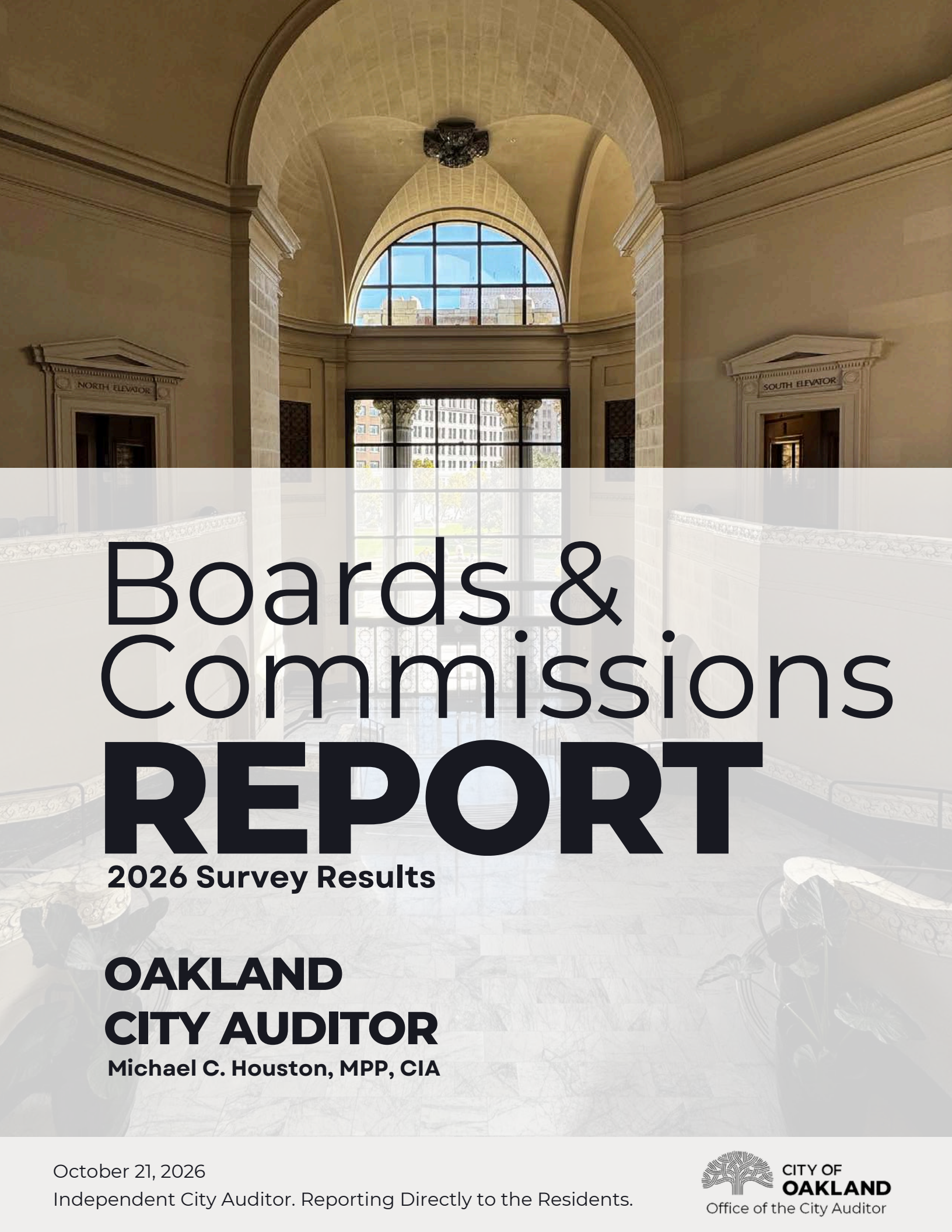




Boards & Commissions **REPORT**

2026 Survey Results

**OAKLAND
CITY AUDITOR**

Michael C. Houston, MPP, CIA

October 21, 2026

Independent City Auditor. Reporting Directly to the Residents.



**CITY OF
OAKLAND**
Office of the City Auditor



CITY HALL · ONE FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA 4TH FLOOR · OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA · 94612

Michael C. Houston, MPP, CIA
City Auditor

(510) 238-3378
FAX (510) 238-7640
TDD (510) 238-3254
www.oaklandauditor.com

October 21, 2026

RE: Boards & Commissions Survey Results

Dear Residents of Oakland, Mayor Lee, Council President Jenkins, Members of the City Council, City Attorney Richardson, Interim City Administrator Lake, City Clerk Reed, and Members of City Boards and Commissions,

In June 2026, our Office issued surveys to City of Oakland board and commission members and City staff liaisons to better understand their experiences and identify opportunities to strengthen the City's board and commission system. We developed these surveys based on past work that has been done to identify challenges in volunteer public oversight boards and commissions, both nationally and in Oakland. Our survey received 82 responses from the Boards and Commissions Member Survey and 14 from the Staff Liaison Survey, for response rates of approximately 31 and 48 percent, respectively. Respondents covered 29 different boards and commissions.

Overall, survey respondents indicated that they feel their boards and commissions fulfill their roles, but had concerns about staff capacity, lack of access to information, and limited influence and City Council access. Additionally, board and commission members' specific duties and staff's role in supporting members could be better defined, and short- and long-term objectives are not always clear. Despite challenges, board and commission members and staff liaisons reported positively on their experiences.

The enclosed report provides aggregate results of both surveys, commonalities between the results, and actionable insights that respondents gave in open-ended comments, suggesting how the City could improve recruitment, onboarding and training, staff resources, and access to information, among other areas. Appendices detail our methodology and include information on each board or commission's authorizing ordinance/measure, the year it was established, current membership makeup, and the availability of information such as bylaws and meeting minutes.

We included background information in the report on academic research on boards and commissions. Research has found that formal training or orientation for new board and commission members helps to ensure that they have the skills and information necessary to advise government officials, and helps

members understand their role and the basic procedures that affect public policy.^{1,2,3} We also included summary information from past reports evaluating Oakland's boards and commissions. Notably, our survey results echo earlier studies and recommendations for improvement. Small changes to improve communication with board applicants, standardize onboarding, clarify commission goals, reduce barriers to participation, and recognize the service of board and commission members and their staff liaisons could go a long way towards institutionalizing a culture of community engagement in our government.

I am grateful to the board and commission members and staff liaisons that responded to our survey to help us better understand their experiences. I am also thankful for the cooperation and insight of the City Clerk's Office, who reviewed our survey questions and facilitated outreach to our survey population.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "MCHouston", with a stylized, cursive script.

Michael C. Houston
City Auditor

¹ George W. Dougherty, Jr. and Jennifer Easton, "Appointed Public Volunteer Boards: Exploring the Basics of Citizen Participation Through Boards and Commissions," *The American Review of Public Administration* 41, no. 5 (September 2011): 519-541. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074010385838>.

² William A. Brown, "Board Development Practices and Competent Board Members: Implications for Performance," *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* 17, no. 3 (April 2007): 301-17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.151>. While this article focuses on board membership for non-profits, it notes that training's influence on performance has been found consistently across literature on volunteer and human resources management.

³ Karen L. Hinton, "Perceived Training Needs of Volunteers in Government Service," *Public Personnel Management* 24, no. 4 (December 1995): 531-34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009102609502400>.



REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Boards and Commissions Survey: Opportunities to Strengthen Board Effectiveness and Better Support Board Members and City Staff Liaisons

Background

The City of Oakland has over 30 active boards and commissions. These volunteer bodies provide a platform for residents to participate in the policymaking process and highlight issues of concern to the City. In June 2026, the Office of the City Auditor issued surveys to board and commission members and the City staff liaisons who support them to better understand their experiences and identify opportunities to strengthen how these bodies operate. We received responses from 82 members and 14 staff liaisons (with response rates of 31 percent and 48 percent, respectively), representing a wide range of the City's boards and commissions.

What We Found

While many boards and commissions are operating well, there are several areas of improvement that could increase the effectiveness of boards and improve the experience of both board members and staff liaisons. Recruitment and both member and staff training are inconsistent across bodies, with a plurality of board and commission members (43 percent) reporting their onboarding and training prepared them "slightly well" or "not at all well." Board members and staff liaisons also cited slow appointment processes as a factor extending board vacancies. Insufficient City staff capacity was the top concern cited by both board members and staff liaisons. Members expressed uncertainty about their board's influence over City decision-making, with 33 percent of members characterizing their board's relationship with the City Council as "weak" or "very weak," compared to 17 percent saying "strong" or "very strong." Many members identified unclear board duties and goals as a factor inhibiting boards from running effectively. Members and staff also cited difficulties accessing information pertinent to carrying out their board's duties. Despite these challenges, two-thirds of members reported feeling heard and valued in their role and would recommend City board service to a friend, and the majority of staff liaisons reported feeling satisfied with their role supporting their board.

What We Recommend

This report is informational. Survey respondents provided actionable insights to improve board recruitment and onboarding processes, strengthen staff capacity and support, standardize how board recommendations are communicated to the City Council, clarify board objectives, improve boards' access to key information, and make board service more accessible and rewarding for members.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
BACKGROUND	7
Local Boards and Commissions Commonly Face Challenges in Recruitment, Training, and Effectiveness	8
Previous Reports on Oakland Boards and Commissions Found Similar Challenges Relating to Training and Effectiveness	9
SURVEY RESULTS	11
ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS	12
Recruitment, Onboarding, and Training	12
Staff Capacity	13
Influence Over City Decisions	13
Board and Commission Objectives and Scope	13
Access to Information	14
Member and Staff Engagement	14
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS	15
Survey Section 1: Background	15
Survey Section 2: Recruitment & Application Experience	16
Members Are Primarily Motivated By a Desire to Give Back to The Community	16
Board and Commission Members Came to their Role through Various Channels, and Members See Room to Improve Outreach and Application Timelines	17
Survey Section 3: Onboarding & Training	18
Members Reported Mixed Experiences With Onboarding Preparedness and Role Clarity	18
Members Value Specific Trainings, Including Trainings on Board or Commission Duties and Bylaws	19
Members Report Having Some Level of Subject Matter Expertise, Even When Professional Experience is Not Required	20
Survey Section 4: Meetings & Operations	22
Respondents Praised Fellow Members and Cited Specific Aspects of Their Boards' Operations as Highlights	24
Members Cited a Variety of Operational Challenges and Identified Areas for Improvement ..	25
Survey Sections 5 and 6: Influence and Member Experience	25
Respondents Were Divided When Characterizing the Level of Influence of Their Board or Commission	26

Members Have a Generally Positive Relationship With City Staff, But Have Concerns About Capacity.....	28
Members’ Top Concerns Related to Limited Resources and Lack of Influence Over City Decisions	29
Respondents Reported to Be Generally Satisfied With Their Service, Despite Concerns	30
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS STAFF SURVEY RESULTS	32
Survey Section 1: Background.....	32
Survey Section 2: Onboarding & Training	34
Survey Section 3: Meetings & Operations	37
Responsive Board and Commission Members and Experienced Chairs Cited as Operational Highlights	38
Access to Information and City Leadership Cited as Operational Challenges	38
Survey Section 4: Relations with Board and Commission Members	39
Survey Section 5: Effectiveness & Challenges	40
Staff Have Mixed Confidence In Their Support Capacity, But Broadly Believe Boards and Commissions Are Fulfilling Their Purpose.....	40
Staff Play an Instrumental Role in the Recommendation Process	43
Challenges Identified by Staff Included Insufficient Staff Liaison Capacity and Lack of Funding ..	43
Survey Section 6: Satisfaction & General Feedback	45
CONCLUSION.....	46
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	46
APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY	47
Boards & Commissions Member Survey.....	47
Boards & Commissions Staff Survey	48
Omitted Boards & Commissions	49
APPENDIX B: MEMBER SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS	50
APPENDIX C: LIST OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS REPRESENTED IN MEMBER SURVEY	52
APPENDIX D: LIST OF CITY OF OAKLAND BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.....	53
APPENDIX E: COPIES OF SURVEY INSTRUMENTS.....	67
Boards & Commissions Member Survey Instrument.....	67
Boards & Commissions Staff Survey Instrument	77

TABLE OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Respondents Varied In Their Years of Experience Serving on City Boards or Commissions, With Around 60 Percent Having Three or Less Years of Experience	15
Exhibit 2: Nearly 80 Percent of Respondents Devote Three or Fewer Hours to Board or Commission Service Per Week	16
Exhibit 3: Respondents Selected Giving Back to the Community, Interest in the Subject Area, and Influencing Local Policy as Top Motivations for Applying to a Board or Commission Position.....	17
Exhibit 4: Respondents Heard About Their Position Through Various Channels, Particularly Through Fellow Members, Personal Network, and Self-Motivation	17
Exhibit 5: 43 Percent of Respondents Reported Their Onboarding and Training Prepared Them “Not At All Well” or Only “Slightly Well” For Their Role.....	19
Exhibit 6: Nearly Half of Respondents Described Their Responsibilities as “Very” or “Extremely” Defined.....	19
Exhibit 7: Respondents Indicated They Would Have Most Liked to Have Received Trainings on Board Duties and Bylaws, General City Government Operations, and Board-Specific Subject Matter.....	20
Exhibit 8: Nearly Half of Respondents Indicated Relevant Professional or Volunteer Experience Was Either Expected or Required for Board Membership	21
Exhibit 9: 36 Percent of Respondents Indicated Having Professional or Specialized Experience in the Subject Area of Their Board or Commission.....	22
Exhibit 10: Nearly 90 Percent of Respondents Agreed Their Board’s General Meetings Were “About The Right Frequency”	23
Exhibit 11: Just Over Half of Respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed That the Processes and Procedures of their Board or Commission Are Efficient and Effective.....	23
Exhibit 12: Nearly 80 Percent of Respondents Reported General Meetings of Their Board or Commission Had Been Cancelled Twice or Less Within the Past Year	24
Exhibit 13: Among Respondents Who Reported Making Recommendations, 46 Percent Said They Were Sometimes Adopted.....	26
Exhibit 14: Only 34 Percent of Respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed That the Work of Their Board or Commission Made a Meaningful Difference in City Council Decisions	26
Exhibit 15: Nearly One-Third of Respondents Characterized Their Board’s Relationship With The City Council as Weak or Very Weak	27
Exhibit 16: Just Over Half of Respondents Believed Their Board or Commission was “Fully” or “Mostly” Fulfilling Its Purpose, While One-Third of Respondents Believed Their Board or Commission Was “Somewhat” Fulfilling Its Purpose.....	28
Exhibit 17: Nearly Three-Fourths of Respondents Rated City Staff’s Level of Support as Supportive or Very Supportive	29

Exhibit 18: Respondents Most Frequently Cited Lack of City Staff Capacity, Lack of Influence Over City Decisions, and Lack of Funding or Resources As Their Top Concerns	30
Exhibit 19: The Majority of Respondents Reported Feeling Heard and Valued in Their Role and Indicated They Would Recommend Serving On a City Board/Commission to a Friend	31
Exhibit 20: Half of Respondents Indicated Having Between One and Three Years of Experience Serving As a Staff Liaison	32
Exhibit 21: Staff Liaisons Reported Spending Between 1 and 12 Hours a Week on Boards and Commissions, and Varied on the Hours They Would Like to Devote, Given More Time	33
Exhibit 22: Over Half of Respondents Reported Their Workload As a Staff Liaison Was Only Slightly or Moderately Manageable Alongside Other Duties.....	34
Exhibit 23: The Majority of Respondents Indicated They Received a Formal Handoff From the Previous Staff Liaisons, But It Varied In Thoroughness	35
Exhibit 24: Respondents Who Received Training Related to Serving as a Staff Liaison Rated It as Good or Neutral	35
Exhibit 25: Over Two-Thirds of Staff Reported Receiving Recurring Trainings Related to Their Role	36
Exhibit 26: Most Respondents Described Their Responsibilities as Moderately or Very Defined..	36
Exhibit 27: Half of Respondents Reported Only Sometimes or Rarely Having Enough Capacity to Adequately Support Their Board’s Meetings.....	38
Exhibit 28: Respondents Broadly Rated Their Working Relationship With Their Board and Commission Members as Positive	39
Exhibit 29: Nearly All Respondents Rated Their Board and Commission Members As Having a Moderately Clear Understanding of Their Role in Supporting Members.....	40
Exhibit 30: Nearly Two-Thirds of Respondents Reported Only Feeling Slightly or Somewhat Like They Had Sufficient Authority and Access to Information to Effectively Support Their Board or Commission.....	41
Exhibit 31: Three-Fourths of Respondents Reported Holding An Annual Retreat Was or Would Be Helpful.....	41
Exhibit 32: Most Staff Liaisons Indicated Their Board or Commission Was Fully or Mostly Fulfilling Its Intended Purpose.....	42
Exhibit 33: Staff Liaisons Mostly Indicated Alignment Between the Priorities of their Boards and Commissions and the Priorities of their Department/the City.....	42
Exhibit 34: Staff Most Commonly Assisted Members During the Recommendation Process By Providing Administrative Assistance and Guiding Board and Commission Members Through The Drafting Process	43
Exhibit 35: Respondents Most Frequently Cited Lack of Funding or Resources and Insufficient Staff Liaison Capacity As Their Top Concerns.....	44

Exhibit 36: Three-Fourths of Staff Reported Feeling Satisfied or Very Satisfied With Their Staff Liaison Role	45
Exhibit 37: 12 Boards and Commissions Were Omitted From Surveys Due to Being Inactive, Operating Independently of the City, or For Other Reasons.....	49
Exhibit 38: Nearly Two-Thirds of Respondents Identified as a Woman	50
Exhibit 39: 43 Percent of Respondents Identified as White and One-Third of Respondents Identified as Black or African American.....	50
Exhibit 40: Nearly One-Third of Respondents Were 65 or Older	51
Exhibit 41: Board Members From 29 Different Boards and Commissions Were Represented in Boards & Commissions Member Survey.....	52
Exhibit 42: Oakland Boards and Commissions Vary in Their Purpose, Membership Requirements, and Availability of Relevant Documents	54

INTRODUCTION

The City of Oakland has more than 30 active boards and commissions. These bodies provide a platform for Oakland residents to participate in the policymaking process and highlight issues of concern to the City. Boards and commissions serve a variety of purposes — some provide direct oversight of City tax measures, while others advise the City on how to improve specific government functions in areas such as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, community policing, and cultural affairs. Board and commission members are appointed to their roles as volunteers, and they are often experts and/or advocates in their boards' areas of focus. One City staff member ("staff liaison") is typically assigned to help facilitate each board and commission.

In June 2026, the Office of the City Auditor issued surveys to City of Oakland board and commission members and staff liaisons to better understand their experiences and identify opportunities to strengthen the City's board and commission system. We created two survey tools— one was distributed to board and commission members, and the other to the staff liaisons who support City boards and commissions. We received responses from 82 members and 14 staff liaisons.¹ Survey topics included onboarding and training, meeting operations and effectiveness, relations with the City, and persistent challenges.²

Throughout the report, we have included select quotes from participants' open-ended responses. These quotes appear in boxes like the one below.



Quote: *I deeply enjoy being of service to my community. Influencing city policy and pushing for improvements... is a privilege and an honor.*

¹ See the Methodology section in Appendix A for additional details.

² See Appendix E for copies of the full survey instruments.

