



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA DATE: May 19, 2026
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Omar Rascon, Office of the County Executive
REVIEWED BY: Carla Kacmar, Office of the County Executive
SUBJECT: Request from the Office of the County Executive to Receive the Commissions' Biennial Review Survey Findings and Provide Direction to Staff.

RECOMMENDATION: Receive and discuss findings from the 2026 Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCCs) Biennial Survey and provide policy direction on the next phase of governance improvements.

Staff recommends:

- Implementing the formal Sunset Review Framework
- Utilization of the Board and Commission Ad Hoc Subcommittee to conduct structured reviews
- Pausing new appointments to BCCs, except as needed to maintain quorum
- Directing staff to further explore survey findings and return to the Board with more information at a later date.

SUMMARY: Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCCs) are a core component of the County's governance structure, supporting public engagement, policy input, and subject matter expertise.

As part of the County's ongoing governance improvement work, staff conducted a biennial survey and collected reports from advisory bodies to assess participation, vacancies, operational consistency, and support needs. (Attachment #1)

Findings indicate that while commissions provide significant value, the system has developed without a consistent governance framework, resulting in variability in operations, support, and effectiveness. Key findings indicate persistent challenges

related to vacancies, quorum, onboarding, and administrative consistency. (Attachment #2)

This report presents those findings and outlines a structured path forward, including a proposed Sunset Review Framework (Attachment #3), standardized onboarding and training, and a more coordinated recruitment and governance model.

In alignment with Resolution 2022-80 (Attachment #4), multiple commissions are scheduled to sunset in August 2026. Staff recommends using this milestone, along with survey findings, to conduct a comprehensive and consistent governance review.

Staff is also seeking to temporarily pause new appointments to BCCs, except where required to maintain quorum, to allow for coordinated implementation of governance improvements.

For consistency, this work is intended to transition the County from an ad hoc commission model to a standardized, performance-based governance framework supported by standardized processes and clear accountability.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND:

Prior Board Direction and Implementation Phases

On November 28, 2023, the Board of Supervisors accepted the Strategic Plan for Enhancing Diversity and Equity in Marin County Boards and Commissions, based on findings from the 2023 Equity Survey. The Board directed staff to advance a phased governance improvement strategy focused on diversity, operational effectiveness, recruitment, and long-term sustainability.

Implementation has progressed as follows:

Phase 1: Needs Assessment and Data Collection (Completed)

Staff conducted the 2023 Equity Survey to establish baseline data on demographic representation, recruitment barriers, participation trends, and operational challenges.

Phase 2: Board and Commission Review (Completed/Ongoing)

Staff evaluated commissions for activity level, recruitment challenges, quorum issues, and mission alignment. The Board approved the sunset of five commissions in 2024.

Phase 3: Standardized Training and Onboarding (Current Phase)

Staff is advancing development of standardized onboarding and training protocols, including Brown Act compliance, ethics, parliamentary procedure, and role clarity.

Phase 4: Feedback Loops and Governance Review (Current/Next Phase)

Biennial reporting has been established to improve transparency and accountability. Staff now proposes formalizing governance review through performance measures and sunset criteria.

Phase 5: Outreach, Recruitment, and Community Engagement (Next Phase)

Future work will focus on strengthening outreach, improving applicant diversity, and supporting member retention.

Current Conditions and Biennial Findings

The County currently supports 54 BCCs with approximately 431 authorized seats, of which 57 are vacant.

Multiple commissions report ongoing recruitment challenges and quorum impacts, affecting their ability to operate consistently.

Key findings include:

- **Vacancies and Recruitment Challenges:** Difficulty attracting and retaining qualified applicants
- **Quorum and Meeting Consistency:** Ongoing quorum issues impacting operations
- **Training and Role Clarity:** Lack of standardized onboarding and clear expectations
- **Technology and Administrative Support:** Inconsistent tools, processes, and staff support

Governance and Policy Alignment

Bylaws and Mission Alignment

Several commissions report outdated bylaws and unclear governance structures. Staff recommends a coordinated bylaws review to improve consistency, clarify roles, and align with County priorities.

