairness, transparency, and voter trust by allowing voters to choose their representatives.

As a Charter County, San Mateo County has the authority to place this important structural reform before voters. Establishing an IRC through the Charter would align the County with emerging best practices, strengthen public confidence in the redistricting process, and ensure that future district maps reflect the County's evolving communities.



For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to recommend this Charter amendment for consideration by the Board of Supervisors and, ultimately, by the voters of San Mateo County.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

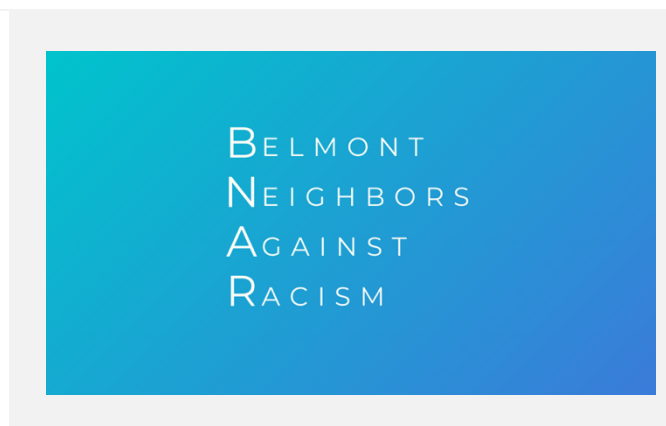
Tina Doede, President

League of Women Voters of North & Central San Mateo County

Lucia Tedesco, President

League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County

The following organizations endorse this recommendation.





Northern
California

San Mateo County Chapter

April 1, 2026

San Mateo County Charter Review Committee
c/o Kim Boverio, City Selection Committee Secretary
County Executive's Office / Clerk of the Board
500 County Center, 5th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Via email:

kboverio@smcgov.org

Re: Support for an Independent Redistricting Commission

Dear Chair and Members of the Charter Review Committee:

The ACLU – San Mateo County Chapter hereby endorses the April 1, 2026 letter to you from the League of Women Voters of North & Central San Mateo County and South San Mateo County (attached).

Sincerely,

Beth von Emster, Co-Chair

ACLU – San Mateo County Chapter

April 1, 2026

San Mateo County Charter Review Committee
c/o Kim Boverio, City Selection Committee Secretary
County Executive's Office / Clerk of the Board
500 County Center, 5th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

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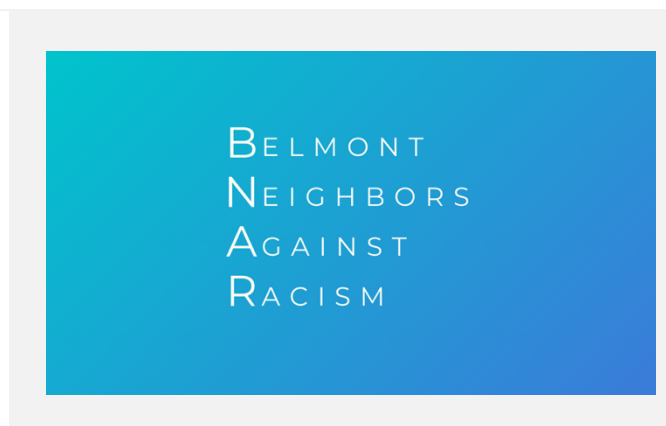
Tina Doede, President

League of Women Voters of North & Central San Mateo County

Lucia Tedesco, President

League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County

The following organizations endorse this recommendation.





San Mateo County Charter Review Committee Meeting
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 5:30 p.m.
500 County Center, Manzanita Hall, Redwood City, CA 94063

DRAFT MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rosanne Foust at 5:33 p.m.

1. Roll Call

In-Person Present:

Committee Members: Tom Adams, Rosanne Foust, Mark Haesloop

Virtual Present:

Committee Members: Liliam Perez Avila, Jacquelyn Foust, Nathan Healy, Dana Johnson, Monica Mejia, Iliana Rodriguez, Kathleen Wheeler, Kimberly Woo

Absent:

Committee Members: Talavou Aumavae, Karen Chapman, Eddie Flores, Lynette Garcia, Daniela Jongitud, Julie Lind, George Smith

Staff: Brian Pettit, Deputy County Attorney; Rocio Kiryczun, Deputy County Executive; Lena Silberman, Management Analyst, and Kim Boverio, Assistant Clerk of the Board

2. Public Comment

Speakers: None

3. Approval of March 3, 2026 Minutes

11 RESULT: Approved
MOTION: Mark Haesloop
SECOND: Tom Adams

Member	Vote
Tom Adams	Aye
Talavou Aumavae	Absent
Liliam Perez Avila	Aye
Karen Chapman	Absent

Member	Vote
Eddie Flores	Absent
Jacquelyn Foust	Aye
Rosanne Foust	Aye
Lynette Garcia	Absent
Mark Haesloop	Aye
Nathan Healy	Aye
Dana Johnson	Aye
Daniela Jonguitud	Absent
Julie Lind	Absent
Monica Mejia	Aye
Iliana Rodriguez	Aye
George Smith	Absent
Kathleen Wheeler	Aye
Kimberly Woo	Aye

Total: Aye (11), No (0), Abstain (0), Absent (7)

4. Presentation by County Attorney's Office
Presentation of 2018 Charter Review Report to the Board of Supervisors and the Committee Reports. Presentation of proposed schedule of future meetings.