BACKGROUND

Oakland has over 30 active boards and commissions, formed through a variety of mechanisms and for varied purposes.³ While each board has different requirements for who can serve, they generally require members to be Oakland residents.

According to Article VI, Section 601 of the Oakland City Charter, the City Council “may create by ordinance such operational, advisory, appellate or rule-making boards and commissions as may be required for the proper operation of any function or agency of the City.” The City Council may also “prescribe their function, duties, powers, jurisdiction, meeting frequency, standards for conducting long-term planning, and the number of board and commission members, their terms, compensation and reimbursement for expenses.”⁴ Members of boards and commissions are appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by the vote of five members of the City Council.

Boards and commissions are typically staffed by one City of Oakland staff liaison from the City department most closely associated with the body’s subject matter or the City Administrator’s Office. Staff liaisons’ roles vary depending on the body, but they typically provide administrative support through tasks such as managing meeting agendas, uploading meeting minutes, updating board webpages, and recruiting for vacant positions.

Boards and commissions vary in their level of authority, with some performing specific oversight duties, and others advising the City on specific topics.

- **Boards and commissions with primarily oversight duties** are typically formed after Oakland residents adopt a specific ballot measure, and they help oversee the respective programs created via these ballot measures. While they do not have legal authority over how the tax funds are spent, they can typically conduct independent research, listen to constituent priorities, and provide feedback and recommendations to City departments and agencies. Some of these bodies are expected to report to the City Council at least once per year.
- **Other boards and commissions act in an advisory fashion**, advising City Council and staff on issue-specific policies and programs, serving as a resource to City staff, making recommendations to City Council, and voicing the concerns of the public to City leadership.

Most boards and commissions are established via specific City ordinances and resolutions. Seven are codified within the Oakland City Charter: the Independent Redistricting Commission,⁵ the Public Ethics Commission,⁶ the Police Commission,⁷ the Board of Port Commissioners,⁸ the

³ See Appendix D for a list of City boards and commissions, with information on each board’s purpose, authorizing legislation, membership, and other details.

⁴ Oakland City Charter, Art. VI, Sec. 601

⁵ Oakland City Charter, Art. II, Sec. 220

⁶ Oakland City Charter, Art. VI, Sec. 603

⁷ Oakland City Charter, Art. VI, Sec. 604

⁸ Oakland City Charter, Art. VII, Sec. 701

Children’s Fund Planning and Oversight Committee,⁹ the Children’s Initiative Citizens’ Oversight Commission,¹⁰ and the Oakland Municipal Employees’ Retirement System Board of Administration.¹¹

Local Boards and Commissions Commonly Face Challenges in Recruitment, Training, and Effectiveness

Appointed public volunteer boards and commissions are among the most common mechanisms for citizen participation. Across the country, boards and commissions help provide greater community input into local government decisions. At their best, local boards and commissions may increase representation, leverage community expertise, and increase the credibility of government decision-making; however, at worst, “boards may also be used as a symbolic means of participation or to placate or co-opt a vocal public.”¹²

Nationally, research has found that a common challenge local governments face is recruiting people to serve on boards and commissions.¹³ Residents often need persuading, or informal recruitment by city leaders and current board and commission members, to serve, particularly when expertise is required.^{14, 15}

⁹ Oakland City Charter, Art. XIII, Sec. 1305

¹⁰ Oakland City Charter, Art. XVI, Sec. 1601

¹¹ Oakland City Charter, Art. XX, Sec. 2002. Measure EE, passed in 2014, authorized the City Council to terminate the Oakland Municipal Employees’ Retirement System, which the City Council did by way of a unanimous vote on Ordinance 13290 CMS on January 20, 2015. The ordinance specifies that the Board shall purchase life annuities for payments equal to the benefits due to the retired members of OMERS, provide for any other outstanding liabilities, and that remaining assets shall be held in a reserve account for liabilities of OMERS until the last former member or beneficiary dies. As such, the Board is effectively defunct.

¹² George W. Dougherty, Jr. and Jennifer Easton, “Appointed Public Volunteer Boards: Exploring the Basics of Citizen Participation Through Boards and Commissions,” *The American Review of Public Administration* 41, no. 5 (September 2011): 519-541. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074010385838>.

¹³ Dougherty and Easton, “Appointed Public Volunteer Boards.” Although the academic literature on boards and commissions is relatively limited, and much of it focuses on very small jurisdictions, it helps shed light on the common experiences and challenges local volunteer boards face.

¹⁴ John R. Baker, “Recruitment to Boards and Commission in Small Cities: Individual versus Contextual Explanations,” *State and Local Government Review* 38, no. 3 (2006): 142-55. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4355430>.

¹⁵ Dougherty and Easton (2011), in a survey of 274 municipalities in Southwest Pennsylvania, found that more than half “have trouble finding people to serve” on volunteer public bodies, particularly in smaller towns. Baker (2006), in a survey of volunteer board members in 60 small cities, found that three quarters of board members were asked to serve, usually by an elected official or a current board member. Among those who self-recruited to serve on a board, their primary motivations were dissatisfaction with city leaders and the desire to share their expertise.

Research has also found that formal training or orientation for new members is often lacking,¹⁶ though formalized training helps to ensure they have the skills and information necessary to advise government officials.^{17,18,19}

More broadly, appointed volunteer boards are most likely to be effective if they have the information necessary to advise government officials and influence public policy.²⁰ Effectiveness is also increased when members understand their role and the basic procedures that affect public policy.²¹

Previous Reports on Oakland Boards and Commissions Found Similar Challenges Relating to Training and Effectiveness

Past reports on Oakland's boards and commissions echo the findings in national research. In 2010, the League of Women Voters of Oakland published a report evaluating the functions, operations, and value of Oakland's boards and commissions. The report stated that Oakland's advisory boards required a large amount of City staff time, board members often did not receive adequate training and orientation, and the City Council and Mayor did not always respond to advisory board recommendations.^{22, 23}

In 2017, the Office of the City Auditor commissioned a report focused on improving the management and operations of Oakland's boards and commissions. The report referenced the

¹⁶ Dougherty and Easton (2011) found that only 24 percent of the boards surveyed in their study provided board members with formal training or orientation.

¹⁷ Dougherty and Easton, "Appointed Public Volunteer Boards."

¹⁸ William A. Brown, "Board Development Practices and Competent Board Members: Implications for Performance," *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* 17, no. 3 (April 2007): 301-17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.151>. While this article focuses on board membership for nonprofits, it notes that training's influence on performance has been found consistently across literature on volunteer and human resources management.

¹⁹ Karen L. Hinton, "Perceived Training Needs of Volunteers in Government Service," *Public Personnel Management* 24, no. 4 (December 1995): 531-34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009102609502400>.

²⁰ Dougherty and Easton, "Appointed Public Volunteer Boards."

²¹ Dougherty and Easton, "Appointed Public Volunteer Boards."

²² League of Women Voters of Oakland, *Boards and Commissions in Oakland: Findings and Recommendations from the League of Women Voters of Oakland* (Oakland, 2010).

²³ The report also noted how boards varied widely in how they functioned. For example, while some met regularly, others often failed to meet quorum and lacked updated web information on meeting schedules and minutes.

League of Women Voters' report, and found that many boards were not operating efficiently due to a lack of training and communication issues with staff liaisons.^{24, 25}

The League of Women Voters published a follow-up assessment report of the City's boards and commissions in 2021, focusing on nine that specifically performed oversight duties. The report highlighted that these oversight bodies required more resources and external support to carry out their work effectively. The most effective bodies held annual retreats and followed pre-set strategic plans, while the least effective bodies did not appear to meet regularly.²⁶ While the assessment found that boards and commissions were operating more effectively than they were in 2010, there was still more work needed to strengthen them.²⁷

This survey aims to update the status of research on Oakland boards and commissions. We incorporated these past findings and recommendations in our survey design. This report builds on previous research by using two separate survey instruments to capture the perspectives of both board and commission members and their staff liaisons.

²⁴ Jason Y. Siu, *Improving the Works of Boards & Commissions* (Oakland: City of Oakland, Office of the City Auditor, 2017).

²⁵ This report's recommendations included creating a more comprehensive ethics training for board members, creating specialized training on board management for chairs and vice chairs, increasing the applicant pool through the use of social media, creating an annual reporting requirement, and creating an attendance policy.

²⁶ Pajouabla Monica Lee, *An Assessment of Oakland Oversight Bodies: Progress, Gaps, and Recommendations for Improved Functions* (Oakland: League of Women Voters of Oakland, 2021).

²⁷ Lee, *An Assessment of Oakland Oversight Bodies*.

SURVEY RESULTS

Both board and commission members and their staff liaisons reported feeling that their boards and commissions fulfill their roles, but that improvements in recruitment, onboarding and training, staff resources, and access to information could increase the effectiveness of boards, as well as the satisfaction of members and staff liaisons.

- **Insufficient staff capacity was the top concern for both board and commission members and staff liaisons.** All staff liaisons reported that their board duties were manageable alongside their other duties, though only one liaison indicated that they “always” have enough capacity to adequately support their board’s meetings (others ranged from “rarely” to “usually”). Despite capacity concerns, most board and commission members reported feeling supported by their staff liaisons.
- **Board and commission members and staff liaisons cited lack of access to information as hindering board and commission effectiveness.** Some board and commission members cited difficulties obtaining necessary information from the City, expressing that information was unavailable, opaque, or untimely. Staff reported that they do not always have sufficient authority or access to information to support their body. Out of 11 responses, only four staff liaisons said they “mostly” or “completely” had sufficient authority and access to information to effectively support their board or commission. Five staff members said they “somewhat” had sufficient authority, and two said they “slightly” did.
- **Lack of influence and limited City Council access were among the top concerns of board and commission members.** When asked to select their top concerns about serving on their body, lack of influence over City decisions was selected second most frequently (tied with lack of funding or resources, selected by 42 percent of board members; lack of City staff capacity ranked first, selected by 45 percent of board members). The experiences of board and commission members varied in how much influence they felt their body had over City decisions. Of the board and commission members who reported making recommendations, nearly half (46 percent) said they were “sometimes” adopted by the City. Fewer (30 percent) reported that they were “often” or “almost always” adopted, and 24 percent said “never” or “rarely.” Just over a third of board and commission members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement: “My board/commission’s work makes a meaningful difference in City Council decisions.” Just over half of board members rated their board’s working relationship with the City Council as “neither weak nor strong.”



Quote: *Commission recommendations are presented to City Council by staff as ‘receive recommendation’ without being structured so Council can take action. [There’s] no reference material for how to structure recommendations to enable Council to take action (i.e., templates, required elements, letterhead etc.)... the City Council does not always take our recommendations seriously.*

- **Board and commission members’ specific duties and staff’s role in supporting members could be better defined, and short- and long-term objectives are not always clear.** When asked how clear of an understanding board and commission members had of staff’s role in supporting them, most staff liaisons (10 of 12), reported that members had a “moderately clear” understanding. Board and commission members varied in how they characterized their duties, with 45 percent saying they were “very” or “extremely defined,” while 32 percent characterized them as “moderately defined,” and 23 percent characterized them as only “slightly” or “not at all defined.”

In open-ended responses, one member noted how “there is little clarity on what board members do or even advise on,” adding how “questions aren’t welcomed openly.” Others pointed to their board or commission lacking a plan (“commission doesn’t have a plan”) and a lack of cohesive strategy among members (“differing levels of commitment and availability among our members makes it hard to have a cohesive strategy and plan and often feels disjointed when we meet approximately every two months”). Just over half of board and commission members reported their board was “fully” or “mostly” fulfilling its intended purposes; nearly half of responding members felt their board was only “somewhat” or “mostly [not]” fulfilling its intended purpose.



Quote: *Poorly defined mission. Lack of clarity about what the [board] is supposed to be doing, and what deliverables the [board] is charged with producing, and for whom.*

- **Despite challenges, board and commission members and staff liaisons report positively on their experience.** Two-thirds of board and commission members would recommend serving on a City board to a friend. Just 10 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Two-thirds of members agreed they felt heard and valued in their role. Three-fourths of staff respondents felt satisfied with their role in supporting the board. Out of 12 staff responses, eight said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their role supporting their board or commission. One reported being “dissatisfied,” and three were neutral.

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

In open-ended comments, respondents provided actionable insights into how the City could improve the effectiveness and experience of serving on a board or commission. We grouped insights based on themes.

Recruitment, Onboarding, and Training

- **Expand outreach for vacancies and improve communication with applicants.** Respondents indicated City leaders should highlight the work of boards and commissions at community events, particularly in underserved communities, and advertise vacancies more broadly to increase citywide awareness. Respondents also recommended that the City confirm receipt of applications and share regular status updates.
- **Expand and standardize onboarding and training.** Respondents expressed a need for comprehensive training for board and commission members and staff liaisons. Based on

the responses, member training should include information on City government operations, budgets, and processes for working with City Council and department staff towards effective policy changes. Staff liaison training should cover Granicus and website management, KTOP coordination, and records management.²⁸

- **Develop board- and commission-specific onboarding.** Members indicated wanting a training and onboarding process specific to their board and commission. Based on the responses, training materials could include information on board and commission duties (including expectations for time commitment and meeting attendance), bylaws, and board- and commission-specific subject matter.

Staff Capacity

- **Provide dedicated IT support.** Respondents indicated a desire for dedicated IT support to help boards and commissions manage websites and Granicus.
- **Create a staff liaison peer network.** Staff liaisons suggested establishing a peer-support channel (i.e., Microsoft Teams) for staff to share resources.
- **Improve continuity during staff transitions.** Staff liaisons could aim to maintain board-specific transition manuals with information on recurring responsibilities, key contacts, and how to access important resources and documents to improve the staff onboarding process. The City Clerk's Office could facilitate this with a checklist or onboarding guide.

Influence Over City Decisions

- **Standardize board and commission recommendations.** Respondents expressed a desire for reference material to help support recommendations to the City Council. The City Clerk's Office could create guidance for boards and commissions on how to structure recommendations to best support City Council action (templates, required elements, letterhead, etc.). Clear roles and objectives, facilitated by staff liaisons, could further facilitate recommendations.
- **Better communication with the City Council and Mayor's Office.** Respondents indicated a desire for greater communication from the City Council when their board or commission makes a recommendation, as well as when items relevant to their work are likely to appear on an upcoming agenda.

Board and Commission Objectives and Scope

- **Clarify goals through annual planning retreats and written strategic plans.** Respondents described wanting greater clarity over their bodies' goals and responsibilities. Board and commission chairs could work with staff liaisons to hold annual retreats to review priorities, clarify responsibilities, and establish short- and long-term goals. Each board and commission could also maintain a written strategic plan outlining current priorities and objectives that is accessible to members and the public.

²⁸ Granicus is an online platform for public engagement. Oakland lists information on its boards and commissions, as well as vacancies, on its Granicus site:

<https://oakland.granicus.com/boards/w/8552f8c4c0e15460/boards>.

- **Distribute meeting materials in advance.** Respondents indicated that meetings were effective when members had time to review meeting materials ahead of the meeting.

Access to Information

- **Establish information-sharing procedures.** Respondents indicated a desire to receive relevant information from the City in a timely manner. Not all staff indicated that they had relevant authority or access to necessary information. Training for board and commission members could include various information sources. Regular reports to boards and commissions by relevant staff could also support information sharing.²⁹

Member and Staff Engagement

- **Reduce barriers to participation.** Board and commission members and staff liaisons identified several ways to reduce barriers to board and commission participation, including through expanding virtual meeting options to accommodate members' schedules and reimbursing members for travel, meals, and/or other expenses associated with service on boards and commissions.
- **Recognize board and commission member service and acknowledge work of staff liaisons.** Respondents suggested the City could formally recognize the contributions of board and commission members through an annual recognition event, a certificate, a newsletter highlight, or through another public means and ensure departments are aware of the range of duties staff liaisons carry out to support boards and commissions.

²⁹ Our Office has made recommendations to support regular reporting on special tax revenues, expenditures, and the status of associated projects to oversight boards. For example, in our 2023 audit [*Budget Transparency, Performance Management, And Stronger Oversight Needed To Ensure Oaklanders Benefit From The 2020 Parks And Recreation Preservation, Litter Reduction, And Homelessness Support Act*](#), we recommended that the City Administrator's Office bring regular operational and expenditure reports to the Commission on Homelessness to facilitate citizen oversight of homelessness efforts, and that the Commission establish a regular agenda item for this purpose. We also recommended that for future special tax programs, the City Administrator's Office initiate a best practice policy requiring an annual report on revenues, expenditures, and the status of open projects, to make sure that the City satisfies California Government Code sections 50075.1 and 50075.3. Similarly, our 2026 audit, [*Performance Audit of the Vacant Property Tax: Defined Goals, Reporting, and Oversight Needed to Align Expenditures with Policy Goals*](#), we found that the Finance Department should provide an annual report to the City Council and Commission on Homelessness detailing revenues, expenditures, and the status of projects funded by the Tax, as required by California Government Code sections 50075.1 and 50075.3.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

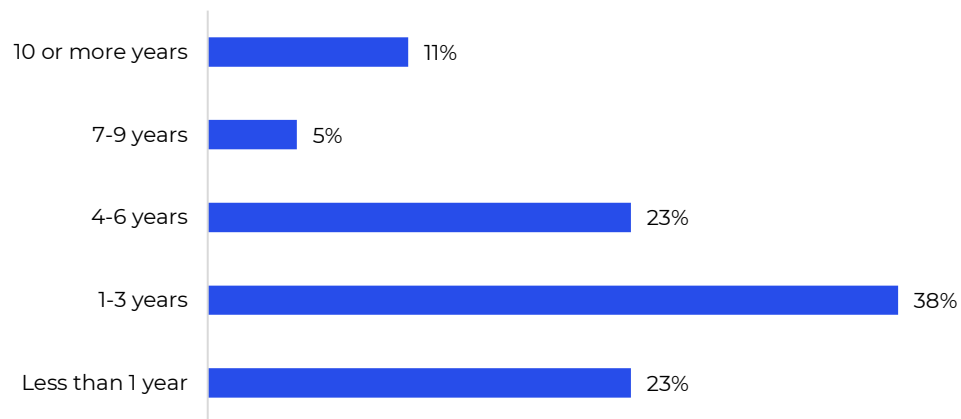
The survey results found that members feel motivated to serve their community and would recommend serving on a board or commission to a friend, but that there was room to improve in the clarity of board and commission roles. Procedurally, members reported that their board or commission met at about the right frequency, and just over half agreed with the statement that their procedures are efficient and effective. Overall, just over half of the members surveyed reported feeling that their board or commission “fully” or “mostly” fulfilled its purpose.

The following section summarizes the findings from the boards and commissions member survey, organized by survey section.