Sunset Review Framework

Staff recommends implementation of a formal Sunset Review Framework (Attachment #3) to ensure commissions remain active, mission-aligned, and effective.

The framework establishes:

- Evaluation criteria
- Performance measures
- Standardized review timelines

This approach creates a consistent, transparent process for evaluating commissions and making informed recommendations to the Board.

Subcommittee Governance Role

Staff recommends utilizing the Board and Commission Subcommittee to conduct detailed governance reviews, including:

- Evaluation of commission performance
- Review of bylaws and mission alignment
- Assessment of structural and operational effectiveness

The Subcommittee would provide recommendations to the full Board for final consideration, ensuring a focused and consistent review process.

Appointments and Recruitment Strategy

To support a coordinated governance review, staff seeks direction on temporarily pausing new appointments to BCCs, except where necessary to maintain quorum.

This approach would allow the County to:

- Align recruitment with updated governance structures
- Implement standardized onboarding and training
- Complete bylaws modernization and sunset review processes
- Ensure a more strategic and consistent appointment process

Recruitment would resume following Board direction and completion of key governance improvements.

Operational Capacity and Support

Additional staffing resources approved in June 2025 have increased capacity to support recruitment coordination, onboarding, compliance, and governance consistency.

This expanded capacity positions the County to transition from assessment to sustained implementation of governance improvements.

Discretionary & Non-discretionary Committees

Discretionary Boards, Commissions, and Committees are required to submit a biennial report, as well as some non-discretionary bodies pursuant to statute or bylaws. (Attachment #5)

Conclusion

The biennial findings confirm the need for a more consistent, structured, and sustainable governance model for Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

The proposed framework, combined with targeted policy direction, positions the County to strengthen accountability, improve operational effectiveness, and better align advisory bodies with County priorities.

The next step is Board direction on the proposed governance approach.

POLICY FRAMEWORK: Boards, Commissions, and Committees serve as formal advisory bodies established by ordinance, resolution, or policy direction of the Board of Supervisors. Future changes related to commission structure, bylaws, sunset review, membership expectations, or support standards require Board policy direction and, where applicable, legal review by County Counsel and formal amendments to governing documents.

EQUITY IMPACT SUMMARY: Marin County boards, commissions, and committees are a primary pathway for community members to shape public policy, advise on service delivery, and ensure County decisions reflect the lived experiences of residents across all districts. Supporting and sustaining these bodies advances equity by increasing civic access and representation for communities that have historically faced barriers to participation in government—including low-income communities, communities of color, LGBTQ+ residents, disabled residents, immigrants, and other underserved populations. When commissions are fully staffed, well-supported, and reflective of Marin’s diversity, they can elevate community-informed priorities, identify inequities in programs and outcomes, and strengthen trust and transparency in County decision-making.

COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: The Biennial Survey was administered through departmental staff liaisons in coordination with commission leadership, allowing staff to collect operational data while incorporating commission-level feedback regarding participation, support needs, and governance challenges.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Clerk of the Board staff compiled and analyzed the results to identify common themes, operational challenges, and opportunities for improvement, which informed the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

CONTRACT RENEWALS / PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES: Not applicable.

CONTRACT RISKS: Not applicable.

CEQA ANALYSIS: Not applicable.

FISCAL, FACILITY & STAFFING ANALYSIS: There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with receiving this report. Future actions—particularly related to technology enhancements, staffing, or training programs—may have fiscal implications and will be brought to the Board for consideration as proposals are developed.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Receive the report and provide no further direction.
2. Direct staff to return with specific implementation proposals and resource recommendations.

3. Refer specific governance issues to the Board's Boards and Commissions Subcommittee for further review.

ESTIMATED TIME (in minutes): 60

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1 - Biennial Review Survey Results (Full Package)
- Attachment 2 - Biennial Review Survey Analysis
- Attachment 3 - Sunset Review Framework
- Attachment 4 - Resolution 2022-80
- Attachment 5 - Discretionary and Non-Discretionary Committees Required to Submit Biennial Survey
- Attachment 6 – Presentation