Speakers: Brian Pettit, Deputy County Attorney
Commissioner Kimberly Woo
Commissioner Dana Johnson
Commissioner Kathleen Wheeler

Presentation materials were provided to the Commission and are on file.

Commissioner Kathleen Wheeler is requesting a word template for the subcommittee reports based on slide 3 of presentation (see below), and for the report template to include arguments for and against the issue .

Subcommittee Reports:

- Subcommittee members, chair
- Issue(s) considered
- Investigative process (references to research material, interviews, etc.)
- Recommendation and justification

Public Comment: None

5. Discussion of a proposal from Members Tom Adams and Karen Chapman regarding resilience against events of extreme weather

This item is being deferred to April 2nd meeting.

Public Comment: None

6. Preview of Recommendation from the “Independent District Lines Commission” Subcommittee

Speakers: Commissioner Kathleen Wheeler
Commissioner Mark Haesloop
Commissioner Tom Adams
Chair Rosanne Foust
Commissioner Dana Johnson

Presentation materials were provided to the Commission and are on file. The subcommittee is recommending that the County Charter be amended to establish an independent redistricting commission. This recommendation will come back to April 14th meeting for consideration by the Commission.

Commissioner Talavou Aumavae joined the meeting virtually at 5:57 P.M.

Public Comment: None

7. Informational Reports: Ad Hoc Committees

- a) Procedures for Board Appointments to Fill Vacancies in Elected Office
Commissioner Iliana Rodriguez: Outline and drafts are in the works for preview on April 2nd.
- b) Annual Review of Board Governance Practices
Commissioner Mark Haesloop: Commissioner Eddie Flores has circulated outline and draft to subcommittee members and will have detailed subcommittee meeting coming up for preview on April 2nd.
- c) Row Officer Consolidation / Language Access & Equity
Commissioner Jacquelyn Foust: Recommendations being flushed out with committee and will be ready for preview on April 2nd.
- d) Human Rights & Equity Commission
Commissioner Monica Mejia: Scheduling meetings with Supervisors and Brian Pettit, Deputy County Attorney to gain input on recommendations for preview on April 14th.

Public Comment: None

2. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Proposed Schedule of Items for the CRC

3/18/2026

Thursday, April 2nd, 2026 | 4/2/2026

- Preview of Procedures for Board Appointments to Fill Vacancies in Elected Office
- Preview of Annual Review of Board Governance Practices
- Preview of Row Officer Consolidation / Language Access & Equity
- Discussion of a proposal regarding resilience against events of extreme weather

Tuesday, April 14th, 2026 | 4/14/2026

- Vote on all subcommittee recommendations

Monday April 27th, 2026 | 4/27/2026

- Vote on final recommendation letter for the Board of Supervisors

RESILIENCE AGAINST EXTREME WEATHER SHOULD BE A PRIORITY

Because of the global failure to reduce carbon emissions, the world has already passed through one heat level tipping point and is rapidly approaching another. Resilience strategies to minimize damage from now unavoidable tragedies fall principally on local governments. Public infrastructure, building codes, zoning ordinances, and emergency services are all involved.

The enormous threats to public safety from climate driven events will only escalate over time. Although there are some models, it is extremely difficult to predict the unfolding magnitude of these events. Month long torrential rains are one possible example. Wind driven fires across a drought parched landscape are another. All that we really know now is that the threats will become much, much worse over time.

The Preamble to the County Charter currently states, in part, that the County should be “responsive to ... environmental needs and goals in a democratic manner.”

Given the unprecedented threat to public safety from extreme weather, we propose that a more precisely focused statement of priority be added to the County Charter Preamble:

Policies and programs providing long-term resilience against the increasing threats from extreme fire, flood, wind, rain, heat, drought and sea level rise should be a County priority. As much as possible these policies and programs should be developed collaboratively with the cities, districts, and other public entities in the County.

This statement is an extension of the existing Preamble language. We believe that there is no legal barrier to it.

A vote of the people confirming that resilience against extreme weather events is a priority will show support both for ongoing efforts on to mitigate sea level rise and for the very extensive efforts that will be needed to face the dangerous threats in the decades ahead.

Memorandum

To: San Mateo County Charter Review Committee

From: Subcommittee on Filling Vacancies in Elected Office (Iliana Rodriguez - Chair, Julie Lind, and Liliam Perez Avila)

Date: March 11, 2026

Subject: Recommendation to Amend Charter Section 415 – Vacancies in Elected Office

Background

The Subcommittee on Filling Vacancies in Elected Office conducted independent research and interviews to evaluate how vacancies in elected county offices are filled under the San Mateo County Charter and to assess practices used by other charter counties in California.

As part of its review, the subcommittee consulted with staff from the San Mateo County Human Resources Department and the San Mateo County Attorney's Office. These discussions included the most recent application of Charter Section 412.5 concerning removal of an elected sheriff for cause, and operational considerations related to the current procedures for filling vacancies.