Survey Section 1: Background

The survey received responses from 82 board and commission members, representing a wide range of Oakland boards and commissions. Of the 81 respondents who identified their board, responses spanned 29 different boards and commissions.³⁰ While most respondents only served on one board or commission (94 percent), multiple respondents indicated serving on two or more. Respondents included both newly-appointed members and long-serving members (see Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Respondents Varied In Their Years of Experience Serving on City Boards or Commissions, With Around 60 Percent Having Three or Less Years of Experience

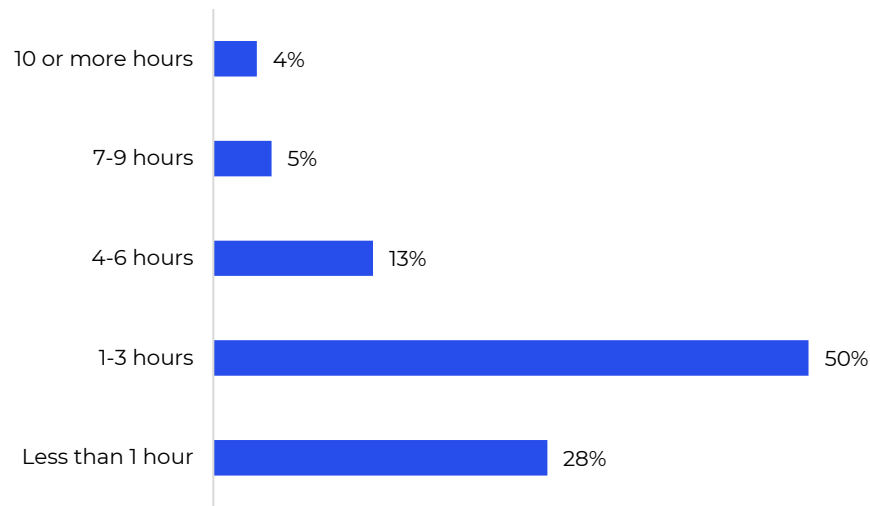


Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #2: “Cumulatively, how many years of experience do you have serving on City of Oakland boards and commissions?” n=82.

Most respondents indicated that board or commission service required three or less hours per week (78 percent), although a notable share (9 percent) indicated they devoted seven or more hours per week to their role.

³⁰ See Appendix C for complete list of boards and commissions covered.

Exhibit 2: Nearly 80 Percent of Respondents Devote Three or Fewer Hours to Board or Commission Service Per Week



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #4: “On average, how many hours per week do you devote to your role as a board or commission member?” n=82.

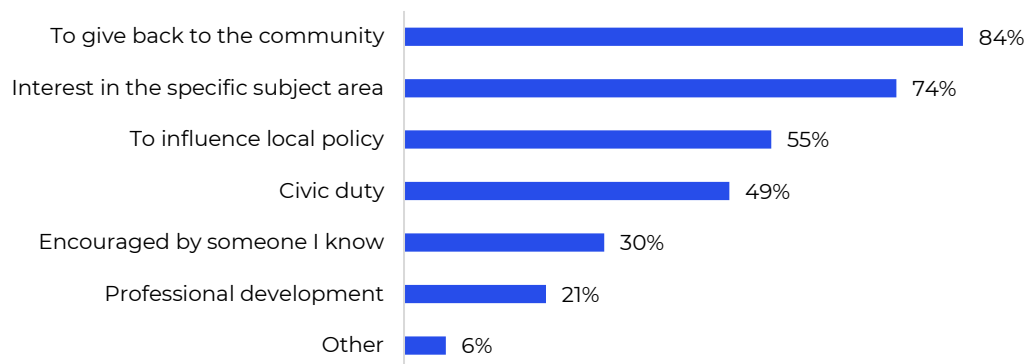
Survey Section 2: Recruitment & Application Experience

Board and commission members came to their roles through a variety of channels, and they were often motivated by a desire to serve their community. Open-ended responses indicated concerns about the application and appointment process that may limit the City’s ability to attract and retain qualified applicants.

Members Are Primarily Motivated By a Desire to Give Back to The Community

Respondents were primarily motivated to apply for a board position “to give back to the community,” followed by “interest in the specific subject matter” and “to influence local policy,” as shown in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3: Respondents Selected Giving Back to the Community, Interest in the Subject Area, and Influencing Local Policy as Top Motivations for Applying to a Board or Commission Position

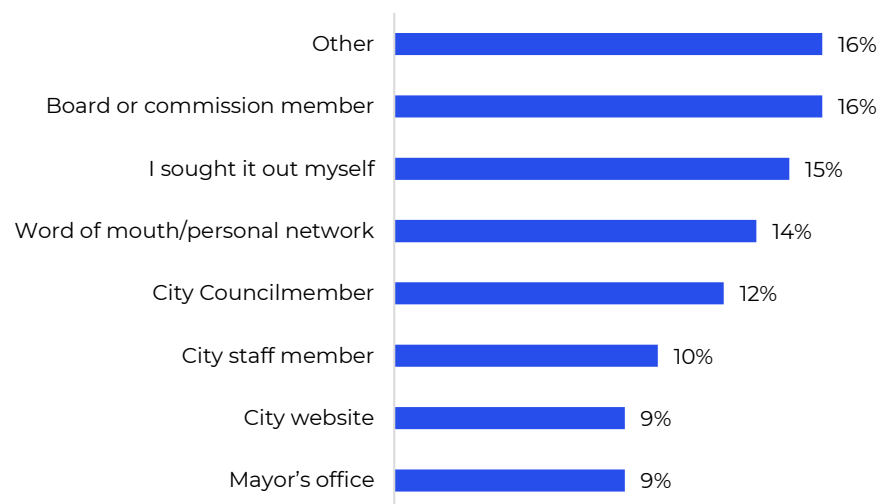


Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #6: "Please indicate the reason you chose to get involved with a City board or commission. (Select all that apply)" n=80.

Board and Commission Members Came to their Role through Various Channels, and Members See Room to Improve Outreach and Application Timelines

Around 16 percent of respondents reported hearing about their current position through an existing board or commission member, 15 percent reported they sought out the position themselves, and 14 percent indicated they found the position through word of mouth or their personal network.

Exhibit 4: Respondents Heard About Their Position Through Various Channels, Particularly Through Fellow Members, Personal Network, and Self-Motivation



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #5: "How did you first hear about your current board or commission position?" n=81.

In open-ended responses on ways to attract more applicants, many respondents expressed a need for community awareness; some noted how most Oakland residents simply don't know boards and commissions exist. Suggested solutions to increase outreach included:

- Social media outreach.
- Increased presence at community events.
- Partnerships with neighborhood organizations.
- Direct recruitment at community colleges and universities.
- Putting clear information on the City website.

Some respondents indicated the application process itself could also be improved, as applications are often stalled waiting for approval by the Mayor or Councilmembers, with one respondent noting, "While the application was easy online, the process was a bit of a black box in terms of when I would hear back, what was involved, etc." Another stated, "We have volunteers that want to be on [the board], but their appointment is being held up by different departments." Suggestions included being more communicative with applicants about the status of their application and processing applications in a more timely manner.

Survey Section 3: Onboarding & Training

Board and commission members reported mixed experiences with onboarding and training. While many members came to their roles with relevant subject matter expertise, a plurality indicated that their onboarding and training did not adequately prepare them for the role.

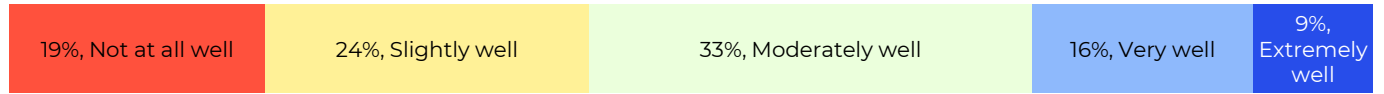


Quote: *No onboarding was provided. New members wait months before [the] appointment process is completed. [It's] unclear how appointments, terms, vacancies etc. should be handled.*

Members Reported Mixed Experiences With Onboarding Preparedness and Role Clarity

When asked how well their onboarding and/or training prepared them for the role, 43 percent of respondents said it prepared them "not at all well" or "slightly well," while a quarter said it prepared them "very well" or "extremely well."

Exhibit 5: 43 Percent of Respondents Reported Their Onboarding and Training Prepared Them “Not At All Well” or Only “Slightly Well” For Their Role



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #8: “How well did your onboarding and/or training prepare you for your role?” n=80.

Members reported somewhat greater clarity about their duties, though room for improvement remains. Nearly half of respondents described their duties as “very defined” or “extremely defined,” while 23 percent of respondents described their duties as “slightly defined” or “not at all defined.”

Exhibit 6: Nearly Half of Respondents Described Their Responsibilities as “Very” or “Extremely” Defined



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #9: “How clearly defined are your responsibilities and duties as a board or commission member?” n=79.

Members Value Specific Trainings, Including Trainings on Board or Commission Duties and Bylaws

When asked what types of training they would have most liked to receive as new members, the most commonly selected options were “training on board duties and bylaws,” “training on general City government operations,” and “training relevant to the board’s subject matter.” This suggests a greater need for board-specific training.

Exhibit 7: Respondents Indicated They Would Have Most Liked to Have Received Trainings on Board Duties and Bylaws, General City Government Operations, and Board-Specific Subject Matter



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #10: “What types of trainings or resources would you have most liked to have received as a new board or commission member? (Select all that apply)” n=78.

One board member, commenting on the types of training they wanted to receive as a new member, said, “We had to have a board retreat where we ourselves did the training. Even had to beg for meeting space and a little money to hire a facilitator.” Multiple respondents indicated it would be helpful to be trained on how City budgeting and finances work.

Other suggestions to improve and expand training included:

- Holding a training on the history of the board and/or program the board is involved with.
- Making the ethics and Brown Act trainings in-person or more interactive.
- Giving each commissioner an individual onboarding, rather than using whole group time for onboarding.

Members Report Having Some Level of Subject Matter Expertise, Even When Professional Experience is Not Required

Boards and commissions vary considerably in their membership requirements. When asked whether their board or commission required them to have professional or subject matter expertise relevant to the body’s work, 36 percent of respondents said relevant experience was

expected but not required, 13 percent said there were formal experience requirements, and 30 percent said there were no experience requirements.³¹

Exhibit 8: Nearly Half of Respondents Indicated Relevant Professional or Volunteer Experience Was Either Expected or Required for Board Membership



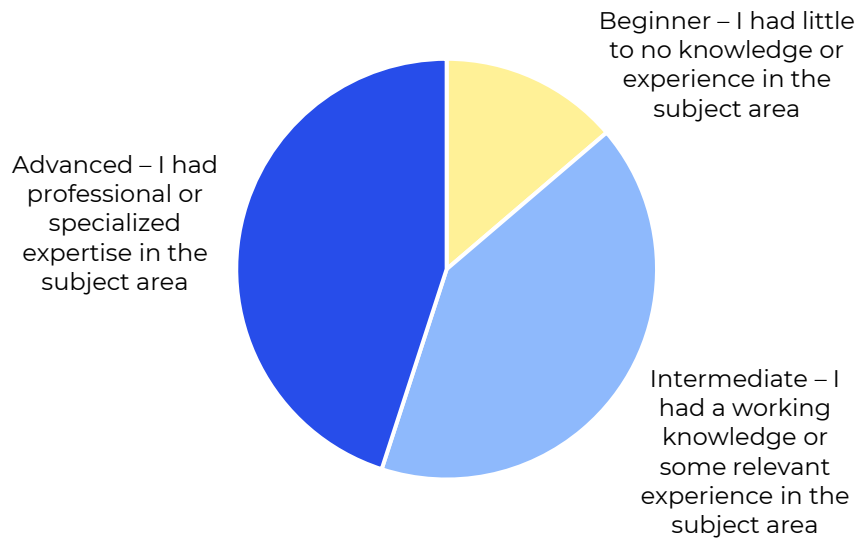
Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #11: “Does your board or commission require members to have professional or subject matter expertise relevant to the board or commission's work?” n=80.

For members who indicated there were professional or subject matter expertise requirements, many noted these were lived experiences, such as living in a low-income area of the City, or having some knowledge of the subject matter relevant to the board or commission.

³¹ At least 12 boards and commissions have requirements for select seats. These requirements range significantly in complexity and proportion. For example, the Children’s Fund Planning and Oversight Committee (OFCY) requires eight members to be under the age of 21. The Children’s Initiative Oversight Commission requires: at least one member with professional expertise in early childhood education policy, one member with expertise or who is a provider of early childhood care or education, at least one member with at least two years of experience teaching in early childhood education, at least one member with at least two years of experience teaching TK-12 or who has professional expertise in TK-12 education or college access, at least one member with professional expertise in college completion and/or support for traditionally underrepresented college students, at least one member with experience in budgeting, auditing, finance, or early asset building; at least one member of a union who is an education provider; at least one homeowner subject to the tax; at least one parent who has had a preschool-age child in the past five years benefitting from public subsidy or who was on the waitlist for such a program; and at least one member who was, within five years of appointment, enrolled in an Oakland public school and enrolled in college or who is the first in their immediate family to graduate from college. The Commission on Homelessness requires that no less than half the members must be residents of heavily impacted neighborhoods; no fewer than two members must be currently homeless, formerly homeless, or low income as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development; no fewer than three members must have professional expertise or be providers of homeless services or housing; no fewer than one person must have financial expertise. The Landmark Preservation Advisory Board must include one architect, one landscape architect or city planner, one real estate broker or professional, and one Oakland historian.

Most members rated their own subject matter expertise as intermediate (33 percent) or advanced (36 percent) prior to joining the board or commission.

Exhibit 9: 36 Percent of Respondents Indicated Having Professional or Specialized Experience in the Subject Area of Their Board or Commission



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #13: “Does your board or commission require members to have professional or subject matter expertise relevant to the board or commission's work?” n=80.

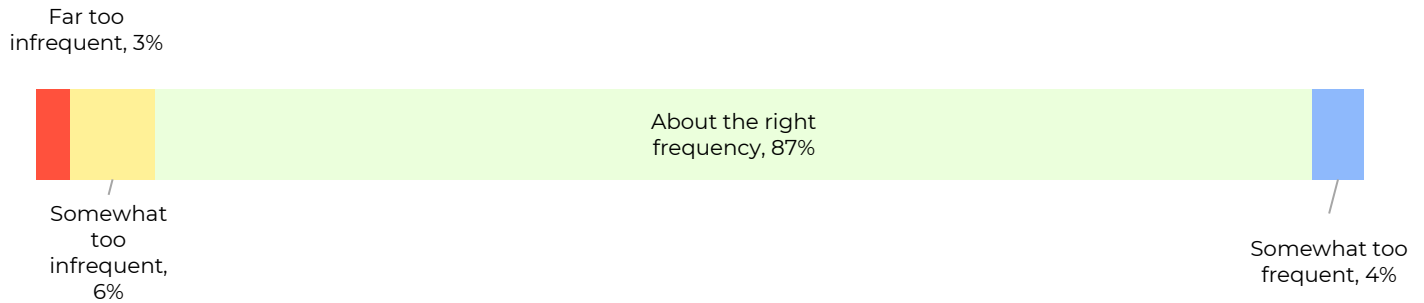
Survey Section 4: Meetings & Operations

Board and commission members generally characterized their body’s procedures as efficient and effective and were satisfied with the frequency of meetings. However, in open-ended responses, members identified various challenges in how their board or commission operates, with many citing a lack of access to relevant information, unclear goals, and accessibility challenges.

Members Are Generally Satisfied with Meeting Frequency and Procedures

Most respondents were satisfied with the frequency of their body’s meetings, with 87 percent reporting meetings were “about the right frequency.” This aligns with members’ overall assessment of board or commission operations: 53 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their board's or commission's processes and procedures were efficient and effective.

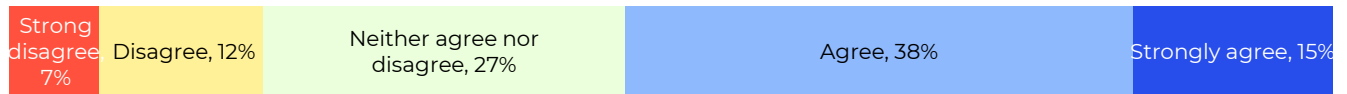
Exhibit 10: Nearly 90 Percent of Respondents Agreed Their Board’s General Meetings Were “About The Right Frequency”



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #14: “How would you characterize the frequency of your board or commission’s general meetings?” n=78.

Exhibit 11: Just Over Half of Respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed That the Processes and Procedures of their Board or Commission Are Efficient and Effective

“My board/commission's processes and procedures are efficient and effective.”

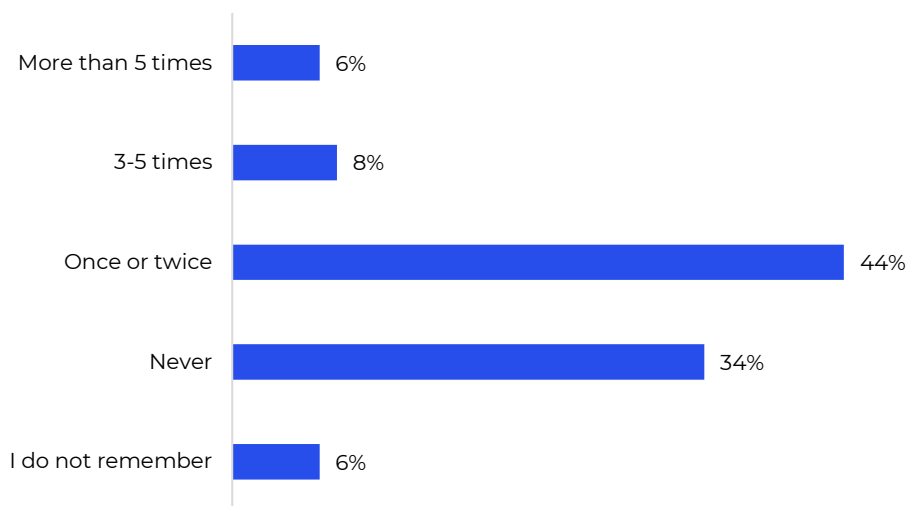


Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #24: “Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, as it relates to your service on a City board or commission.” “My board/commission's processes and procedures are efficient and effective” n=73.

Respondents also reported that meetings were rarely canceled within the past year, with 35 percent of respondents stating meetings had never been canceled, and 45 percent of respondents stating meetings had been canceled “once or twice.” ³²

³² Several reports have indicated frequent cancellations by Oakland boards and commissions. In May 2026, the Oaklandside reported that 45 percent of Planning Commission meetings were canceled in 2025, mostly due to a lack of items to consider for the agenda. The Alameda County Grand Jury 2024-25 report stated, “The Grand Jury found a stunning commonality across the City of Oakland’s governance: a failure to provide citizen oversight and internal controls.... While certain commissions met as scheduled, other commissions with critical oversight functions failed to meet, some cancelling meetings mere minutes before they were scheduled to begin.” In reviewing agendas for 18 boards and commissions through 2025, we found a median cancellation rate of 21 percent, with a range of 0 percent to 83 percent. Our estimate is based on the expected number of meetings based on frequency (i.e., quarterly, monthly, biweekly, or twice per month). This estimate may be slightly overstated, as it appears many boards and commissions may recess in August, at the same time as the City Council. In all, there were 28 posted cancellations and 189 meetings held for an overall cancellation rate of 15 percent for those 18 boards and commissions, which for a commission with monthly meetings, would work out to 1-2 cancellations in the year. The most cancellations a board or commission posted within the year was nine.

Exhibit 12: Nearly 80 Percent of Respondents Reported General Meetings of Their Board or Commission Had Been Cancelled Twice or Less Within the Past Year



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #15: “In the past year, approximately how often have your board or commission’s general meetings been cancelled?” n=79.

