



Community & Economic Development Department
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Planning Division

CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD MEETING DATE: JUNE 18, 2025
AGENDA ITEM NO.: 5

DISCUSSION ITEM

Case Number	Not Applicable
Issue	Conduct a review of the Cultural Heritage Board membership structure, role, potential consolidation opportunities, and discuss the development of a Citywide governance resolution.
Project Location	Citywide
Wards	All
Staff Planner	Scott Watson, Historic Preservation Officer 951-826-5507 swatson@riversideca.gov

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Cultural Heritage Board conduct a review of the Board membership structure, roles, potential consolidation opportunities and the development of a Citywide governance resolution and provide any recommendations to Staff.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The Cultural Heritage Board was established on November 19, 1968, with the adoption of Ordinance #3562. The membership and power and duties of the Board are established in Chapter 20.10 of the Riverside Municipal Code. In general, the purpose of the Board is to work for the identification, protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements, buildings, structures, signs, objects, features, sites, places, areas, districts, neighborhoods, streets, works of art, natural features and significant permanent landscaping having special historical, archaeological, cultural, architectural, community, aesthetic or artistic value in the City.

In addition to Title 20, the Board has requirements specified by our Certified Local Government (CLG) agreement with the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) executed March 1, 1995. Per the CLG agreement:

- The Board shall have a minimum of five members.
- At least two members shall be appointed from among professionals in the disciplines of architecture, history, architectural history, planning, archaeology, or other historic preservation-related disciplines, such as urban planning, American studies, American civilization, cultural geography, or cultural anthropology, to the extent that such professionals are available in the community.
- The Board shall meet at least four times per year.
- Each commission member is required to attend at least one training per year.

The Inclusiveness, Community Engagement, and Governmental Processes Committee (ICGC) received and discussed the Rules of Procedure and Order of Business for the City Council through a series of meetings held between January 2022 and November 2023. As part of that review process, on July 6, 2022, the ICGC received and discussed an update to City Council Rules of Procedure and Order of Business related to the number and role of Boards and Commissions. Through discussion the ICGC requested that the item be continued for further review and discussion.

Council Rules of Procedure and Order of Business with the intent to bring a resolution specific to the Boards and Commissions back for consideration at a later date. On May 7, 2025, the Governmental Processes Committee received a presentation on the review of boards and commission membership structure, consolidation opportunities, and development of citywide governance resolution. The committee would like to receive feedback from each individual board and commission for consideration.

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 recommendations regarding the bullet points listed above will be forwarded to the Governmental Processes Committee for consideration.

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.

EXHIBITS LIST

1. Ordinance #3562
2. Chapter 20.10 of the Riverside Municipal Code
3. CLG Agreement
4. [ICGC July 6, 2022 Link](#)
5. [Governmental Process Committee May 7, 2025 Link](#)

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