Section 415 of the Charter currently requires the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors to fill a vacancy in an elected office by appointment within 30 days, or the County Elections Officer must call a special election.

The subcommittee's review and discussions with staff suggest that the current timeframe may not allow sufficient time to conduct a transparent and inclusive appointment process when the Board elects to fill a vacancy by appointment.

Review of Other California Charter Counties

State law requires county charters to provide a method for filling vacancies in governing body offices and other elected positions. The subcommittee reviewed vacancy provisions in all fourteen charter counties in California.

Most charter counties authorize their governing bodies to fill vacancies by appointment, often combined with provisions that require a special election depending on the timing of the vacancy or if the governing body does not act within a specified timeframe.

Review included:

- Alameda County – Board appointment authority, with gubernatorial appointment if the Board fails to act within 60 days.
- El Dorado County – Vacancies on the Board of Supervisors are filled by election.
- Fresno County – Hybrid model requiring special elections in most cases, with limited appointment authority during the final year of a term.
- Los Angeles County – Board appointment authority for most countywide offices.
- Orange County – Vacancy procedures vary depending on the time remaining in the term.
- Sacramento County – Special election required early in a supervisor’s term; other county offices may be filled by appointment.
- San Bernardino County – Board must appoint within 60 days or call a special election.
- San Diego County – Board may appoint a replacement or call a special election.
- San Francisco – The Mayor appoints replacements for certain offices.
- Santa Clara County – Board may appoint a replacement or call a special election.
- Tehama County – Board must appoint a replacement within 90 days.

This review shows that many charter counties provide longer timeframes—typically 60 to 90 days—when appointments are used to fill vacancies.

Findings from Staff Consultation

County staff indicated that the current 30-day deadline in Section 415 may limit the Board’s ability to conduct a thorough appointment process when that option is selected.

Additional time would allow the County to more robustly:

- Publicly solicit applications from qualified residents
- Verify eligibility and qualifications of candidates
- Conduct public interviews
- Provide opportunities for meaningful public engagement

These steps are important to ensure transparency and public confidence in the selection process.

Subcommittee Recommendation

The subcommittee recommends that the San Mateo County Charter Review Committee consider proposing an amendment to Section 415 of the San Mateo County Charter to clarify the Board’s options when a vacancy occurs and to improve transparency in the appointment process.

Specifically, the subcommittee recommends:

1. Clarifying that the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors may choose either to call a special election or fill the vacancy by appointment; there is no hybrid option.
2. If the Board elects to fill the vacancy by appointment, extending the timeframe from 30 days to 60 days to allow for a more deliberate and transparent process.

3. Requiring the Board to hold at least one publicly noticed meeting dedicated to receiving community input before making an appointment.

Proposed Charter Language (Conceptual Amendment)

The subcommittee offers the following conceptual language for consideration:

Section 415 Vacancies: When a vacancy occurs in any elective county office, if the Board of Supervisors elects to fill the vacancy by appointment, the appointment shall be made within 60 days of the occurrence of the vacancy. Prior to making such appointment, the Board shall hold at least one publicly noticed meeting for the purpose of receiving public input regarding the appointment and qualifications of potential candidates.

If the Board does not make an appointment within sixty days, the County Election Officer shall call a special election to fill the vacancy in accordance with applicable law.

Conclusion

The subcommittee's research indicates that the current vacancy provisions in San Mateo County are generally consistent with practices in other charter counties, but the 30-day appointment window is shorter than that used in many comparable jurisdictions.

Allowing the Board to choose between appointment or election, while extending the appointment timeframe to 60 days and requiring public input, would support transparency, strengthen public confidence, and allow a more thoughtful selection process when vacancies occur.

The subcommittee respectfully submits this recommendation to the San Mateo County Charter Review Committee for consideration.

San Mateo County Charter Review Committee

Section 415 - Vacancies in Elected Office
Subcommittee Presentation
Iliana Rodriguez, Liliam Perez Avila, Julie Lind

Issue for Consideration

- ▶ Question: Whether Section 415 of the Charter should be amended to more clearly define the procedures the Board must follow when appointing someone to fill a vacancy in an elected office.
- ▶ Context: While the Charter authorizes the Board to fill vacancies, it does not fully specify how the appointment process should work. In practice, procedures are often established ad hoc or by Board policy rather than by Charter direction. A recent example is the Board's creation and adoption of procedures to appoint a Sheriff.