Among respondents who reported a meeting being cancelled, 52 percent said that lack of quorum was the most common reason for the cancellation, with 17 percent citing lack of agenda items, and 9 percent stating the reason was unclear. 22 percent of respondents listed “other” as a reason, citing specific reasons for cancellation such as the agenda being posted five minutes late, holidays, bureaucratic delays, and delays with members not being sworn in and having their Form 700 documents ready on time.

Respondents Praised Fellow Members and Cited Specific Aspects of Their Boards’ Operations as Highlights

In open-ended responses about what works well about how their board operates, many respondents directly referred to the passion and knowledge of their fellow board members. One respondent noted how they were “mission-driven and public-service focused,” while another called them “open and collaborative.” Another respondent stated that “quality commissioners with experience assist with the issues/operations,” indicating that, while operational issues may exist, experienced commissioners are able to help ease these issues.

Other respondents highlighted specific ways their board or commission was structured to help it run smoothly, with one respondent praising their subcommittee structure, and another calling their retreat “super helpful to understand more about the role and the needs.” Multiple respondents also noted that clear agendas and giving members time to prepare beforehand helped ensure meetings run efficiently.

Members Cited a Variety of Operational Challenges and Identified Areas for Improvement

In open-ended responses about how their boards and commissions operations could be improved, multiple respondents cited a lack of clarity around their mission, scope, and meeting objectives. One respondent noted how “there is little clarity on what board members do or even advise on,” while another said there was a “lack of clarity about what the [board] is supposed to be doing, and what deliverables the [board] is charged with producing, and for whom.”

“ **Quote:** *[There is a] lack of clarity about what the [board] is supposed to be doing, and what deliverables the [board] is charged with producing, and for whom.*

Another commonly cited theme was a lack of access to key information. Multiple respondents detailed instances where their board or commission faced difficulties in getting timely information from the City in advance of key meetings, with one respondent stating that “the information we need from the City and its various departments and agencies has been really opaque, hard to understand, poorly organized and presented,” and another stating the board was “mired in red tape and an inability to get the information we actually need to get our job done appropriately.”

Specific suggestions for improvement noted within open-ended responses included:

- **Receiving information in a more timely fashion** from relevant City departments and Councilmembers.
- **Highlighting upcoming City Council meetings** at meetings in order to prepare public comments.
- **Improving meeting accessibility** by allowing hybrid meetings and improving access to meeting recordings.
- **Ensuring all meetings have objective-driven agendas.**

“ **Quote:** *...The information we need from the City and its various departments and agencies has been really opaque, hard to understand, poorly organized and presented...*

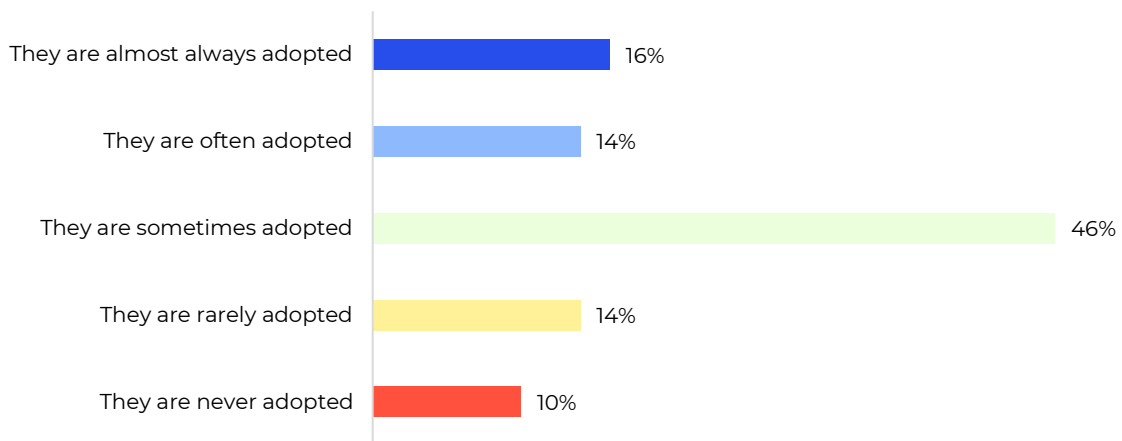
Survey Sections 5 and 6: Influence and Member Experience

While respondents generally rated their board meetings and day-to-day operations positively, they were more divided when characterizing their board’s level of influence. Members expressed uncertainty over whether their work consistently influences City decision-making, and they cited concerns related to staff and resource capacity. Despite these challenges, members also cited a variety of reasons they found their role satisfying.

Respondents Were Divided When Characterizing the Level of Influence of Their Board or Commission

Respondents had mixed opinions on their bodies' level of influence over City operations. When asked how often the recommendations of their board or commission were adopted by the City, 18 percent of respondents said their recommendations were "never adopted" or "rarely adopted" by the City Council, whereas 22 percent of respondents said they were "often adopted" or "almost always adopted," and 34 percent said they were "sometimes adopted." The remainder (27 percent) said their board did not make recommendations.

Exhibit 13: Among Respondents Who Reported Making Recommendations, 46 Percent Said They Were Sometimes Adopted

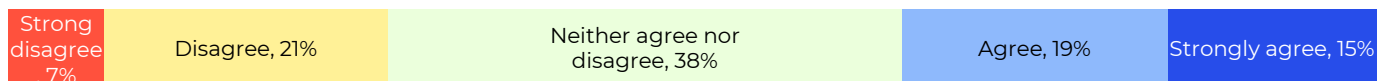


Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #18: "How often are your board or commission's recommendations adopted by the City?" n=50. (Exhibit excludes the category "Not applicable – we don't make recommendations.")

Similarly, only 34 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "My board/commission's work makes a meaningful difference in City Council decisions," while 28 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 38 percent of respondents were neutral.

Exhibit 14: Only 34 Percent of Respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed That the Work of Their Board or Commission Made a Meaningful Difference in City Council Decisions

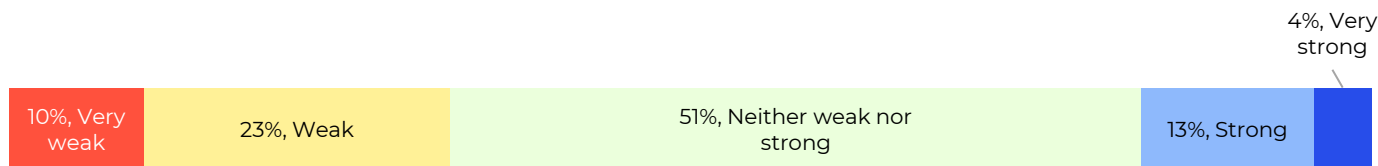
"My board/commission's work makes a meaningful difference in City Council decisions."



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #24: "Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, as it relates to your service on a City board or commission." "My board/commission's work makes a meaningful difference in City Council decisions" n=72.

Correspondingly, about one-third of respondents characterized the working relationship of their board or commission with the City Council as “weak” or “very weak,” while only 17 percent said “strong” or “very strong.” Half reported “neither weak nor strong.”

Exhibit 15: Nearly One-Third of Respondents Characterized Their Board’s Relationship With The City Council as Weak or Very Weak



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #19: “How would you rate the working relationship between your board or commission and the City Council?” n=71.

In open-ended responses about challenges their board or commission face, multiple respondents noted their limited influence over decision-making. One respondent stated that “as an advisory board it is difficult to have a meaningful effect on policy,” while another stated, “I guess it feels like we don’t have too much power or say as oversight commissioners. So sometimes I wonder, what is the point?”



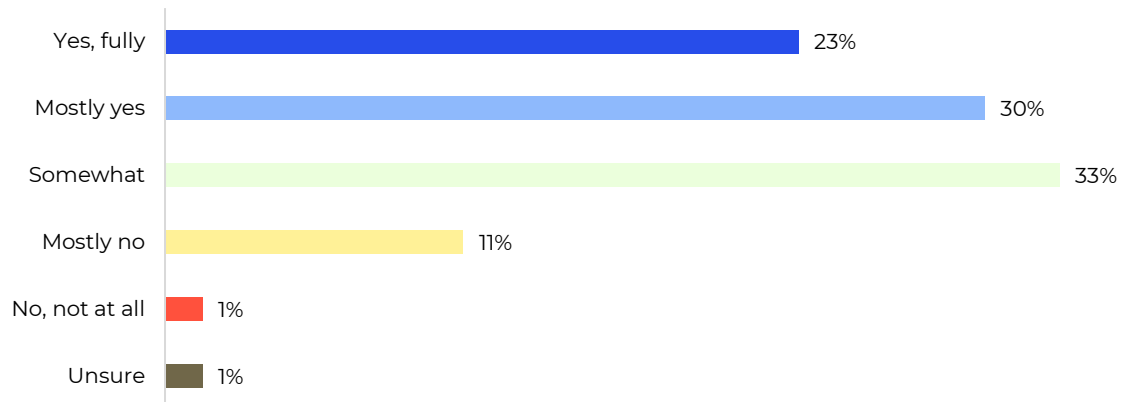
Quote: *I guess it feels like we don't have too much power or say as oversight commissioners. So sometimes I wonder, what is the point?*

In open-ended responses about aspects of their board or commission operations that could be improved, multiple respondents mentioned ways to improve recommendations to the City Council. One respondent noted that “City Council does not always take our recommendations seriously,” adding that there should be more guidance on how to structure recommendations to enable the City Council to take action. Another respondent, whose commission is charged with oversight of a tax measure, argued the City Council needed to take their concerns more seriously and added it was hard to effectively carry out their oversight responsibility “given stonewalling and/or non-responsiveness that we’ve experienced.” Multiple respondents similarly highlighted not feeling listened to by the City and encouraged stronger relationship-building between boards and commissions and City officials.

Similar to respondents’ mixed opinions on their influence, just over half of responding members felt that their board or commission was fulfilling its general purpose, with 53 percent of respondents stating their board was “fully” or “mostly” fulfilling its purpose.

Exhibit 16: Just Over Half of Respondents Believed Their Board or Commission was “Fully” or “Mostly” Fulfilling Its Purpose, While One-Third of Respondents Believed Their Board or Commission Was “Somewhat” Fulfilling Its Purpose

“Do you believe your board or commission is fulfilling its intended purpose (as established through ballot measure, bylaws, charter, etc.)?”



Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #20: “Do you believe your board or commission is fulfilling its intended purpose (as established through ballot measure, bylaws, charter, etc.)?” n=73.

Members Have a Generally Positive Relationship With City Staff, But Have Concerns About Capacity

Members had a generally positive attitude towards City staff liaisons. Nearly three-fourths of respondents rated the level of support they receive from City staff in carrying out the work of their board and commission as “supportive” or “very supportive.”

- **In open-ended responses, many respondents cited the role of staff in ensuring meetings ran smoothly.** Respondents praised the work of staff liaisons in managing meetings and communicating with board and commission members, with one respondent calling their support “instrumental.” Another respondent praised their liaison for “keeping us informed and telling us what is expected.”
- **Other respondents spoke negatively about their staff liaison, with several acknowledging they were stretched too thin.** One respondent spoke directly to the fact that there was too much staff turnover, with “lousy staff support and organization.” Another noted their board had “competent but bare-minimum staff support,” highlighting how staff often only have the time to do essential duties like running meetings and ensuring the board is complying with established laws.

Exhibit 17: Nearly Three-Fourths of Respondents Rated City Staff's Level of Support as Supportive or Very Supportive



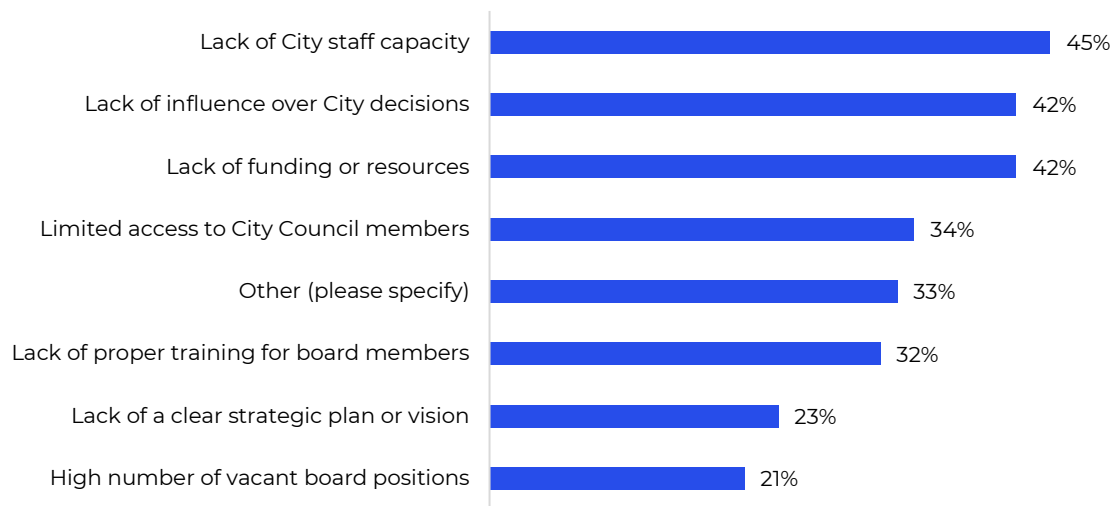
Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #21: "How would you rate the level of support you receive from City staff in carrying out your board or commission's work?" n=72.

Members' Top Concerns Related to Limited Resources and Lack of Influence Over City Decisions

When asked to select their top concerns, board and commission members selected lack of City staff capacity, lack of funding or resources, and lack of influence over City decisions the most frequently.

In write-in responses, four respondents listed lack of access to specific information as a concern. Two highlighted concerns regarding the authority of their board or commission. Respondents also listed concerns related to vacancies and qualifications, with one respondent stating a need for clear qualifications, adding: "Many commissioners have not been qualified from a subject matter perspective and/or are unclear of what is expected of them. There needs to be [...] consistent criteria in selecting members and not favoritism based on relationships or special interests." Another respondent said it was difficult to get qualified candidates without Councilmember support.

Exhibit 18: Respondents Most Frequently Cited Lack of City Staff Capacity, Lack of Influence Over City Decisions, and Lack of Funding or Resources As Their Top Concerns



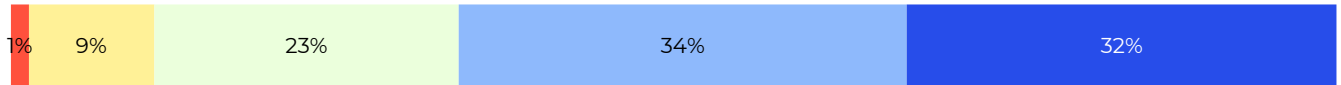
Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #22: "Please select your top concerns about serving on your board or commission. (Select all that apply)" n=73.

Respondents Reported to Be Generally Satisfied With Their Service, Despite Concerns

Board and commission members generally viewed their service as a worthwhile opportunity to contribute to their communities. Nearly two-thirds of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend serving on a board or commission to a friend. Two-thirds of responding members agreed or strongly agreed that they felt heard and valued in their role.

Exhibit 19: The Majority of Respondents Reported Feeling Heard and Valued in Their Role and Indicated They Would Recommend Serving On a City Board/Commission to a Friend

"I would recommend serving on a City board/commission to a friend."



"I feel heard and valued in my role."



■ Strong disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

Source: Auditor analysis of member survey question #24: "Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, as it relates to your service on a City board or commission." "I would recommend serving on a City board/commission to a friend" n=74. "I feel heard and valued in my role" n=72.

In open-ended responses about the aspects of the role they found most satisfying or fulfilling, respondents said they appreciated how their service provided opportunities to voice concerns and be of service to the City and community. Others cited the learning opportunities the role gave them, including learning more about City government and operations, learning from their fellow board and commission members, and working to "demystify the city process for people not involved."

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

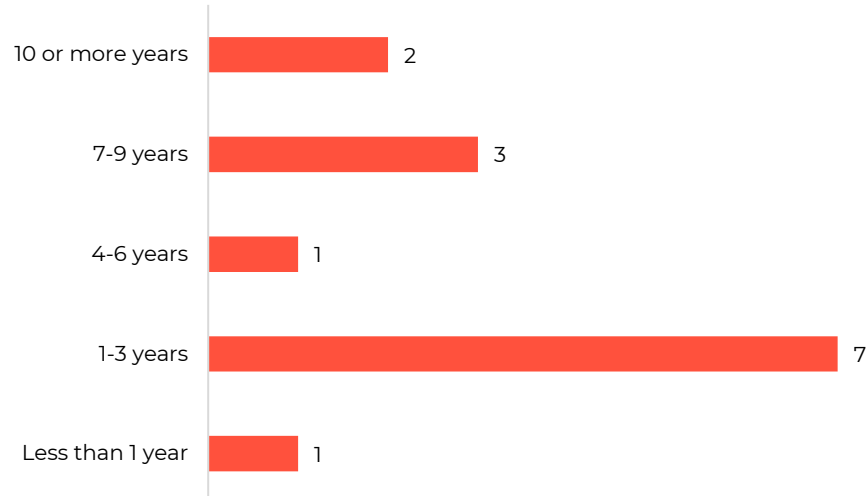
The survey results found that staff liaisons have had mixed experiences in terms of how their boards and commissions work and the training they received as staff liaisons.

The following section summarizes the findings from the boards and commissions staff survey, organized by survey section. Due to the small number of respondents for the staff liaison survey, we use actual values rather than percentages to describe the number of responses for each answer.

Survey Section 1: Background

The survey received responses from 14 staff liaisons from a variety of City departments, serving at least 19 different boards and commissions. This sample yields an estimated 48 percent response rate. Of the respondents, 11 indicated serving as the staff liaison to one board or commission, 1 served as the liaison to two, and 2 served three or more. Staff respondents' tenure in their role as staff liaison varied. About half had more than 3 years of experience, while half had 1 to 3 years of experience.

Exhibit 20: Half of Respondents Indicated Having Between One and Three Years of Experience Serving As a Staff Liaison



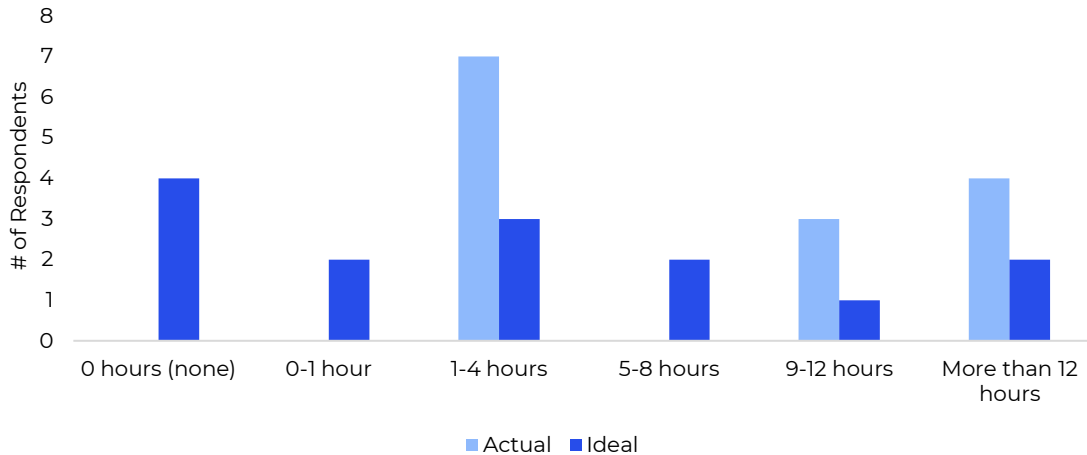
Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #2: "Cumulatively, how many years of experience do you have serving as a staff liaison to City boards and commissions?" n=14.

