



City of Arts & Innovation

Commission of the Deaf Memorandum

TO: COMMISSION OF THE DEAF **DATE: MAY 14, 2025**

FROM: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE **WARDS: ALL**

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF COMMISSION OF THE DEAF STRUCTURE AND ROLE

ISSUE:

Conduct a review of the Commission of the Deaf membership structure, role, potential consolidation opportunities, and the development of a Citywide governance resolution.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Commission of the Deaf conduct a review of the Commission of the Deaf membership structure, roles, potential consolidation opportunities and the development of a Citywide governance resolution and provide any recommendations to Commission of the Deaf Staff.

DISCUSSION:

Boards and Commissions serve an important role as advisory bodies that provide recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on various matters affecting the community and give residents an additional outlet to engage in local government.

The City Council has expressed ongoing interest in evaluating the structure and effectiveness of the City's Boards and Commissions. Over time, issues such as declining participation, difficulty achieving quorum, overlapping duties, and outdated structures have prompted discussion about possible restructuring, consolidation, or standardization efforts. The intent is to align advisory functions with City priorities, improve efficiency, and ensure meaningful community engagement. The following questions have guided this review:

- Is membership size optimized for functionality?
- Are quorum and attendance issues affecting performance?
- Are there opportunities to consolidate or streamline?
- Is there a need for a standard governance framework?

Standardizing Governance Framework

As it stands currently, each Board or Commission is responsible for developing and reviewing its own standing rules or bylaws. The adoption of a Citywide Resolution that sets clear and consistent rules for all Boards and Commissions could be considered. This resolution could be similar to the Council's adopted Rules of Procedure and would cover:

- How members are appointed and number of members
- What each group's role and responsibilities are
- How meetings are run and quorum requirements
- What kind of training new members should receive
- What's expected of members in terms of participation and engagement

Board members should submit any recommendations regarding the bullet points listed above to Daisy Gastelum via e-mail at dgastelum@riversideca.gov by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 6, 2025, for submission to the Governmental Process Committee.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item aligns with Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Priority 5, High Performing Government, Goal 5.3 – Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.

It aligns with Envision Riverside 2025 Cross Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – This review enhances transparency and public accountability by ensuring that Boards and Commissions are functioning effectively, meeting consistently, and serving their intended advisory roles. Community involvement remains a priority through ongoing opportunities for public comment and participation in advisory processes.
2. **Equity** – Streamlining membership structures and clarifying responsibilities ensures more equitable access to participation and improves representation across all Wards. A standardized governance framework helps ensure all commissions operate under fair and consistent expectations.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Reducing inactive or overlapping commissions and right-sizing membership supports more efficient use of City resources, including staff time and administrative support. Resources saved can be redirected toward higher-impact programs and services.
4. **Innovation** – The proposed standardization and restructuring provide an opportunity to modernize how Boards and Commissions operate, including clearer onboarding, digital access to materials, and improved collaboration tools for commissioners and the public.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Establishing a consistent framework for governance and participation supports long-term stability, reduces redundancy, and helps ensure that advisory bodies remain relevant and effective in adapting to future community needs.

Approved by: Rene Goldman, HR Director