Current Charter Framework

- ▶ Language: 415. Vacancies. The Board of Supervisors shall provide for public notice of vacancies on boards and commissions and of the method by which citizens may apply for appointments. If a vacancy occurs in an elective office other than the Board of Supervisors, the Board shall within 30 days of the effective date of the vacancy, either make an appointment or order the calling of a special election to fill the vacancy. If the Board does not make an appointment or call a special election within 30 days, the county officer responsible for conducting county elections shall immediately order a special election to be called to fill the vacancy. Section 415 requires Board to act within 30 days
- ▶ If no action → special election is triggered
- ▶ Does not define HOW appointments occur
- ▶ Procedures are developed case-by-case

Background

- ▶ The Subcommittee on Filling Vacancies in Elected Office conducted independent research and interviews to evaluate how vacancies in elected county offices are filled under the San Mateo County Charter and to assess practices used by other charter counties in California.
- ▶ As part of its review, the subcommittee consulted with staff from the San Mateo County Human Resources Department and the San Mateo County Attorney's Office. These discussions included the most recent application of Charter Section 412.5 concerning removal of an elected sheriff for cause, and operational considerations related to the current procedures for filling vacancies.
- ▶ Section 415 of the Charter currently requires the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors to fill a vacancy in an elected office by appointment within 30 days, or the County Elections Officer must call a special election.
- ▶ The subcommittee's review and discussions with staff suggest that the current timeframe may not allow sufficient time to conduct a transparent and inclusive appointment process when the Board elects to fill a vacancy by appointment.

How Other Charter Counties Handle Vacancies

Alameda County - Board appointment authority, with gubernatorial appointment if the Board fails to act within 60 days.

El Dorado County - Vacancies on the Board of Supervisors are filled by election.

Fresno County - Hybrid model requiring special elections in most cases, with limited appointment authority during the final year of a term.

Los Angeles County - Board appointment authority for most countywide offices.

Orange County - Vacancy procedures vary depending on the time remaining in the term.

Sacramento County - Special election required early in a supervisor's term; other county offices may be filled by appointment.

San Bernardino County - Board must appoint within 60 days or call a special election.

San Diego County - Board may appoint a replacement or call a special election.

San Francisco - The Mayor appoints replacements for certain offices.

Santa Clara County - Board may appoint a replacement or call a special election.

Tehama County - Board must appoint a replacement within 90 days.

Staff Input & Operational Reality

- ▶ 30 days is often insufficient for a robust process
- ▶ Time needed for outreach, vetting, and public engagement
- ▶ Administrative coordination requires lead time
- ▶ More time supports legitimacy of outcome

Real-World Challenge

- ▶ Recent Sheriff vacancy required rapid process creation
- ▶ Compressed timeline limited outreach and engagement
- ▶ Heavy reliance on Board policy rather than Charter guidance
- ▶ Raised questions about consistency and transparency

Why This Matters

- ▶ Vacancies in elected office are high-stakes governance moments
- ▶ Public trust depends on transparency and fairness
- ▶ Unclear processes can create confusion or controversy
- ▶ Charter clarity ensures consistency across future Boards

What the Public Expects

- ▶ Clear notice of vacancy and application process
- ▶ Open and accessible application period
- ▶ Transparent vetting of candidates
- ▶ Opportunities for public input before decision

What More Time Enables

- ▶ Broad and equitable recruitment of applicants
- ▶ Thorough review of qualifications
- ▶ Public interviews and deliberation
- ▶ Meaningful community input

Subcommittee Recommendation

- ▶ Clarify Board must choose: appointment OR election
- ▶ Extend appointment timeline to 60 days
- ▶ Require at least one public input meeting
- ▶ Maintain fallback to special election

Why This Approach Works

- ▶ Improves transparency without over-regulating
- ▶ Aligns with best practices across counties
- ▶ Maintains Board flexibility
- ▶ Enhances public confidence in decisions

Proposed Amended Language

- ▶ Section 415. Vacancies: When a vacancy occurs in any elective county office, if the Board of Supervisors elects to fill the vacancy by appointment, the appointment shall be made within 60 days of the occurrence of the vacancy. Prior to making such appointment, the Board shall hold at least one publicly noticed meeting for the purpose of receiving public input regarding the appointment and qualifications of potential candidates.
- ▶ If the Board does not make an appointment within sixty days, the County Election Officer shall call a special election to fill the vacancy in accordance with applicable law.

Any Questions?

BRIEFING MEMO

TO: 2026 San Mateo County Charter Review Committee
FROM: Councilmember Eddie Flores, Chair, Subcommittee on Board Governance Practices
DATE: April 2, 2026
SUBJECT: Recommendation to Amend the County Charter to Require Periodic Review of Board Governance Processes and Practices

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Member	Role
Eddie Flores	Chair
Daniela Jongitud	Member
Lynette Garcia	Member
Talavou Aumavae	Member
Mark Haesloop	Member

ISSUE(S) CONSIDERED:

Whether the County Charter should be amended to add a new section requiring the Board of Supervisors to review, on a regular basis, the Board's governance processes and practices — including the creation and maintenance of a governance handbook, processes for amending that handbook, and inclusion of a demographic report.

INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS:

Our subcommittee undertook the following steps to research and evaluate this issue:

- Met with Board President Noelia Corzo and her office to understand the existing governance framework and the draft Governance Handbook prepared by her office (February 2026).
- Analyzed the draft "San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Governance Handbook" (February 2026), which addresses Board roles, norms, protocols, and expectations and establishes a framework for periodic review.
- Reviewed best practices in local government governance, including the Institute for Local Government (ILG) compilation of sample governance handbooks from California counties and agencies.
- Assessed the legal and structural relationship between a potential Charter amendment and the Board's existing authorities, including the Brown Act, the Public Records Act, the Board's Code of Conduct (adopted January 2025), and the district-based leadership rotation policy adopted in 2023.