Staff Liaisons' Time Commitment Towards Role Varies and Spans a Range of Duties

Staff liaisons' time spent on board/commission duties varied. While half of staff indicated devoting one to four hours per week to supporting their board or commission, the other half indicated devoting nine or more hours per week to the role. When asked how many hours per

week they would ideally like to devote to the role if they had more time, six respondents said they would like to devote less than an hour to the role each week. In general, staff would like to devote fewer hours per week to their role than they currently do, although there were a few exceptions where staff indicated wanting to devote more hours to the role if they had more time.

Exhibit 21: Staff Liaisons Reported Spending Between 1 and 12 Hours a Week on Boards and Commissions, and Varied on the Hours They Would Like to Devote, Given More Time



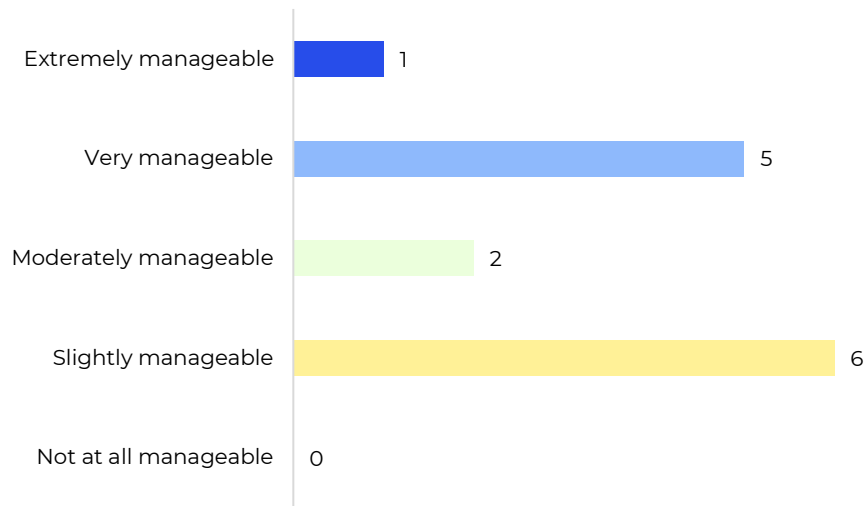
Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #4: “On average, how many hours per week do you devote to supporting your board or commission?” n=14 and auditor analysis of staff survey question #6: “If you had more time, how many hours per week would you ideally like to devote to supporting your board or commission?” n=14.

The scope of work described by staff also varied. Several staff liaisons described devoting most of their time to writing and setting agendas and transcribing meeting minutes. Multiple staff members also listed helping with recruitment for vacant positions, facilitating meetings, and managing the board’s webpage. When asked how manageable their workload was, supporting their board alongside their other job responsibilities, all staff liaisons reported it was manageable, though the extent varied. Six said it was only “slightly manageable,” while another six respondents said it was “very” or “extremely manageable.”



Quote: *There are definitely times that I feel I am doing the bare minimum to make sure meetings happen, required reporting is timely, and we are compliant in all ways required... I have less bandwidth to do more, or even a better job, of all the things in the background that support all matters of Board-related business.*

Exhibit 22: Over Half of Respondents Reported Their Workload As a Staff Liaison Was Only Slightly or Moderately Manageable Alongside Other Duties



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #7: “How manageable is your workload in supporting your board or commission alongside your other job responsibilities?” n=14.

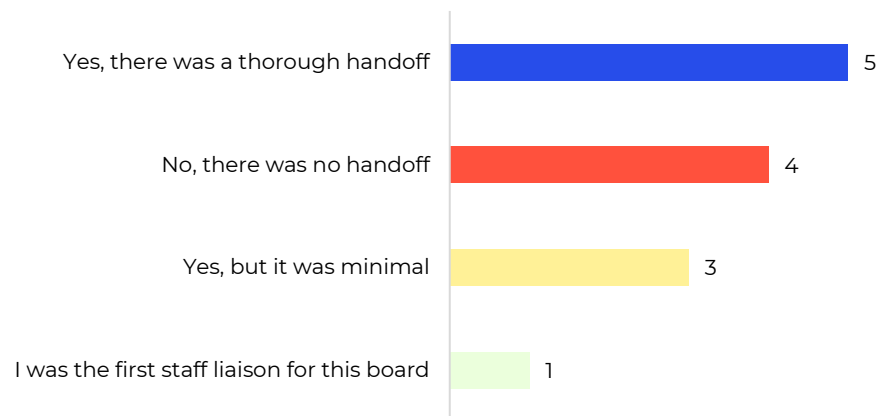
- **Staff who described their workload as manageable** cited organizational features that helped their work run more smoothly. One staff member noted how their department/division had a “coordinated team” for their commission. Another staff member noted how their board had subcommittees that met regularly.
- **Staff who described their workload as not manageable** cited concerns related to understaffing and not having enough time to devote themselves more fully to the work of the board or commission. Multiple staff members stated that their department and/or the City was understaffed. Two staff members noted how recruitment for vacancies was time-consuming.³³ Multiple staff members also cited the time commitment of basic administrative duties, such as organizing documents and making sure activities comply with legal requirements.

Survey Section 2: Onboarding & Training

Staff also had mixed responses on their level of onboarding and training when they first began supporting their board or commission. While five respondents indicated there was a formal and thorough handoff from the previous staff liaison, three respondents said there was a formal handoff, but it was minimal, and another four respondents indicated there was no formal handoff or transition.

³³ Per City Charter Section 601, members of boards and commissions are generally appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by the vote of five members of the City Council.

Exhibit 23: The Majority of Respondents Indicated They Received a Formal Handoff From the Previous Staff Liaisons, But It Varied In Thoroughness



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #9: “When you first began supporting your board or commission, was there a formal handoff or transition from the previous staff liaison (including through the transfer of relevant files, documents, and/or shared databases)?” n=13.

Additionally, while just over half of respondents said they received formal training on how to serve as a staff liaison, the rest said they did not receive any formal training. Of the respondents who received training, four rated the training as good, while three rated it neutrally.

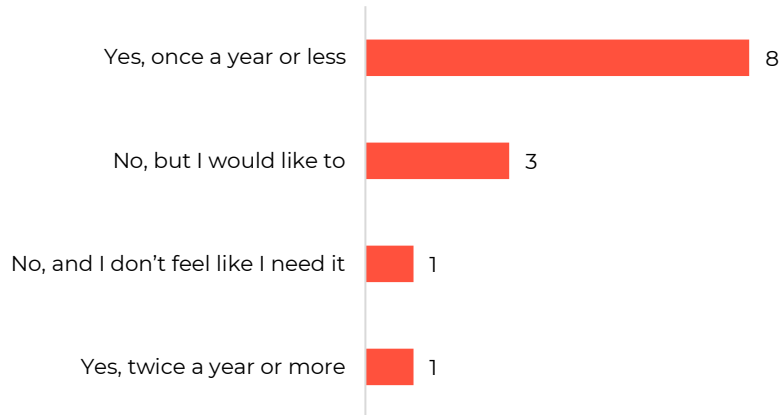
Exhibit 24: Respondents Who Received Training Related to Serving as a Staff Liaison Rated It as Good or Neutral



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #11: “Overall, how would you rate the training you received for your role?” n=7. Respondents were only able to answer this question if they answered “Yes” to question #10: “Did you receive any formal training on how to serve as a staff liaison to a board or commission?”

Over half of respondents reported receiving recurring training related to their role, with three respondents indicating that they have not received recurring training, but they would like to receive it.

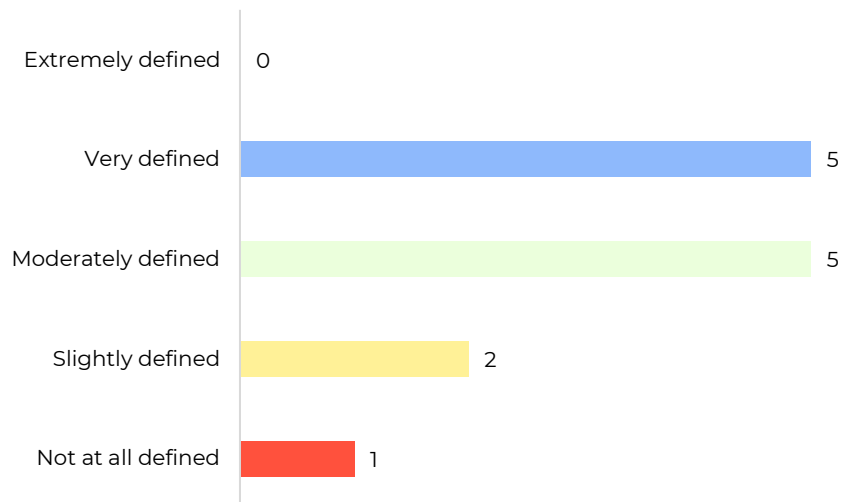
Exhibit 25: Over Two-Thirds of Staff Reported Receiving Recurring Trainings Related to Their Role



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #12: “Have you received any recurring trainings related to your role?” n=13.

Despite mixed levels of training, respondents reported having an adequate understanding of their responsibilities and duties as staff liaisons. The majority of respondents said their responsibilities were either “very” or “moderately defined,” with only three staff liaisons saying their responsibilities were “slightly” or “not at all defined.”

Exhibit 26: Most Respondents Described Their Responsibilities as Moderately or Very Defined



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #13: “How clearly defined are your responsibilities and duties as a staff liaison?” n=13.

In open-ended responses about their training experience, multiple staff members noted that trainings did not cover all the responsibilities staff liaisons have. For example, one staff member stated: “Recent trainings from Clerk's Office were helpful, although they did not cover the range of responsibilities like website updates and maintenance, KTOP coordination, records retention strategies.” Another noted how trainings were less hands-on than they used to be, and more responsibility had shifted to individual staff, particularly with Granicus and website management.

Suggestions to improve the staff liaison training and onboarding experience included:

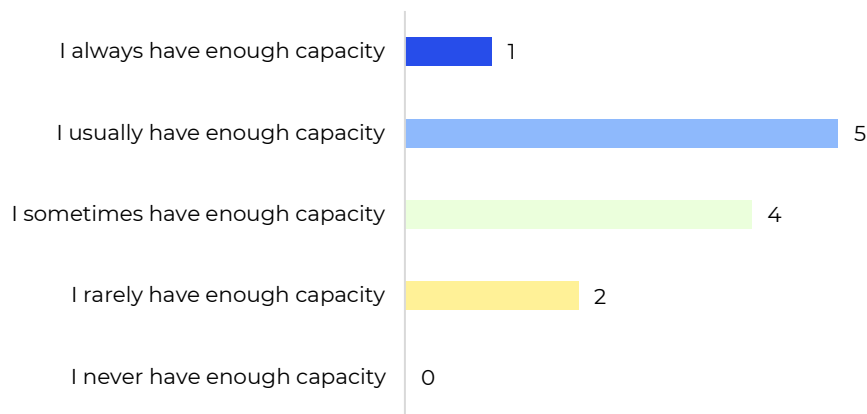
- **Getting buy-in from department leadership** to enable more time for liaisons to meaningfully support boards and commissions.
- **Creating a chat (i.e., Microsoft Teams)** for staff liaisons to share resources with each other and ask for peer-to-peer support.
- **Creating a clear list of who liaisons should reach out to** when it comes to different needs, such as the annual recruitment process, strategic planning, getting items on the City Council agenda, what to do when a board or commission member resigns, and who liaisons’ point of contact in the Mayor’s Office is when there’s a new administration.

Survey Section 3: Meetings & Operations

Staff generally had a positive view of the meetings and operations of their boards and commissions, though they cited several areas to improve how their board or commission currently operates.

Staff overwhelmingly characterized the meetings of their boards or commissions as effective. Eight respondents indicated their meetings were overall “effective,” three indicated “very effective,” and one indicated “neither effective nor ineffective.” No liaisons said that the meetings were overall “ineffective” or “very ineffective.” Despite this, half of respondents said they only sometimes or rarely had the capacity to adequately support their boards' and commissions' meetings.

Exhibit 27: Half of Respondents Reported Only Sometimes or Rarely Having Enough Capacity to Adequately Support Their Board's Meetings



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #16: “How would you describe your capacity to adequately support your board or commission’s meetings given your overall workload?” n=12.

Staff indicated having adequate capacity for webpage management, with over half of respondents saying their board’s City of Oakland webpage was often updated, and the rest saying it was occasionally updated (n=12).

Responsive Board and Commission Members and Experienced Chairs Cited as Operational Highlights

Staff generally described their boards and commissions as functioning well due to the responsiveness and engagement of their members, with several noting strong attendance and follow-through. One staff member wrote that their board has “a clearly defined team, clear coordination, and clear protocols and expectations,” with another staff member saying the board is “clear on responsibilities and understands their roles.” Staff members described their board and commission members as “responsive” and “dependable,” with one staff member noting that “several commissioners are deeply involved.” Two staff liaisons specifically praised their respective board/commission chairs, with one stating how the “Chair manages time effectively,” and another stating the chair is “incredibly experienced” and “has been a huge mentor.”

Access to Information and City Leadership Cited as Operational Challenges

Several staff also identified operational challenges.³⁴ Two staff members cited issues related to access to information and City leadership, with one stating their board “would like to be more plugged into what policies are coming down the pipeline to [the City Council] so we can have a chance to get informed and advocate...” The staff member noted it was hard to know when City

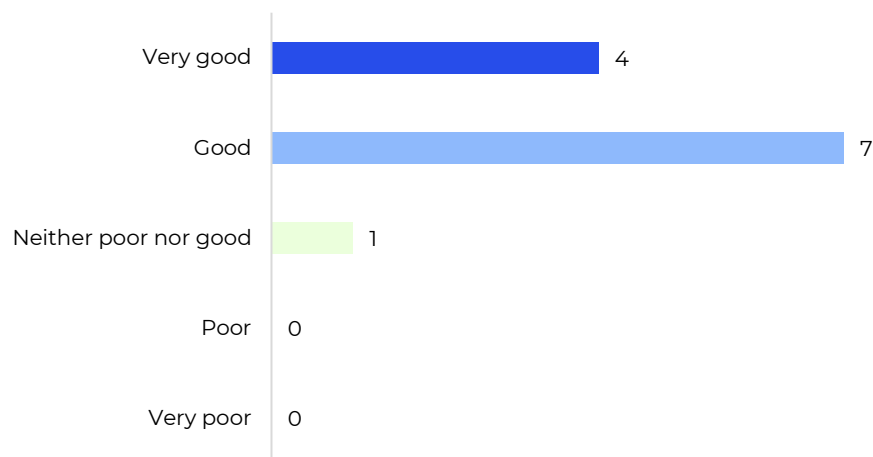
³⁴ Additional staff responses on ways to improve board operations can be found in Section 5 under “Challenges.”

resolutions were coming, and the board had been more successful in their partnerships with groups outside elected leadership.

Survey Section 4: Relations with Board and Commission Members

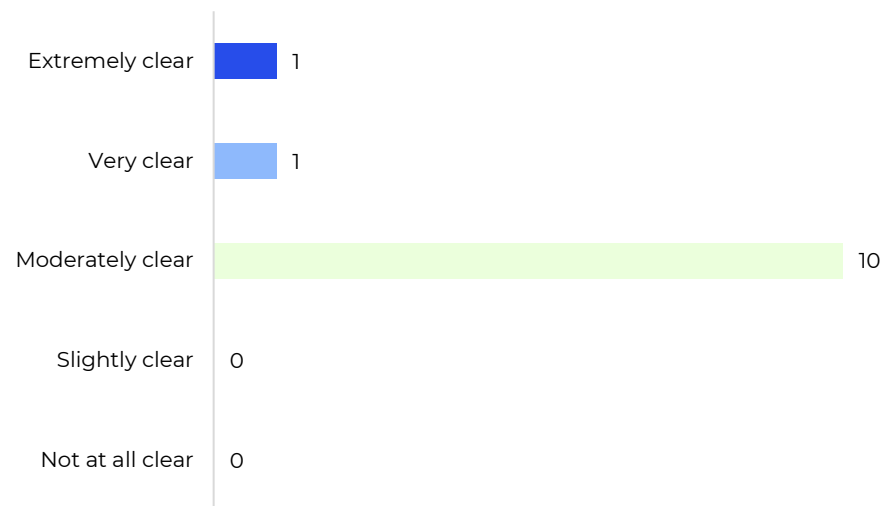
Staff generally reported having a positive working relationship with their board and commission members, with four respondents describing their working relationship as “very good,” and seven rating it as “good.” However, most respondents thought board and commission members had only a “moderately clear” understanding of staff’s specific role in supporting them, with only two respondents saying members had a “very clear” or “extremely clear” understanding.

Exhibit 28: Respondents Broadly Rated Their Working Relationship With Their Board and Commission Members as Positive



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #20: “How would you describe your overall working relationship with your board or commission's members?” n=12.

Exhibit 29: Nearly All Respondents Rated Their Board and Commission Members As Having a Moderately Clear Understanding of Their Role in Supporting Members



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #21: “In your opinion, how clear of an understanding do board or commission members have of your role in supporting them?” n=12.

Staff also viewed board and commission members as generally responsive to their requests, with seven respondents stating members were “responsive” or “very responsive” to their communications and requests, and the remaining five saying “neither responsive nor unresponsive.”

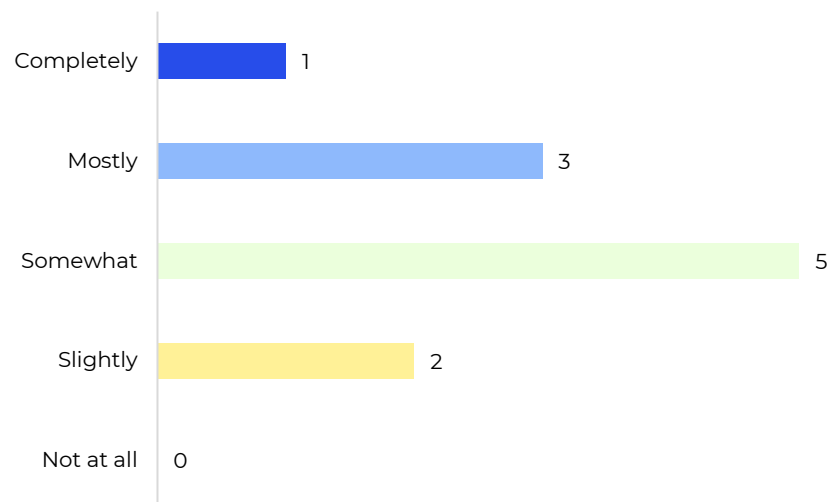
Survey Section 5: Effectiveness & Challenges

Most staff members believed their board or commission was fulfilling its purpose. Staff indicated helping members during the recommendation process through a variety of means. Staff also pointed to challenges that hinder their ability to support their board/commission, namely through vacancies and staffing and resource constraints.