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST CHARTER AMENDMENT:

Arguments for:

1. Transparency and accountability. A formal, recurring governance review creates a predictable, public forum for evaluating how the Board operates. The draft handbook's emphasis on open meetings, clear roles, and defined norms directly supports these aims.
2. Continuity and onboarding. A governance handbook serves as a practical resource for new and sitting supervisors, clarifying roles, expectations, and protocols. Periodic review ensures the document stays current as laws, community expectations, and Board membership change.
3. Equity and data-informed decision making. Embedding a demographic report into the regular review cycle aligns with the County's equity commitments and helps the Board identify disparities, track progress, and make data-informed improvements.
4. Legal risk reduction. Regular review of governance protocols helps keep practices aligned with evolving laws and guidance, reduces confusion about roles, and promotes orderly meetings — reducing the risk of Brown Act violations and other compliance issues.
5. Foundation already exists. Board President Corzo and her office have already completed substantial groundwork, including the draft Governance Handbook, which provides a solid foundation for codifying these practices.

Arguments against:

6. Administrative burden. Some may view a periodic review requirement as adding staff workload or bureaucratic process. However, the County Executive's Office already collaborates on agenda-setting and training in ways consistent with this framework, minimizing additional burden.
7. Sufficiency of existing norms. One might argue that existing policies (the Brown Act, the Code of Conduct, and Board resolutions) already address governance adequately. The subcommittee finds, however, that a Charter-level requirement provides durability, visibility, and accountability that no single policy currently provides.

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

The subcommittee strongly recommends that the Charter Review Committee approve moving forward with a Charter amendment to require periodic review of Board governance processes and practices, including adoption and maintenance of a governance handbook and inclusion of a demographic report.

The subcommittee recommends that the governance handbook and any associated demographic report be reviewed at minimum every two years, or more frequently at the discretion of the Board by majority action. This practice supports transparent, accountable, and effective county governance without altering or diminishing the legal powers of the Board or the Board President.

This approach is practical, legally sound, and aligned with work already undertaken by Board President Corzo and her office. With the draft Governance Handbook in hand, San Mateo County is well positioned to formalize a practice that is common among high-functioning local governments and that will serve residents for years to come.

DRAFT CHARTER LANGUAGE:

The following draft language is proposed for inclusion in the County Charter (subject to review by County Counsel). Specifically, the subcommittee recommends amending Section 206(a)(6) to replace the existing provision with the following:

RESOLVED:

That the Board of Supervisors place an amendment to the County Charter before the voters to Amend Section 206(a)(6) to replace the existing provision with the following:

“Adopt a Governance Handbook specifying the powers, duties, procedures, rules of operation, code of conduct, and ethical policies of the Board and County employees, and that the Governance Handbook shall be reviewed no less than every two years and appropriate amendments be adopted by the Board.”

Additional proposed Charter language elements (Section [X]. Periodic Review of Board Governance Practices):

- A. The Board of Supervisors shall adopt and maintain a Governance Handbook that documents Board roles, norms, protocols, and operating procedures consistent with this Charter and applicable law.
- B. The Board shall conduct a public review of its governance processes and practices at least once every two years, or more frequently at the discretion of the Board by majority action. The review shall include consideration of amendments to the Governance Handbook.
- C. The Board shall receive and publish, as part of its review, a demographic report and other relevant data to inform equitable, transparent, and effective governance.
- D. Nothing in this Section alters the legislative, budgetary, oversight, or leadership powers of the Board or the Board President.

EXTERNAL PRACTICES AND EXAMPLES:

Many California agencies have adopted governance handbooks to improve board performance and public trust. The Institute for Local Government (ILG) hosts a collection of sample governance handbooks from agencies across the state, including California counties. These examples demonstrate that codified governance practices are widely recognized as good practice and support high-functioning boards.

While each organization tailors its handbook to local needs, common features include board roles, meeting protocols, norms of conduct, training, and mechanisms for periodic review. The draft BOS Governance Handbook reflects those same elements and is appropriate to San Mateo County's context.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

- Board President's Office: The subcommittee met with Board President Noelia Corzo. Her office has been a constructive partner and has already produced the draft Governance Handbook, demonstrating leadership and momentum on this issue.

- County Executive and County Attorney: The draft handbook clearly identifies implementation responsibilities for these offices, which will help operationalize the review and keep it aligned with legal requirements and best practices.

OPERATIONAL IMPACTS:

- Staff workload: The County Executive's Office already collaborates with the Board President on agenda-setting and training. The draft handbook assigns roles consistent with existing practice, minimizing operational disruption while providing structure.
 - Training and orientation: A periodic review dovetails with existing orientation and professional development commitments, improving consistency without creating new mandates outside the Board's control.
 - Public engagement: Regular review provides a predictable venue for residents and stakeholders to offer input on governance norms, transparency, and access. The draft handbook emphasizes respectful public comment and open communication, which this amendment reinforces.
-

Attachment referenced:

- 2026 DRAFT BOS Governance Handbook (February 2026)
<https://sanmateocounty.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=15257765&GUID=544D56DB-B2F9-45B2-98B6-0CD5567D3CC8>

B R I E F I N G M E M O

Subcommittee on Board Governance Practices

*Recommendation to Amend the County Charter to Require
Periodic Review of Board Governance Processes and Practices*

April 2, 2026 | Presented to: 2026 San Mateo County Charter Review Committee | Chair: Councilmember Eddie Flores

Subcommittee Members: Eddie Flores (Chair) · Daniela Jongitud · Lynette Garcia · Talavou Aumavae · Mark Haesloop

Today's Presentation

What we'll cover in this briefing



Issue Considered

What question was the subcommittee asked to address?



Existing Groundwork

The draft Governance Handbook already prepared by Board President Corzo



Investigative Process

How we researched and evaluated the issue



Draft Charter Language

Proposed amendment language for Section 206(a)(6)



Arguments For & Against

A balanced view of the considerations



Formal Recommendation

The RESOLVED language and next steps

Issue Considered

Whether the County Charter should be amended to add a new section requiring the Board of Supervisors to review, on a regular basis, the Board's governance processes and practices.

The subcommittee charge specifically contemplated:

- 1 A Governance Handbook — Documenting Board roles, norms, protocols, and operating procedures
- 2 Processes for Amending the Handbook — Ensuring the document stays current via majority Board action
- 3 Inclusion of a Demographic Report — Embedding equity-focused data into the regular review cycle

Investigative Process

How the subcommittee researched and evaluated this issue

STEP 1 · MET WITH BOARD LEADERSHIP

Met directly with Board President Noelia Corzo and her office to understand the existing governance framework and the draft Governance Handbook (February 2026).

STEP 2 · ANALYZED THE DRAFT HANDBOOK

Reviewed the full draft "San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Governance Handbook" covering Board roles, norms, protocols, and a framework for periodic review.

STEP 3 · REVIEWED BEST PRACTICES

Examined the Institute for Local Government (ILG) compilation of sample governance handbooks from California counties and agencies across the state.

STEP 4 · ASSESSED LEGAL STRUCTURE

Evaluated the relationship between a proposed Charter amendment and existing authorities: the Brown Act, Public Records Act, Code of Conduct (Jan. 2025), and the district-based rotation policy (adopted 2023).

Arguments For & Against

✓ ARGUMENTS FOR

- Builds public trust through consistent, predictable transparency
- Continuity & onboarding for new and sitting supervisors
- Equity & data-informed governance via embedded demographic report
- Legal risk reduction — keeps practices aligned with evolving laws and Brown Act compliance
- Foundation already exists via Board President Corzo's draft handbook

✗ ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- Administrative burden — some may view periodic review as adding staff workload
- Sufficiency of existing norms — Brown Act, Code of Conduct, and Board resolutions already address governance

Subcommittee's Response:

The County Executive's Office already collaborates on agenda-setting and training consistent with this framework, minimizing additional burden. A Charter-level requirement provides durability, visibility, and accountability that no single existing policy currently provides.

Existing Groundwork: Draft Governance Handbook

Prepared by Board President Supervisor Noelia Corzo — February 2026

Board President Corzo and her office have already completed substantial groundwork — the subcommittee's recommendation builds directly on this existing work.

Purpose & Authority

Establishes the handbook's role as a living document subject to annual review

Governance Principles

Centers equity, transparency, accountability, and stewardship

Defined Roles

Board President, Vice President, County Executive, County Attorney

Board Operations & Norms

Agenda development, public comment, electronic communications, media

Orientation & Development

New supervisor onboarding and commitment to continuous improvement

Code of Conduct

References the Board's Code of Conduct adopted January 2025

 [Draft Handbook available in the Charter Review Committee Agenda Packet: smcgov.org/ceo/2026-charter-review-committee](https://smcgov.org/ceo/2026-charter-review-committee)

Policy Rationale

Why this Charter amendment should move forward

01 Transparency & Accountability

A formal, recurring process creates a predictable, public forum for evaluating how the Board operates — open meetings, clear roles, and defined norms.

02 Continuity & Onboarding

The handbook is a practical resource for new and sitting supervisors. Periodic review ensures it stays current as laws, community expectations, and Board membership change.

03 Equity & Data-Driven Decisions

Embedding a demographic report aligns with the County's equity commitments and helps the Board identify disparities and track progress over time.

04 Legal Risk Reduction

Regular review keeps practices aligned with evolving law, promotes orderly meetings, and reduces the risk of Brown Act missteps and other compliance issues.

Stakeholder Engagement

Board President Noelia Corzo

Board President's Office

The subcommittee met directly with President Corzo and her office. Her office has been a constructive and proactive partner — they have already produced the draft Governance Handbook, demonstrating clear leadership and momentum on this issue.

County Executive's Office

Implementation Partner

The draft handbook identifies the County Executive's Office as a key implementation partner for governance review, agenda-setting, and training — consistent with its existing role. This minimizes operational disruption.

County Attorney's Office

Legal Compliance

The draft handbook identifies the County Attorney's Office as responsible for advising on legal requirements. A Charter amendment would keep governance practices aligned with evolving laws and guidance.