Staff Have Mixed Confidence In Their Support Capacity, But Broadly Believe Boards and Commissions Are Fulfilling Their Purpose

Staff liaisons had mixed opinions on their ability to effectively support their board/commission. While four respondents said they “mostly” or “completely” had sufficient authority and access to information to effectively support their board, five said “somewhat,” and two said “slightly.”

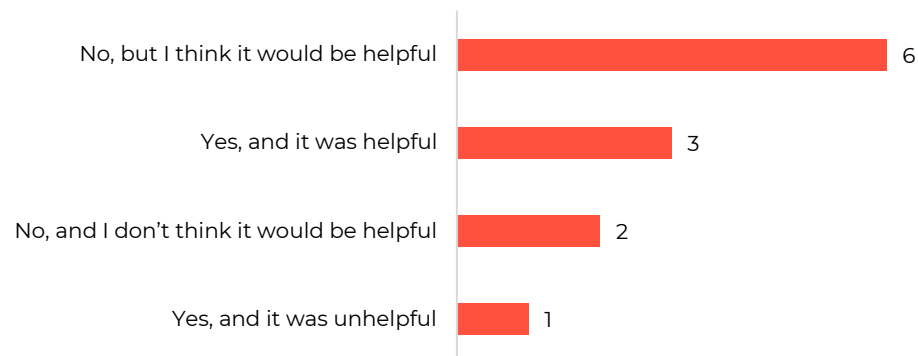
Exhibit 30: Nearly Two-Thirds of Respondents Reported Only Feeling Slightly or Somewhat Like They Had Sufficient Authority and Access to Information to Effectively Support Their Board or Commission



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #23: “Do you feel you have sufficient authority and access to information to effectively support your board or commission?” n=11.

Additionally, while only one-third of respondents said their board or commission held an annual retreat in the past year, three-fourths of respondents said holding an annual retreat either was or would be helpful.

Exhibit 31: Three-Fourths of Respondents Reported Holding An Annual Retreat Was or Would Be Helpful

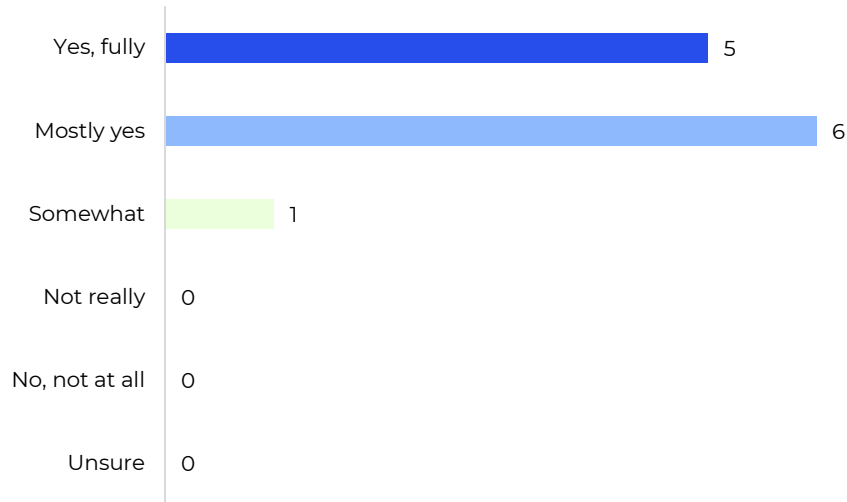


Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #24: “In the past year, did your board or commission hold an annual retreat?” n=12.

Staff liaisons believed their board was generally fulfilling its intended purpose and was aligned with the priorities of their department and the City: 11 out of 12 respondents said their board or commission was either fully or mostly fulfilling its intended purpose, and 11 out of 12 of

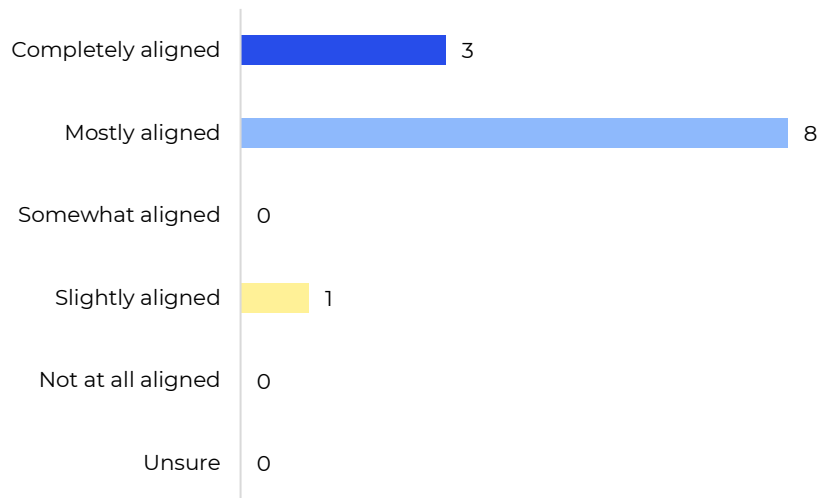
respondents said their board or commission was “mostly aligned” or “completely aligned” with departmental or City priorities. This contrasts to the member survey, where just over half of members felt that their board was fulfilling its general purpose.

Exhibit 32: Most Staff Liaisons Indicated Their Board or Commission Was Fully or Mostly Fulfilling Its Intended Purpose



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #25: “Do you believe your board or commission is fulfilling its intended purpose (as established through ballot measure, bylaws, charter, etc.)?” n=12.

Exhibit 33: Staff Liaisons Mostly Indicated Alignment Between the Priorities of their Boards and Commissions and the Priorities of their Department/the City



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #26: “To what extent are your board or commission's priorities aligned with the priorities of your department/the City?” n=12.

Staff Play an Instrumental Role in the Recommendation Process

Boards and commissions often make recommendations in their advisory or oversight capacities. Ten out of 12 staff members indicated that, in the past year, their board or commission made one or more recommendations to the City. Among staff members whose boards or commissions made recommendations to the City, providing administrative assistance and guiding members through the recommendation drafting process were the top ways staff liaisons reported assisting during the recommendation process, with several staff members also indicating they provided subject matter expertise.

Exhibit 34: Staff Most Commonly Assisted Members During the Recommendation Process By Providing Administrative Assistance and Guiding Board and Commission Members Through The Drafting Process



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #28: "In what ways did you assist board members during the recommendation process? (Select all that apply)" n=10. Respondents were only able to answer this question if they answered "Yes" to question #27: "In the past year, has your board made recommendation(s) to the City?"

Challenges Identified by Staff Included Insufficient Staff Liaison Capacity and Lack of Funding

When asked to identify their top concerns in the role, staff liaisons most frequently selected insufficient staff liaison capacity and lack of funding or resources. The high number of vacant board and commission positions, limited influence over the City, and lack of subject matter expertise among members were also commonly ranked. Relatedly, one respondent cited the length of time it takes for the Mayor's Office to move forward with board and commission appointments.

Exhibit 35: Respondents Most Frequently Cited Lack of Funding or Resources and Insufficient Staff Liaison Capacity As Their Top Concerns



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #29: "Please select your top concerns in your role supporting your board or commission. (Select all that apply)" n=12.

Within open-ended responses, staff liaisons expanded on vacancy challenges. One respondent described their biggest challenge as "maintaining a full board... with no vacant seats." A separate respondent noted how the work of their board was "a lot to ask [of] volunteers," which could potentially contribute to the level of vacancies. They suggested offering small stipends for transportation or meals to make the position more accessible for low-income residents and show appreciation for their work. Similarly, when asked what changes would help them better support their board, one staff liaison listed "additional support with ongoing board recruitment when vacancies exist," with another stating they would like a "clear list of who liaisons should reach out to when it comes to different things," such as what to do when a board or commission member resigns.

In open-ended responses, staff liaisons suggested a variety of changes to improve the experience of liaisons and members and to improve how boards and commissions operate. These included:

- **Increasing staff capacity** by hiring additional staff, providing dedicated support from the IT Department to perform website and Granicus updates, and ensuring boards and commissions have staff assigned to help fill vacant positions.
- **Expanding board member training** by implementing a board or commission retreat/strategic planning day, creating a department-specific onboarding packet and orientation, holding specific onboarding events for Chairs and Vice Chairs, and having an in-person option for the trainings mandated by the City Clerk's Office.
- **Lowering barriers to board participation** by providing small stipends to members for transportation or meals and allowing members to meet virtually to achieve a quorum.

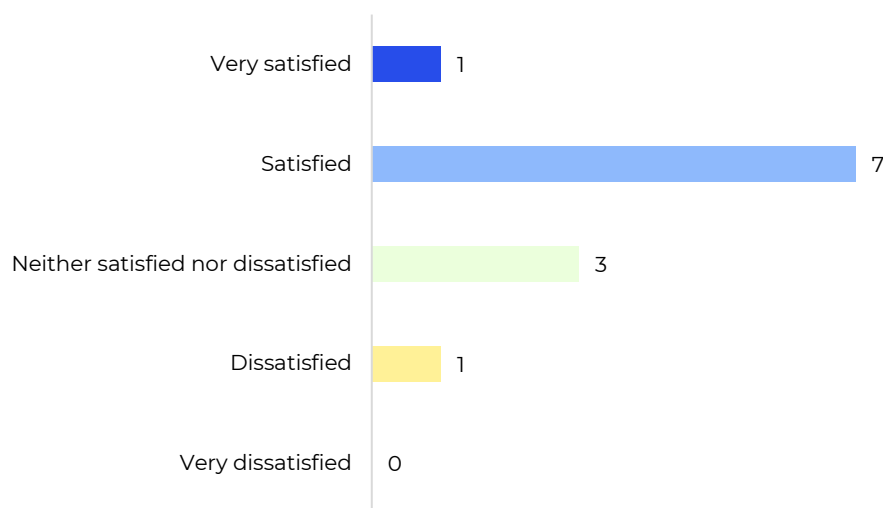
(staff described members living far away and/or safety concerns with late-night meetings at City Hall).

- **Speeding up the recruitment process** by letting departments and commissions screen candidates themselves (removing additional interviews from Councilmembers).

Survey Section 6: Satisfaction & General Feedback

Staff overall expressed satisfaction with their role supporting their board or commission, with two-thirds of staff responding they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied,” three responding they were “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,” and one responding they were “dissatisfied.”

Exhibit 36: Three-Fourths of Staff Reported Feeling Satisfied or Very Satisfied With Their Staff Liaison Role



Source: Auditor analysis of staff survey question #33: “Overall, how satisfied are you with your role supporting your board or commission?” n=12.

Despite feeling satisfied overall with their role, in closing comments, staff reiterated a desire for greater recognition of their workload. One respondent wrote that they “sense the board members being frustrated by limited staff capacity” and that “leadership should have a better understanding of the staff time required to support these bodies meaningfully.”

CONCLUSION

Oakland's boards and commissions play an important role in connecting residents to local government and informing City decision-making with community perspectives. Survey responses indicate that board and commission members are highly committed to public service and value the role boards and commissions play in providing an outlet for community input. The findings also highlight opportunities to strengthen boards and commissions so they operate more efficiently and play a stronger role in City decision-making.

Board and commission members and staff liaisons identified several recurring challenges, including slow appointment processing, inconsistent onboarding and training, staffing and resource constraints, difficulty accessing information, unclear board and commission duties and goals, and uncertainty about how board and commission recommendations are considered by City leadership. Addressing these issues can improve the experiences of board and commission members and City staff and strengthen the effectiveness and impact of Oakland's boards and commissions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We appreciate the City Administration's participation, including staff from the City Clerk's Office, for their insight and collaboration during the survey process. We are also thankful for the board and commission members, and staff liaisons, who replied to this survey. We give special thanks to Animal Services Director Joe DeVries and former Library Commissioner Mary Forte, who pretested our survey instruments and gave valuable insight from the perspectives of staff and members. Last, we want to acknowledge the tremendous work of the Office of the City Auditor's Graduate Student Intern, Gretchen Rooney, who compiled the population of boards and commissions, designed and implemented the survey, analyzed its results, and wrote this report as part of her studies at the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

The Office of the City Auditor administered two confidential surveys in June 2026—one for current board and commission members and one for current staff liaisons—through a web-based survey tool. The surveys were open for approximately three weeks, and closed on July 14, 2026. Question types for both surveys were varied, including multiple-choice, open-ended, and scaled questions. (See Appendix E for the survey instruments.) Participation was voluntary, and respondents could skip any question.

Boards & Commissions Member Survey

Survey Design. The Boards & Commissions Member survey contained 29 questions, designed to gauge members' experience serving on and satisfaction with the City of Oakland's boards and commissions and identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. The survey was divided into six sections, plus an optional three-question demographics section at the end.

Prior to launching the survey, we pretested the survey instrument with a former City board member to help ensure the questions were clear and relevant to their role. We incorporated their feedback into the final version.

Participants & Sampling. Due to varying availability of board and commission member email addresses, we collected responses via email where possible and via a link-based collector as needed. In total, we sent surveys to an estimated 257 board and commission members.

The survey was sent out via email on June 23, 2026, to 207 current board and commission members, representing 26 boards and commissions. Due to delays in obtaining the email addresses of members of two boards, we sent the survey via email to an additional 7 board members, representing one additional board, on July 6, 2026, and an additional 10 board members, representing one additional board, on July 9, 2026, bringing the total number of board and commission members surveyed via direct email to 224. (This number excludes two bounced emails.)

We also collected responses via a URL collector, as there were three boards where we were unable to access board members' email addresses. Instead, we emailed the survey URL to the staff liaison, and they then forwarded the web link to their respective board and commission memberships.

The survey was open for three weeks. We sent one reminder email to participants who had not completed the survey on June 30, 2026, and we sent a final reminder email to participants who had not completed the survey on July 13, 2026.³⁵ The survey closed on July 14, 2026.

A total of 82 board members responded to the survey (69 responses via the email collector, and 13 responses via the web link). The response rate for the email collector was 31 percent. We

³⁵ Reminder emails were only sent to board members who received the survey via email (as opposed to URL collector).

estimate a response rate for the web link of 39 percent (13/33 potential respondents) but are unable to calculate an exact response rate for the URL collector, as we did not have receipt for the number of recipients.

Data Analysis. Responses to scaled and multiple-choice questions were analyzed quantitatively. Open-ended responses were reviewed qualitatively and grouped thematically.

Limitations. This survey is based on participants' self-reported perceptions and reflects the board and commission members' views at the time the survey was conducted. Due to the voluntary nature of the survey, it's possible those who completed the survey had stronger opinions on the issue. Responses should indicate perceived experiences and opinions rather than factual determinations.

For three boards, responses were collected via a URL collector rather than direct email, which affected response tracking and follow-up reminder outreach for those members. Additionally, we received contact information for the members of two boards/commissions after the survey had already opened, so they had a shorter time window to respond to the survey.

Boards & Commissions Staff Survey

Survey Design. The Boards & Commissions Staff survey contained 34 questions, designed to better understand the experiences of the staff liaisons that support the City of Oakland's boards and commissions and to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. The survey was divided into six sections.

Prior to launching the survey, we pretested the survey instrument with a former City staff liaison to help ensure the questions were clear and relevant to their role. We incorporated their feedback into the final version.

Participants & Sampling. We sent the survey on June 24, 2026, to the email addresses of 29 current staff liaisons representing 32 boards and commissions. The survey was open for three weeks. We sent one reminder email to participants who had not completed the survey on June 30, 2026, and one final reminder email on July 13, 2026. The survey closed on July 14, 2026.

The survey received a total of 14 responses out of 29 staff liaisons, for a response rate of 48 percent.

Data Analysis. Responses to scaled and multiple-choice questions were analyzed quantitatively. Open-ended responses were reviewed qualitatively and grouped thematically.

Limitations. This survey is based on participants' self-reported perceptions and reflects the views of staff liaisons at the time the survey was conducted. Due to the voluntary nature of the survey, it's possible those who completed the survey had stronger opinions on the issue. Responses should indicate perceived experiences and opinions rather than factual determinations. Due to the small sample size (n=14), findings may not be representative of all staff liaisons' experiences, and results should be interpreted with this limitation in mind.

Omitted Boards & Commissions

We chose to omit surveying the members and staff liaisons of several Oakland boards and commissions, because: 1) the boards appeared to be inactive, 2) they primarily operate independently of the City of Oakland, 3) we were unable to obtain members' contact information, or 4) for other reasons detailed below. The omitted boards and our reasoning are detailed in Exhibit 37.

Exhibit 37: 12 Boards and Commissions Were Omitted From Surveys Due to Being Inactive, Operating Independently of the City, or For Other Reasons

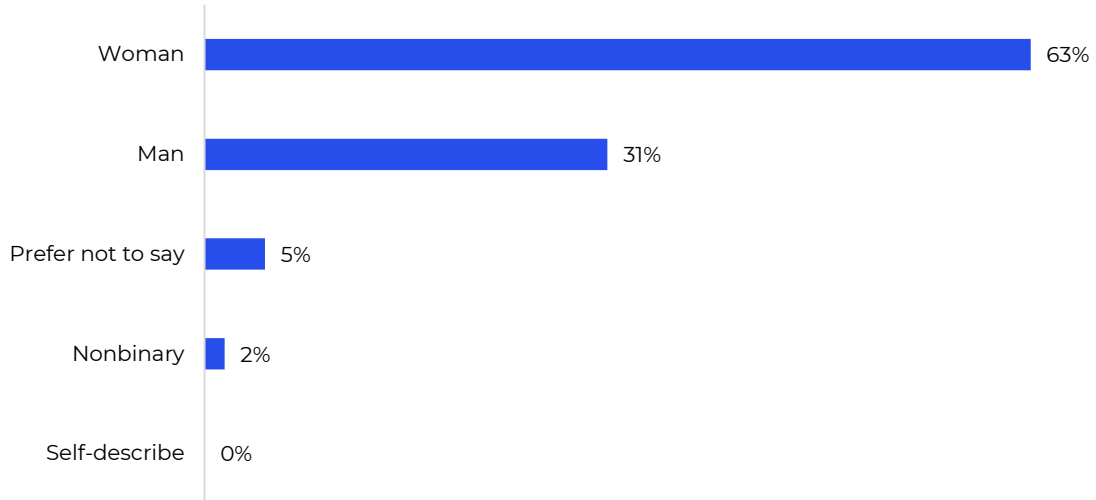
Board/Commission	Reason for Omission
Children's Fairyland Board	Operates independently from the City of Oakland
Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) Task Force	Appears to be inactive
Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness Council (EMADPC)	Only meets approximately once per year; employee committee
Oakland - Alameda Coliseum JPA Commission	Operates independently from the City of Oakland
Oakland Army Base Jobs Oversight Commission	Appears to be inactive
Oakland Housing Authority	Operates independently from the City of Oakland
Oakland ROCKS	Employee committee, not for public oversight
Paramount Theater of the Arts Board	Operates independently from the City of Oakland
Port of Oakland Board of Commissioners	Reported that they operate differently from other boards in the City; opted out of participating
Public Safety and Services Violence Prevention Oversight Commission	No longer active; was replaced by the Oakland Public Safety Planning and Oversight Commission (OPSPOC)
Redistricting Commission	Currently inactive as it meets every ten years
Solid Waste Collection Services Advisory Committee	This is a newly created committee, so it did not have appointed members as of June 2026

Source: Auditor summary of omitted boards and commissions.

APPENDIX B: MEMBER SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

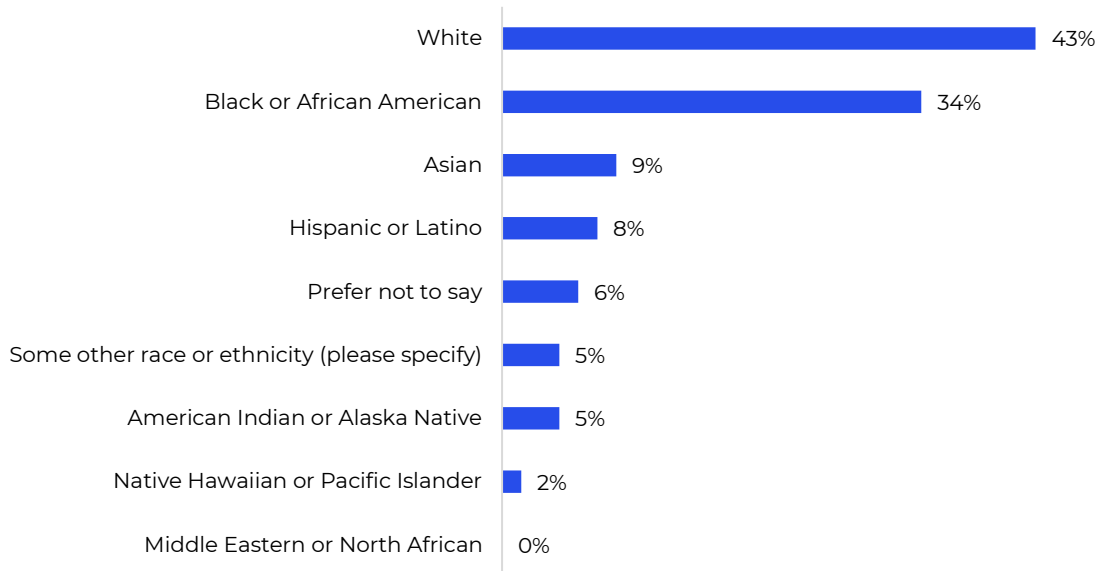
This section provides the demographic breakdown for the Boards & Commissions Member Survey. Please note that all responses were optional.

Exhibit 38: Nearly Two-Thirds of Respondents Identified as a Woman



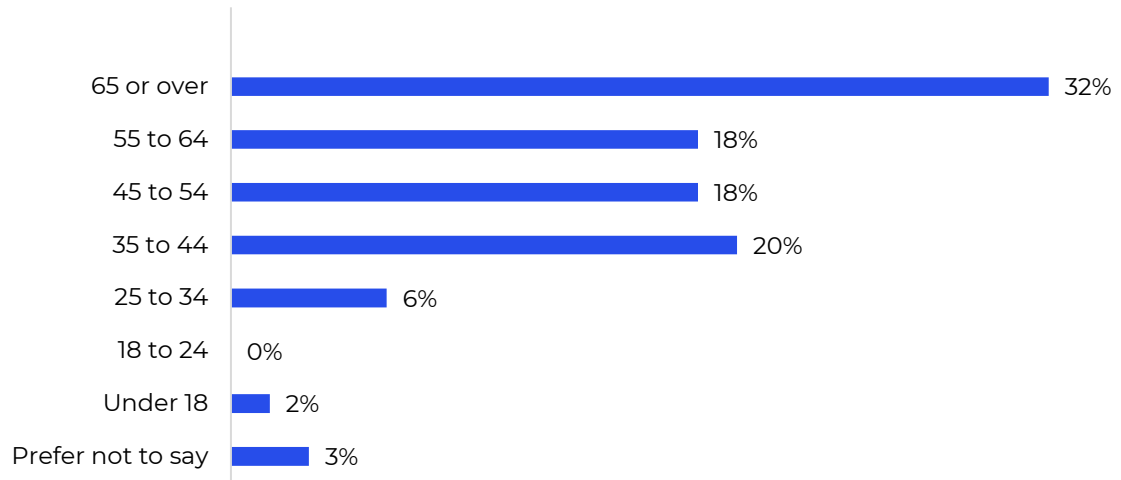
Source: Auditor analysis of survey question #27: "How would you describe your gender?" n=65.

Exhibit 39: 43 Percent of Respondents Identified as White and One-Third of Respondents Identified as Black or African American



Source: Auditor analysis of survey question #28: "How would you describe your race and/or ethnicity? (Select all that apply)" n=65.

Exhibit 40: Nearly One-Third of Respondents Were 65 or Older



Source: Auditor analysis of survey question #29: "What is your age?" n=65.

APPENDIX C: LIST OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS REPRESENTED IN MEMBER SURVEY

At least one member from each of the following boards and commissions responded to the Boards & Commissions Member Survey. See Exhibit 41 for the 29 boards and commissions represented.

Exhibit 41: Board Members From 29 Different Boards and Commissions Were Represented in Boards & Commissions Member Survey

Board or Commission
Affordable Housing & Infrastructure Bond (I-Bond) Public Oversight Committee
Alameda County-Oakland Community Action Partnership Administating Board
Bicyclist and Pedestrian Advisory Commission
Budget Advisory Commission
Business Tax Board of Review
Cannabis Regulatory Commission
Children's Fund Planning and Oversight Committee (OFCY)
Children's Initiative Oversight Commission
Civil Service Board
Commission on Homelessness
Community Policing Advisory Board
Cultural Affairs Commission
Head Start Advisory Board
Housing, Residential Rent, and Relocation Board
Library Commission
Mayor's Commission on Aging
Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities
Oakland Public Safety Planning & Oversight Commission
Oakland Workforce Development Board
Oakland Youth Commission
Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission
Police & Fire Retirement Board
Police Commission
Police Commission Selection Panel
Privacy Advisory Commission
Public Art Advisory Committee
Public Ethics Commission
Sugar Sweetened Beverages Community Advisory Board
Wildfire Prevention Commission

Source: Auditor analysis of survey question #3: "Please write the name of the City of Oakland board or commission you currently serve on below. If you currently serve on more than one City of Oakland board or commission, please select one board or commission to base your survey responses on, and write the name of that board or commission below." n=81.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF CITY OF OAKLAND BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Exhibit 42 shows a list of Oakland’s boards and commissions, created using publicly available data on Oakland’s boards and commissions webpage and Granicus, as well as information received from current staff liaisons. The table includes information on each board or commission’s authorizing ordinance/measure, the year it was established, current membership makeup, and the availability of information such as bylaws and meeting minutes. Text is hyperlinked where the data is available online.

Exhibit 42: Oakland Boards and Commissions Vary in Their Purpose, Membership Requirements, and Availability of Relevant Documents

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Affordable Housing & Infrastructure Bond (I-Bond) Public Oversight Committee	Will review relevant financial and operational reports related to the expenditure of Affordable Housing & Infrastructure (Measure KK, 2016) bond proceeds and provide reports to the City Council when necessary and evaluate the impacts and outcomes of bond expenditures on the bond measure's stated goals, including social equity, anti-displacement, and affordable housing.	Active	2017	City Council Resolution No. 87010 C.M.S.; Created pursuant to Measure KK, 2016	9	5*	4	Four times per year	None on Oakland website	Bylaws	2018-2026 meeting minutes on Oakland website	2018-2026 meeting agendas on Oakland website	
Alameda County - Oakland Community Action Partnership Adminstrating Board (AC-OCAP)	Members are responsible for planning, developing, and executing the local Community Action Plan for alleviating poverty and working toward institutional change to enhance the ability of low-income residents to achieve self-sufficiency in Oakland and throughout Alameda County (excluding the City of Berkeley).	Active	1971	Established under federal 1979 45 CFR 1062.200; Resolution No. 83589 C.M.S.	18	18*	0	Monthly	Strategic plan posted on Oakland website	Bylaws	Meeting minutes available online	Meeting agendas since 2018 on Oakland website	Info on how to apply on website

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Bicyclist & Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC)	The purpose is to advise City Council and staff on bicyclist- and pedestrian-specific policies, projects, and programs, and on the accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians in all transportation plans, policies, projects and programs. The Commission shall serve as a resource to City staff and a forum for the public's participation in and review of the City's efforts to improve the safety and access of walking and bicycling in Oakland.	Active	2014	Ordinance No. 13215 C.M.S.	9	8*	1*	Monthly	Annual chair reports posted on Oakland website	Bylaws	Meeting minutes since 2014 on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2014 on Oakland website	Divided into multiple committees
Budget Advisory Commission	Advises the City Council on expenditures, revenues, and financial policies. The BAC's advice generally takes the form of informational reports submitted to the Finance & Management Committee of the City Council.	Active	2015	Ordinance No. 13337 C.M.S	15	9*	6	Monthly	Budget process reports posted on Oakland website	Unable to locate	Meeting minutes not available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2022 on Oakland website	
Business Tax Board of Review	The Business Tax Board of Review reviews taxpayers appeals on assessments under the business license tax laws.	Active	1975	Ordinance No. 9177 C.M.S. (Section 5.04.520 of the Oakland Municipal Code)	5	4*	1*	Monthly	None on Oakland website	Unable to locate	Meeting minutes not available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2019 on Oakland website	
Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC)	The CRC makes recommendations to the City Council regarding the licensure, taxation, and regulations of cannabis for adult use and oversees the implementation of the private Adult Cannabis Offenses Policy.	Active	2004	Ordinance No. 12694 C.M.S.; Created pursuant to Measure Z, 2004	11	7*	4	Monthly	Two annual reports posted on Oakland website	Bylaws	Meeting minutes since 2026 on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2026 on Oakland website	Commission authority FAQ

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Children's Fairyland Board	This is a nonprofit public benefit corporation organized to assist Oakland Children's Fairyland by providing funds and services. The Board of Directors works to develop, cultivate an advocate greater public interest in Children's Fairyland	See note	1995	N/A; see note	11			Every other month			No meeting minutes available online	No agendas available online	Operates independently as a 501(c)(3); does not have a page on Oakland website (but is listed on Granicus); Board of Trustees is listed within the City's conflict of interest code (OMC 3.16)
Children's Initiative Oversight Commission	The Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) is a 2018 Charter Amendment passed by the voters of Oakland to deepen our early investment in children and support them through college graduation, by dramatically expanding access to high-quality preschool and providing college access, mentorship, and scholarship support services for students to obtain 4-year or 2-year college or technical degrees.	Active	2018	Article XVI of the Oakland City Charter, through Measure AA, 2018, Resolution 87485	15	9*	6	Monthly	According to Charter, must prepare Three-Year Strategic Investment Plans (plans not available on Oakland website)	Bylaws	Some agendas and meeting recordings online	Some agendas and meeting recordings online	
Civil Service Board	Responsible for enforcing the Civil Service Rules, approving the exemption of classifications from the competitive process, and approving classification specifications, including the creation of new classifications and revisions to existing ones. The Board also serves as an appellate body for employees who wish to challenge employment-related decisions.	Active	1988	O.M.C. 2.08.030	7			Monthly	None on Oakland website	Personnel Manual	Meeting minutes since 2018 on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2018 on Oakland website	

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Commission on Homelessness	Provides oversight of the Oakland vacant property tax received by the City of Oakland for homeless services and makes recommendations to the City Council for strategies to remedy homelessness.	Active	2018	2018 Measure W; Authority expanded via Ordinance No. 13584 C.M.S., 2020 Measure Q	9	8*	1	Monthly	Required via Ordinance 13584 to publish an annual report	Bylaws	2026 meeting minutes on Oakland website	2026 meeting agendas on Oakland website	
Community Policing Advisory Board (CPAB)	Supports block, neighborhood, and community empowerment, civic engagement and public safety by encouraging and supporting connection, collaboration and problem solving between neighbors and among residents throughout Oakland.	Active	2005	Resolution No. 79235 C.M.S	15	8*	7	Monthly	None on Oakland website	Bylaws	Meeting minutes since 2018 on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2018 on Oakland website	Org chart
Community Workforce Agreement (CWA) Task Force		See note	2019	Resolution No. 87293 C.M.S.									Inactive – dissolved in 2022; not on Granicus
Cultural Affairs Commission	An advisory body to the Mayor, City Council, and City Administrator on matters affecting cultural development in Oakland. The Commission acts as ambassadors and advocates for arts and culture in the city.	Active	1991	Ordinance No. 11323 C.M.S.	11			Every other month	None on Oakland website	Not available online	Meeting minutes since 2025 on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2025 on Oakland website	
Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness Council (EMADPC)	Pursuant to Article 10 of the California Emergency Services Act, local governments may establish a disaster council by ordinance to develop plans for meeting any condition constituting a local emergency or state of emergency.	Active	2007	Ordinance No. 12841 C.M.S., codified in Chapter 8.50 of the Oakland Municipal Code				Roughly once per year					Not on Granicus; open to the public but composed primarily of City employees

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Head Start Advisory Board	Provides oversight of quality services for Head Start children and families and for making decisions related to program design and implementation. These decisions and recommendations are shared with the City Council annually or as requested.	Active	2002	Ordinance No. 13230 C.M.S.; Created pursuant to federal program	9	5*	4*	Monthly	None on Oakland website	FY 2024-25 bylaws online	2026 meeting minutes on Oakland website	2026 agendas on Oakland website	
Housing, Residential Rent and Relocation Board	Enforces the Rent Adjustment Ordinance that is set out by the Oakland City Council and fosters fair housing for a diverse population of renters. The board also hears appeals from decisions by Rent Adjustment Program hearing officers and develops and amends regulations for the Rent Adjustment Program. May also make recommendations to the City Council or appropriate City Council committee pertaining to the residential rent, eviction or other City housing policy.	Active	1996	Ordinance No. 11954 C.M.S.	13	8*	5	Twice per month	None on Oakland website		Meeting minutes since 2018 on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2018 available on Oakland website	
Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB)	Identifies historic landmarks in Oakland, conducts design review hearings on historic properties, and advises the Planning Commission and City Council on preservation.	Active	1973	Ordinance No. 8883 C.M.S.; Chapters 17.05 and 17.03 of the Planning Code also note further terms of the Board	7			Monthly	None on Oakland website	Bylaws	Meeting minutes since 2020 on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2019 on Oakland website	

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Library Commission	Makes recommendations to the Oakland City Council; provides citizen oversight of Measure C and Measure D tax funds; and advocates on behalf of Library programs and services.	Active	1969	Ordinance No. 8064 C.M.S.; Measure C (Fund 2241) and Measure D (Fund 2243)	15			Monthly	Posts annual reports to Oakland Library website		Meeting minutes since 2023 available on Oakland library website	Meeting agendas since 2023 available on Oakland library website	Multiple committees
Mayor's Commission on Aging (MCOA)	Works in partnership with the Department of Human Services to develop and evaluate programs to address the special needs of our City's diverse senior residents. A primary function of the Commission is to support the City's network of Senior Centers.	Active	1980	Ordinance No. 9921 C.M.S.	11	10*	1	Monthly	Annual reports and strategic plans on Oakland website		Meeting minutes since 2018 available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2018 available on Oakland website	
Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities (MCPD)	Represents and addresses the concerns of the disability community. Established by City ordinance in 1980, the MCPD is an appointed group of volunteers who are committed to integrating people with disabilities into all aspects of the community. A majority of the commission is composed of people with disabilities.	Active	1980	1980 Ordinance No. 9968 C.M.S., amended by Ordinance 13334 C.M.S in 2015	11	11*	0	Monthly	Annual reports since 2006 and strategic plans since 2017 on Oakland website		Meeting minutes since 2013 available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2013 available on Oakland website	

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Oakland - Alameda Coliseum JPA Commission	A joint powers agency established by the City of Oakland and the County of Alameda to finance improvements to the Coliseum Complex and to manage the Coliseum Complex on behalf of the City and the County.	See note	1990	Joint Powers Agreement	4			Monthly					The Board of Commissioners includes two members of the Oakland City Council and two members of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. The city and county each also appoint two non-elected commissioners.
Oakland Army Base Jobs Oversight Commission/ Community Jobs Oversight Commission	The Community Jobs Oversight Commission ensures compliance with workforce training, local hire compliance, and job quality on the Oakland Army Base.	See note	2012	Ordinance No. 13140 C.M.S.	11			See note			Meeting minutes from 2014, 2020, 2021, 2023, and 2026 online	Meeting agendas from 2014, 2020, 2021, 2023, and 2026 online	Commission most recently met in March 2026; appears to have been largely inactive between 2021 and 2026.
Oakland Fund for Children & Youth- Planning and Oversight Committee (OFCY)	Is the public body that oversees the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY). The Planning and Oversight Committee (POC) is comprised of 17 Oakland residents, appointed by the City Council and the Mayor. One adult and one youth is appointed by each City Councilmember, and one representative is appointed by the Office of the Mayor.	Active	1996	Article XIII of the Oakland City Charter	17	13*	4*	Twice per month	Strategic plans on OFCY website	Bylaws	Meeting minutes since 2013 available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2013 available on Oakland website	

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Oakland Housing Authority	Administers the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 8 program in Oakland. They also own and oversee the management of hundreds of units of legacy public housing and continue to develop new affordable housing.	See note	1938	Ordinance No. 6341 C.M.S.	7			Monthly	Annual reports and plans posted on website	Bylaws			Operates independently of the City
Oakland Police and Fire Retirement Board	The Oakland Police and Fire Retirement System is dedicated to protection and prudent investing of the pension funds for the benefit of the PFRS retirees and beneficiaries.	Active	1951	Article XXVI of the Oakland City Charter	7	7*	0	Monthly	Annual reports for 2024 and 2025 on Oakland website			Meeting agendas since 2018 available on Oakland website	
Oakland ROCKS		See note											Employee committee, not a public commission
Oakland Workforce Development Board	Created under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Oakland Workforce Development Board (WDB) oversees city-wide employment and training programs. These programs connect Oaklanders with career opportunities and help businesses find skilled talent.	Active	2016	Section 107 of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 ³⁶	15	14*	1	Unclear	None on Oakland website		Some meeting minutes available on Oakland website	Some meeting agendas available on Oakland website	

³⁶ We were not able to find an ordinance or measure that established the Oakland Workforce Development Board. According to [Resolution 87699 C.M.S.](#), “the Oakland Workforce Investment Board was dissolved and replaced by the Oakland Workforce Development Board established by Executive Order No. 2016-01, on March 31, 2016.” An [informational report](#) to the Community and Economic Development Committee, dated April 14, 2026, also references the establishment of the Workforce Development Board by executive order.