Institute for Local Government (ILG)

External Best Practices

The ILG hosts a compilation of sample governance handbooks from California counties and agencies, confirming that codified governance practices are widely recognized as good practice for high-functioning boards.

Draft Charter Language

Subject to review by County Counsel

Proposed: Amend Section 206(a)(6) — Replace existing provision with:

"Adopt a Governance Handbook specifying the powers, duties, procedures, rules of operation, code of conduct, and ethical policies of the Board and County employees, and that the Governance Handbook shall be reviewed no less than every two years and appropriate amendments be adopted by the Board."

Additional Proposed Section [X] — Periodic Review of Board Governance Practices:

- A** . The Board shall adopt and maintain a Governance Handbook documenting Board roles, norms, protocols, and operating procedures consistent with this Charter and applicable law.
- B** . The Board shall conduct a public review at least every two years, or more frequently by majority action, including consideration of amendments to the Handbook.
- C** . The Board shall receive and publish a demographic report and other relevant data to inform equitable, transparent, and effective governance.
- D** . Nothing in this Section alters the legislative, budgetary, oversight, or leadership powers of the Board or the Board President.

Subcommittee on Board Governance Practices

RESOLVED

That the Board of Supervisors place an amendment to the County Charter before the voters to Amend Section 206(a)(6) to replace the existing provision with the following:

"Adopt a Governance Handbook specifying the powers, duties, procedures, rules of operation, code of conduct, and ethical policies of the Board and County employees, and that the Governance Handbook shall be reviewed no less than every two years and appropriate amendments be adopted by the Board."

**Minimum Every
2 Years**

*Or more frequently
by majority action*

**No Change to
Board Powers**

*Amendment clarifies
process, not authority*

**Builds on Work
Already Done**

*Handbook draft exists;
Board ready to act*

Why This Should Move Forward

1

Builds Public Trust

A Charter-based requirement assures residents the Board will routinely examine how it governs — in public, with clear documentation and pathways for improvement.

2

Reduces Legal & Operational Risk

Regular review keeps practices aligned with evolving laws, reduces confusion about roles, and promotes orderly meetings — reducing Brown Act risk.

3

Strengthens Equity & Outcomes

A demographic report and equity-focused analysis helps the Board identify gaps, track progress, and make data-informed improvements for all communities.

4

Work Is Already Underway

Board President Corzo's draft Governance Handbook provides a solid foundation. San Mateo County is well positioned to formalize what high-functioning local governments already do.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The subcommittee strongly recommends that the Charter Review Committee approve moving forward with a Charter amendment to require periodic review of Board governance processes and practices.

Adopt & Maintain

A Governance Handbook with roles, norms, and protocols

Review Schedule

At minimum every 2 years, or more frequently by majority vote

Public Report

Demographic report published as part of each review cycle

No Change to Powers

Board and Board President authorities remain fully intact

Attachment: 2026 DRAFT BOS Governance Handbook (February 2026)

smc.gov.org/ceo/2026-charter-review-committee (Charter Review Committee page — January 26 & February 3 Agenda Packets)

Presented by Councilmember Eddie Flores, Chair · Subcommittee on Board Governance Practices · April 2, 2026

Independent Redistricting Commission for SMC

Final Presentation to County Charter Committee
April 2, 2026

Recommended

that the Board of Supervisors place a Charter Amendment upon the Ballot for a vote of the people to Amend Article II section 202 of the County Charter to add that the decennial evaluation and modification of Supervisorial Districts in San Mateo County be performed by an “Independent Redistricting Commission” as defined by California Law and that the Commission select its map pursuant to State Law, the California Constitution and the US Constitution.

California Law

- Constitutional mandate of “One Person, One Vote”
- Districts should be equal in size (number of people) and representative without favor, prejudice or bias to an group, party or special interests
- County supervisorial district must be evaluated every ten years after the decennial federal census. New, revised or modified districts must be adopted in time for the next regular election cycle after January 1 and the year ending in “2”.
- The redistricting process is intended to be devoid of political, economic or other undue influences.
- CA law requires the BOS to adopt by resolution or ordinance district maps in lieu of an Independent Redistricting Commission

State Mandates Criteria for Drawing Maps

- Equal Population (one person, one vote) is priority one
- Not splitting or devaluing Communities of Interest
- Geographic integrity (keeping cities and census tracts intact)
- Easily identified, understood and not artificially interrupted (contiguous)
- To the extent practicable, compact

Any Redistricting Commission MUST comply with this criteria

County Options for Redistricting

- There are four options for a General Law or Charter county to draw district lines after a federal census:
 - Advisory Commission: drafts a new map subject to BOS approval. The BOS can accept/reject/modify proposed maps
 - Hybrid Commission: draft maps for BOS to choose. The BOS ability to modify maps is limited
 - Independent Commission: drafts a map which the BOS must approve
 - Board of Supervisors: creates a new map and approves it
- SMC used an Advisory Redistricting Commission in 2021, but the BOS pursued and approved a separate map

Interview with 2021 ARC Participants

- Interviewed Jim Lawrence (ARC Chair) and Supervisors Pine and Canepa
- Pine and Canepa were tasked by the BOS to form an Advisory Committee made up of volunteers and 3 per district for a total of 15 members. Pine commented that the criteria for members should be reviewed for a future committee
- The 2021 committee worked in a truncated timeline due to late arriving census data. They were able to submit two narrowly passing maps. The BOS had issues with both maps and proposed a new map created by a consultant.
- Both supervisors commented that the new map was not very different from the previous map.

Existing Independent Redistricting Committees

- Three counties used IRCs in 2021 to redistrict
 - San Francisco County (state law)
 - San Diego County (state law and in charter)
 - Los Angeles County (state law)
- Four counties will have IRCs in 2031 (all mandated by state law)
 - San Luis Obispo
 - Kern
 - Fresno
 - Riverside

Consistent Feedback from 2021 IRCs

- All three commissions felt the effort and cost was well justified and generated defensible maps. All three counties had a history of partisan maps.
- Commission membership varied
 - SF (9): BOS appointed one member from their district, Mayor appointed three, rest were election board recommendations
 - Los Angeles(14) and San Diego (14) had vetted candidates and then a random draw
- Cost of the Commission: as much as \$1 million dollars [note that this process always costs the counties money]
 - Mapping consultants
 - Salary of county employees tasked to commission
 - Public solicitation help
- Convene Commission six months before census data for training, organization, planning
- Post Mortem: process, maps and best practices for next Commission

9 Bay Area Counties Approach to Redistricting

	Number of Supervisors	Advisory, Hybrid, Independent or BOS	Makeup of Committee
Marin	5	BOS	
Sonoma	5	Advisory	19: 2 appointees per district and 9 at large
Napa	5	BOS : Election Office	
Solano	5	Advisory	15: 3 appointees from each district
San Mateo	5	Advisory	15: 3 at large from each district
San Francisco	11	Independent 2021	9: BOS (3), Mayor (3), Election board (3)
Santa Clara	5	Advisory	
Contra Costa	5	BOS	
Alameda	5	BOS	

Arguments for the County Charter Change (1/2)

- Precedent: San Diego County does have it in their County Charter
- Precedent: Those counties that could not get it instituted via a Charter change or ordinance were forced to do it via state law change.
- Removes the possible conflict of interest from the redistricting process when the map approval is in the hands of the Board of Supervisors
- Putting it in the County Charter allows the voters of San Mateo County to decide whether to make Redistricting independent of the BOS. Instituting an Independent Redistricting Commission can also be achieved via a state law, but that removes the ability for voters to weigh in.
- Empowering an IRC with autonomy and budget will result in an exacting and well considered Supervisorial District map. The BOS do not have the time to do the same job.

Arguments for the County Charter Change (2/2)

- The state attempted to make this law for all Charter Counties with SB1108 and was vetoed by the Governor due to concerns about costs to counties.
- Since 2021, the increase in high density housing in the county along the Cal Trans corridor and other issues for Communities of Interest will require careful consideration. A non-partisan commission is in the best position to evaluate new criteria.
- Leaving the vital job of drawing district lines to consultants disenfranchises the citizens and voters of the county. Consultants do not live and work here and do not have a frame of reference to understand the subtle issues of the population.
- Given the 2021 map barely changed, district lines have not changed in 20 years while the county has changed. An IRC would objectively review those changes and produce a more relevant map.

Arguments Against a County Charter Change (1/2)

- Why change something that is not broken?
- This does not belong in the County Charter
 - This can be done by ordinance.
 - This can be done by lobbying for a state law.
- The cost of an IRC to do the job correctly can be as much as \$1 million +
- An effective IRC will need dedicated county resources, similar to the Civil Grand Jury. The members of the IRC need to be paid a stipend for their service.
- A careful process is required to make sure committee members are not partisan actors.

Arguments Against a County Charter Change (2/2)

- The committee members must be prepared for a significant time commitment. San Francisco noted that there was significant harassment of committee members.
- It's likely that a majority of voters are happy with the current district lines and letting the BOS manage the redistricting process.

Breaking Down the Recommendation

1. Amend the County Charter, Article II, Section 202 to create an Independent Redistricting Committee with similar language to the section in the San Diego County charter.

Section 400.1: Redistricting Commission. After each federal decennial census, the supervisorial districts of the County shall be reapportioned in the manner specified by general law by a redistricting commission established pursuant to the California Elections code. The supervisorial district boundaries shall be drawn in such a way that the area of at least three districts shall include unincorporated territory with two of the districts having geographic area that is predominantly outside of the incorporated cities as population will permit. (Amended, effective 11-6-18)

2. If approved by this committee and the Board of Supervisors, submit to the voters for the November 2026 election.
3. If passed by the voters, the BOS must via ordinance define the commission and basic processes by which it will do the job of redistricting. This should include commission definition, assignment of members, budget, county resources.

Letters of Support for this Charter Change

- **Jim Lawrence - Chair of the 2021 Advisory Redistricting Committee**
- **League of Women Voters of San Mateo County, including**
 - **ACLU**
 - **Thrive**
 - **San Francisco Peninsula People Power**
 - **Belle Haven Empowered**
 - **Belmont Neighbors Against Racism**