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Oakland Youth Commission (Previously named the Youth Advisory Commission)	Empowers youth to enter the public arena and tackle important issues related to youth. Formed in 1985, OYC develops young leaders in Oakland to engage with city affairs and advise City Council and the Mayor on youth priorities	Active	1985	Ordinance No. 10545 C.M.S.; Most recently amended in 2022 by Ordinance No. 13690	20	15*	0	Twice per month	2024-25, 2023-24, and 2022-23 annual reports on Oakland website	N/A	Meeting minutes since 2019 available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2019 available on Oakland website	Divided into four subcommittees
Paramount Theater of the Arts Board	The Paramount Theatre of the Arts is a non-profit corporation organized for the purpose of operating and maintaining the Paramount Theatre for the benefit of the City of Oakland.	See note		N/A- private nonprofit organization	9			Every other month					Operates independently of the City (private nonprofit organization)
Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC)	Is responsible for advising the Mayor, Council, City Administrator, and the Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development Department on all matters relating to the general policy and operation of the parks and recreation system.	Active	1969	Ordinance No. 13622 C.M.S.; Measure Q	11	10*	1	Monthly	None on Oakland website	Bylaws (approved in Jan 2025)	Meeting minutes since 2018 available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2018 available on Oakland website	
Planning Commission	Promotes the orderly growth and development of the City through studies, decisions on development proposals, policy recommendations to the City Council, and related activities.	Active	1932	Ordinance No. 192 C.M.S.	7			Twice per month	None on Oakland website	Bylaws	Meeting minutes since 2016 available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2016 available on Oakland website	Divided into multiple committees

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Police Commission	Purpose is to oversee the Oakland Police Department to ensure its policies, practices, and customs conform to national standards of constitutional policing, and to oversee the Office of the Inspector General, led by the civilian Office of Inspector General for the Department, as well as the Community Police Review Agency (CPRA), led by the Executive Director of the Agency, which investigates police misconduct and recommends discipline.	Active	2016	Oakland City Charter Article VI, Section 604	9	6	3	Twice per month	Annual reports on website	Rules of order	Most meeting minutes available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2018 available on Oakland website	Multiple Ad Hoc committees
Police Commission Selection Panel	The Selection Panel, with the assistance of the City Administrator, solicits and reviews applications, and interviews applicants interested in serving on the Police Commission.	Active	2016	Oakland City Charter Article VI, Section 604	9	8*	1	From February to August, meeting monthly or more often as required		Procedure Manual	Some meeting minutes available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2018 available on Oakland website	
Port of Oakland Board of Commissioners	The Charter of the City of Oakland vests the Board of Port Commissioners with exclusive control and management of the Port department. The Board consists of seven members nominated by the mayor and appointed by the City Council for four year terms.	Active	1988	Article VII of Oakland City Charter	7	7	0	Every other week			Some meeting minutes available on Port of Oakland website	Meeting agendas available on Port of Oakland website	
Privacy Advisory Commission	Provides advice to the City of Oakland on best practices to protect Oaklanders' privacy rights in connection with the City's purchase and use of surveillance equipment and other technology that collects or stores our data.	Active	2016	Ordinance No. 13349 C.M.S.	9	6*	4	Monthly			Some meeting minutes available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2018 available on Oakland website	

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Public Art Advisory Committee	Works with staff to develop program policies and procedures and approves sites, budgets, selection methods, and proposals for public art in Oakland.	Active	1989	Ordinance No. 11086 C.M.S.	9	9*	0	Monthly			Meeting recordings since 2025 available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2018 available on Oakland website	
Public Ethics Commission	An independent commission made up of Oakland residents and charged with ensuring fairness, openness, honesty and integrity in Oakland City government. Objective is to make sure Oakland public officials and government decision-making processes operate in a fair and unbiased manner, to promote transparency in Oakland government, and to promote public trust in our local political system. Duties include ensuring compliance with the City of Oakland's government ethics, campaign finance, transparency, and lobbyist registration laws.	Active	1996	Oakland City Charter, Article VI, Section 603	7	7	0	Every other week		Policies and procedures listed on Oakland website	Meeting minutes since 2019 available on Oakland website	Agendas since 2019 available on Oakland website	

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Public Safety Planning & Oversight Commission (OPSPOC)	Measure NN created OPSPOC to oversee the departments receiving funding and to develop a four-year Community Violence Reduction Plan (CVRP). In 2025, the OPSPOC started developing the CVRP in collaboration with community stakeholders and the three city agencies that receive the bulk of Measure NN funding—the Oakland Police Department, the Department of Violence Prevention, and the Oakland Fire Department. OPSPOC seeks to use an evidence-based, balanced approach to public safety, promote accountability for taxpayer dollars and prioritize public safety solutions from community members most impacted by violence and crime.	Active	2025	Measure NN; Ordinance No. 13838 C.M.S.	5	5*	0	Monthly	Required to submit a four-year Community Violence Reduction Plan; 2026-30 plan can be found here	Bylaws	Most meeting recordings available on Oakland website	Meeting agendas since 2025 available on Oakland website	Measure NN created this commission to replace the Public Safety and Services Oversight Commission
Redistricting Commission	The Oakland Redistricting Commission sets new district boundaries every ten years for the City Council and School Board, in accordance with the US Census.	See note	2014	Measure DD, Article II, Section 220 of the City Charter	15 (2 alt.)	0	15	Monthly (not currently active)	N/A	Amended Rules of Procedure	2021-2023 meeting minutes available on Oakland website	2022-2023 meeting agendas and recordings on Oakland website	Currently inactive. Meets each year after the Census. Next Redistricting Commission application period will be opened in January 2030.

Board Name	Description	Status	Year Established	Authorizing Ordinance/ Measure	Authorized # of Members	# of Current Board Members	# of Current Vacancies	Meeting Frequency	Strategic Plan/Annual Reports	Bylaws	Meeting Minutes	Meeting Agendas	Notes
Solid Waste Collection Services Advisory Committee	Will provide advice with respect to renewals, Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and other phases of solicitation and implementation of the City's waste, organics, and recycling collection services. Committee members will be engaged in an advisory role relating to the provision of solid waste collection services, including by providing comments on the future solicitation of proposals for waste and recycling collection services and any renewal considerations for the current contracts.	See note	2026	Resolution No. 90537 C.M.S.	7	0	7	Four times per year	None on Oakland website	Unable to locate	N/A-commission has not met yet	N/A-commission has not met yet	Created in 2026. Had not held a meeting yet. Does not have a page on Oakland website.
Sugar Sweetened Beverages (SSB) Community Advisory Board	Advises the City Council and makes recommendations on how and to what extent the Council should establish and/or fund programs to prevent or reduce the health consequences of the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages in Oakland communities.	Active	2016	Measure HH 2016; Resolution No. 86161 C.M.S.	9	4*	5	Monthly	Required by resolution to publish an annual report	Bylaws	Meeting minutes since 2018 posted on Oakland website	Agendas since 2018 posted on Oakland website	
Wildfire Prevention Commission (WPC)	This Commission serves as the public oversight body for Measure MM funding, providing an estimated \$2.7 million annually to support vegetation management activities in Oakland to reduce wildfire risk.	Active	2025	Measure MM 2024; Ordinance No. 13846	7	7*	0	Monthly	None on Oakland website	N/A	Some meeting minutes available on Oakland website	2026 agendas and videos of meetings posted on Oakland website	

*Verified with staff liaison.

Source: Auditor analysis based on publicly-available data on the City of Oakland's "Boards & Commissions" webpage and the City of Oakland's "Boards & Commissions" Granicus page. Information on the current number of members and vacancies was verified with staff liaisons, when available (as denoted by a star), and is reflective of their status as of July 2026.

APPENDIX E: COPIES OF SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Boards & Commissions Member Survey Instrument

A copy of the survey instrument that was distributed to board and commission members can be found below.

Boards & Commissions Member Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The Oakland City Auditor's Office is conducting this survey to better understand the experiences of City of Oakland board and commission members, and to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Responses are confidential, and we greatly appreciate your honest feedback.

Disclaimer: Artificial intelligence may be used to analyze open-ended responses. AI use would be limited to thematic analysis across open-ended responses, it would not be used to train any AI models, and staff in the Auditor's Office would review and validate the resulting themes for relevance and accuracy.

Section 1: Background

1. How many City of Oakland boards or commissions do you currently serve on?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3 or more

2. Cumulatively, how many years of experience do you have serving on City of Oakland boards and commissions?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years
- ☐ 7-9 years
- ☐ 10 or more years

3. Please write the name of the City of Oakland board or commission you currently serve on below.

If you currently serve on more than one City of Oakland board or commission, please select one board or commission to base your survey responses on, and write the name of that board or commission below.

4. On average, how many hours per week do you devote to your role as a board or commission member?

- ☐ Less than 1 hour
- ☐ 1-3 hours
- ☐ 4-6 hours
- ☐ 7-9 hours
- ☐ 10 or more hours

Boards & Commissions Member Survey

Section 2: Recruitment and Application Experience

5. How did you first hear about your current board or commission position?

- ☐ City Councilmember
- ☐ Mayor's office
- ☐ City staff member
- ☐ Board or commission member
- ☐ City website
- ☐ Word of mouth/personal network
- ☐ I sought it out myself
- ☐ Other

6. Please indicate the reason you chose to get involved with a City board or commission.
(Select all that apply)

- ☐ To give back to the community
- ☐ To influence local policy
- ☐ Interest in the specific subject area
- ☐ Encouraged by someone I know
- ☐ Professional development
- ☐ Civic duty
- ☐ Other

7. Do you have any suggestions for how the City could attract more applicants to boards and commissions?

Boards & Commissions Member Survey

Section 3: Onboarding and Training

8. How well did your onboarding and/or training prepare you for your role?

Not at all well

Slightly well

Moderately well

Very well

Extremely well

☐☐☐☐☐

9. How clearly defined are your responsibilities and duties as a board or commission member?

Not at all defined

Slightly defined

Moderately defined

Very defined

Extremely defined

☐☐☐☐☐

10. What types of trainings or resources would you have most liked to have received as a new board or commission member? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Training on board duties and bylaws
- ☐ Training on the Brown Act and conducting public meetings
- ☐ Training on ethics laws
- ☐ Equity and inclusion trainings
- ☐ Training relevant to the board's subject matter
- ☐ Training on general City government operations
- ☐ Other

11. Does your board or commission require members to have professional or subject matter expertise relevant to the board or commission's work?

- ☐ Yes, there is a formal professional experience requirement
- ☐ Yes, relevant professional or volunteer experience is expected but not formally required
- ☐ No, there are no expertise or experience requirements
- ☐ I'm not sure

12. Please briefly describe what those requirements are.

13. Before joining your board or commission, how would you rate your level of subject matter expertise relevant to the board or commission's work?

Beginner - I had little to no knowledge or experience in the subject area

Intermediate - I had a working knowledge or some relevant experience in the subject area

Advanced - I had professional or specialized expertise in the subject area

☐☐☐

Boards & Commissions Member Survey

Section 4: Meetings and Operations

14. How would you characterize the frequency of your board or commission's general meetings?

Far too infrequent	Somewhat too infrequent	About the right frequency	Somewhat too frequent	Far too frequent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. In the past year, approximately how often have your board or commission's general meetings been cancelled?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once or twice
- ☐ 3-5 times
- ☐ More than 5 times
- ☐ I do not remember

16. What was the most common reason for a meeting to be cancelled?

- ☐ Lack of quorum
- ☐ Lack of agenda items
- ☐ Reason was unclear
- ☐ Other

17. What aspects of how your board or commission operates work well? What aspects could be improved?

Boards & Commissions Member Survey

Section 5: Effectiveness, Influence, and Challenges

18. How often are your board or commission's recommendations adopted by the City?

- ☐ They are never adopted
- ☐ They are rarely adopted
- ☐ They are sometimes adopted
- ☐ They are often adopted
- ☐ They are almost always adopted
- ☐ Not applicable - we don't make recommendations

19. How would you rate the working relationship between your board or commission and the City Council?

Very weak	Weak	Neither weak nor strong	Strong	Very strong
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. Do you believe your board or commission is fulfilling its intended purpose (as established through ballot measure, bylaws, charter, etc)?

- ☐ Yes, fully
- ☐ Mostly yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Mostly no
- ☐ No, not at all
- ☐ Unsure

21. How would you rate the level of support you receive from City staff in carrying out your board or commission's work?

Very unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neither supportive nor unsupportive	Supportive	Very supportive
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. Please select your top concerns about serving on your board or commission. (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of funding or resources
- ☐ Lack of City staff capacity
- ☐ Limited access to City Council members
- ☐ Lack of influence over City decisions
- ☐ Lack of proper training for board members
- ☐ Lack of a clear strategic plan or vision
- ☐ High number of vacant board positions
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Boards & Commissions Member Survey

23. Out of the concerns you chose, please rank them in order of importance, with 1 being your most important concern.

- ☐ Lack of funding or resources
- ☐ Lack of City staff capacity
- ☐ Limited access to City Council members
- ☐ Lack of influence over City decisions
- ☐ Lack of proper training for board members
- ☐ Lack of a clear strategic plan or vision
- ☐ High number of vacant board positions
- ☐ [Insert text from Other]

24. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, as it relates to your service on a City board or commission.

	Strong disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My board/commission's work makes a meaningful difference in City Council decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel heard and valued in my role	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would recommend serving on a City board/commission to a friend	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My board/commission's processes and procedures are efficient and effective	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Boards & Commissions Member Survey

Section 6: General Feedback

25. What aspects of your role do you find most satisfying or fulfilling?

26. What challenges have you encountered, and what changes would most improve your experience serving on a City board or commission?

Demographics (Optional): These questions are optional and will only be used to understand the diversity of board and commission membership.

27. How would you describe your gender?

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Nonbinary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Self-describe

28. How would you describe your race and/or ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Middle Eastern or North African
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Some other race or ethnicity (please specify)

29. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 44
- ☐ 45 to 54
- ☐ 55 to 64
- ☐ 65 or over
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Boards & Commissions Staff Survey Instrument

A copy of the survey instrument that was distributed to board and commission staff liaisons can be found below.

Boards & Commissions Staff Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The Oakland City Auditor's Office is conducting this survey to better understand the experiences of City staff who support Oakland's board and commission members, and to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Responses are confidential, and we greatly appreciate your honest feedback.

Disclaimer: Artificial intelligence may be used to analyze open-ended responses. AI use would be limited to thematic analysis across open-ended responses, it would not be used to train any AI models, and staff in the Auditor's Office would review and validate the resulting themes for relevance and accuracy.

Section 1: Background

1. How many boards or commissions do you currently serve as a staff liaison for?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3 or more

2. Cumulatively, how many years of experience do you have serving as a staff liaison to City boards and commissions?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years
- ☐ 7-9 years
- ☐ 10 or more years

3. Please write the name of the board or commission you currently serve as a staff liaison for below.

If you currently serve as a staff liaison for more than one board or commission, please select one board or commission to base your survey responses on, and write the name of that board or commission below.

4. On average, how many hours per week do you devote to supporting your board or commission?

- ☐ 0 hours (none)
- ☐ 0-1 hour
- ☐ 1-4 hours
- ☐ 5-8 hours
- ☐ 9-12 hours
- ☐ More than 12 hours

5. Please briefly describe the types of activities you devote most of your staff time to.

6. If you had more time, how many hours per week would you ideally like to devote to supporting your board or commission?

- ☐ 0 hours (none)
- ☐ 0-1 hour
- ☐ 1-4 hours
- ☐ 4-8 hours
- ☐ 9-12 hours
- ☐ More than 12 hours

7. How manageable is your workload in supporting your board or commission alongside your other job responsibilities?

Not at all manageable	Slightly manageable	Moderately manageable	Very manageable	Extremely manageable
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Please describe the ways in which your workload in supporting your board or commission is and/or is not manageable.

Boards & Commissions Staff Survey

Section 2: Onboarding and Training

9. When you first began supporting your board or commission, was there a formal handoff or transition from the previous staff liaison (including through the transfer of relevant files, documents, and/or shared databases)?

- ☐ Yes, there was a thorough handoff
- ☐ Yes, but it was minimal
- ☐ No, there was no handoff
- ☐ I was the first staff liaison for this board

10. Did you receive any formal training on how to serve as a staff liaison to a board or commission?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. Overall, how would you rate the training you received for your role?

Very poor	Poor	Neither poor nor good	Good	Very good
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Have you received any recurring trainings related to your role?

- ☐ Yes, twice a year or more
- ☐ Yes, once a year or less
- ☐ No, but I would like to
- ☐ No, and I don't feel like I need it

13. How clearly defined are your responsibilities and duties as a staff liaison?

Not at all defined	Slightly defined	Moderately defined	Very defined	Extremely defined
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. Is there anything else you would like to share about your training experience or suggestions for how staff training could be improved?

Boards & Commissions Staff Survey

Section 3: Meetings and Operations

15. Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of your board or commission's meetings?

Very ineffective	Ineffective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Effective	Very effective
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. How would you describe your capacity to adequately support your board or commission's meetings given your overall workload?

I never have enough capacity	I rarely have enough capacity	I sometimes have enough capacity	I usually have enough capacity	I always have enough capacity
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. How often is your board or commission's City of Oakland webpage updated?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very frequently
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. What do you think is working well in how your board or commission currently operates?

19. What do you think needs to be improved in how your board or commission currently operates?

Boards & Commissions Staff Survey

Section 4: Relations with Board and Commission Members

20. How would you describe your overall working relationship with your board or commission's members?

Very poor	Poor	Neither poor nor good	Good	Very good
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. In your opinion, how clear of an understanding do board or commission members have of your role in supporting them?

Not at all clear	Slightly clear	Moderately clear	Very clear	Extremely clear
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. How responsive are board or commission members to your communications and requests?

Very unresponsive	Unresponsive	Neither responsive nor unresponsive	Responsive	Very responsive
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Boards & Commissions Staff Survey

Section 5: Effectiveness and Challenges

23. Do you feel you have sufficient authority and access to information to effectively support your board or commission?

Not at all

Slightly

Somewhat

Mostly

Completely

☐☐☐☐☐

24. In the past year, did your board or commission hold an annual retreat?

☐

Yes, and it was helpful

☐

Yes, and it was unhelpful

☐

No, and I don't think it would be helpful

☐

No, but I think it would be helpful

25. Do you believe your board or commission is fulfilling its intended purpose (as established through ballot measure, bylaws, charter, etc)?

☐

Yes, fully

☐

Mostly yes

☐

Somewhat

☐

Not really

☐

No, not at all

☐

Unsure

26. To what extent are your board or commission's priorities aligned with the priorities of your department/the City?

☐

Not at all aligned

☐

Slightly aligned

☐

Somewhat aligned

☐

Mostly aligned

☐

Completely aligned

☐

Unsure

27. In the past year, has your board made recommendation(s) to the City?

☐

Yes

☐

No

28. In what ways did you assist board members during the recommendation process? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Guiding board members through the recommendation drafting process
- ☐ Providing administrative assistance
- ☐ Providing subject matter expertise
- ☐ Explaining to board members what an effective recommendation looks like
- ☐ I did not assist board members through the recommendation process
- ☐ Other (please specify)

29. Please select your top concerns in your role supporting your board or commission. (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Insufficient staff liaison capacity
- ☐ Lack of clear board direction or leadership
- ☐ High number of vacant board positions
- ☐ Lack of funding or resources
- ☐ Limited influence over the City
- ☐ Lack of proper training for board members
- ☐ Lack of proper training for staff liaisons
- ☐ Lack of subject matter expertise among board members
- ☐ Other (please specify)



**CITY OF
OAKLAND**

Office of the City Auditor

CITY AUDITOR

Michael C. Houston, MPP, CIA

WHISTLEBLOWER HOTLINE
1-888-329-6390 (Interpreter available)

SUBMIT A REPORT ONLINE
www.OaklandAuditor.com/Whistleblower

Office of the City Auditor
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza · 4th Floor, City Hall · Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 238-3378
CityAuditor@OaklandCA.gov

Contact Us!

We'd love to hear from you.

联系我们!

我们非常乐意听到您的反馈。

¡Contáctenos!

Nos encantaría saber de ti.

