



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## AGENDA ITEM

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PALOMA AGUIRRE  
First District

JOEL ANDERSON  
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER  
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE  
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND  
Fifth District

**DATE:** May 19, 2026

# 34

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

### **SUBJECT**

**CONSIDER A POLICY FOR BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEES (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

### **OVERVIEW**

On April 21, 2026 (17), the Board directed the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to coordinate with County Counsel and return with amendments to Board Policy A-74 or a new policy establishing requirements for the operation of Board-created ad hoc subcommittees. These requirements were to include procedures for agenda posting, public accessibility, documentation, and the availability of materials and communications generated during subcommittee meetings.

In response to that direction, staff developed several options for the Board's consideration, including a proposed new Board Policy A-75, "Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Subcommittees Policy," which would establish standardized procedures and documentation requirements for all such subcommittees.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

#### **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

Consider and approve one of the following options to provide standardized requirements for the creation, operation, notice, access, and documentation of ad hoc subcommittee activities:

1. Option 1: Adopt proposed Board Policy A 75, "Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Subcommittees Policy" (Attachment 1).
2. Option 2: Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to amend existing Board Policy A-74, "Participation in County Boards, Commissions, and Committees," and return to the Board with the amendments.
3. Option 3: Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a policy to require all Board-created subcommittees to comply with the Brown Act and return to the Board with the policy.
4. Option 4: Take no action and do not establish a policy at this time. Determine transparency requirements on a case-by-case basis each time an ad hoc subcommittee is created.

### **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Board meetings and advisory bodies operate under procedures intended to provide equitable access for County residents. Establishing consistent requirements for ad hoc subcommittees supports

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public access by ensuring that information, meeting schedules, records, and materials associated with these subcommittees are available to all individuals

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Standardized procedures for ad hoc subcommittee operations support transparency and consistency in County processes. Making records, communications, and meeting materials publicly available contributes to clear documentation and long-term administrative sustainability.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action to adopt the proposed policy. There may be future fiscal impacts related to the establishment of new ad hoc or standing subcommittees, for which staff will return to the Board as necessary with recommendations for consideration and approval. At this time, there is no change in General Fund cost and requires no additional staff years.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

Standardized procedures for meeting access and documentation provide consistent information to the business community and other interested parties. This allows stakeholders to track and participate in matters considered by Board ad hoc subcommittees.

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

Not applicable.

**BACKGROUND**

Board Policy A-74, “Participation in County Boards, Commissions, and Committees,” governs standing and special advisory bodies for the County’s volunteer groups. Similarly, Board Policy I-1, “Planning and Sponsor Group Policies and Procedures,” governs the volunteers on the County’s land use related volunteer groups. However, these policies do not address procedures for the Board’s standing or ad hoc subcommittees composed exclusively of Board members. In recent years, the Board has convened ad hoc subcommittees to review focused subject areas, such as artificial intelligence, Medi-Cal/Medicaid, behavioral health systems, fiscal matters, and regional environmental issues. Additionally, the Board has created standing subcommittees, such as its Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) subcommittee.

On April 21, 2026 (17), the Board directed staff to establish requirements for ad hoc and standing subcommittees, including agenda posting, public access to meetings, recording and retention of meeting materials, documentation of communications, and availability of member and consultant information.

While the proposed Board Policy A-75, “Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Subcommittees Policy,” implements this direction and provides a standardized operational framework for ad hoc subcommittees, including procedures for meeting notice, public access, documentation, and record availability, the Board directed staff to provide options with pros and cons. The additional options are described below.

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**Option 1: Adopt Proposed Board Policy A-75, “Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Subcommittees Policy”**

**Pros:**

- Establishes comprehensive and standardized procedures for ad hoc subcommittees, including meeting notices, public access, documentation, and record availability, ensuring consistent operational expectations across all Board created subcommittees.
- Enhances transparency and supports the County’s Strategic Plan initiatives related to Transparency, Accountability, and Community Engagement by making agendas, recordings, minutes, memos, consultant information, and all meeting materials publicly accessible on a centralized County webpage.
- Provides clear definitions and operational requirements distinguishing ad hoc subcommittees from standing committees, reducing ambiguity around Brown Act applicability while still ensuring robust public access to information.
- Clarifies County staff responsibilities, including designated staff leads, preparation of agendas and minutes, logistical support, and coordination with Board offices, which may reduce confusion and improve consistency in subcommittee operations.

**Cons:**

- Creates additional administrative workload for staff, who must prepare and post agendas, action minutes, recordings, and all associated materials for each meeting. When new ad hoc or standing subcommittees are created, staff’s administrative workload would include preparing an anticipated financial impact based on the scope of work of the subcommittee.
- Because ad hoc subcommittees are intended to be temporary and flexible, the new requirements may reduce their agility and could discourage use of ad hoc structures for short-term exploratory work.
- Although the Board Letter identifies no immediate fiscal impact, expanded posting, recording, and documentation responsibilities may require additional staff resources as more subcommittees are established.
- Public posting requirements for consultant information, including name, contact information, cost, and deliverables, could raise concerns among smaller firms or consultants, potentially affecting vendor participation.

**Option 2: Amend Existing Board Policy A-74, “Participation in County Boards, Commissions, and Committees,” Instead of Adopting a New Policy**

**Pros:**

- Builds upon an existing policy framework governing County committees and may reduce the total number of separate policies addressing committee operations.
- Allows the Board to incorporate only selected transparency and documentation elements into existing policy, potentially reducing procedural requirements for ad hoc subcommittees compared to the full A-75 framework.

**Cons:**

- Policy A-74 governs volunteer boards, commissions, and committees, not Board member only subcommittees, and would require extensive amendment to address operational needs unique to Board created ad hoc bodies.
- Incorporating ad hoc subcommittee procedures into A-74 may result in a complex, layered policy with exceptions and caveats, making it more difficult for staff and the public to understand.

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**Option 3: Require All Board-Created Subcommittees to Comply with the Brown Act**

**Pros:**

- Provides the highest level of transparency and ensures full public access to subcommittee meetings by applying statutory open-meeting requirements uniformly across all Board-created subcommittees.
- Establishes a clear, legally defined operational framework that staff and Board offices are already familiar with, reducing uncertainty about meeting procedures, noticing, and record-keeping.
- Supports consistent public expectations regarding how and when the Board conducts subcommittee work, aligning ad hoc subcommittees with the standards applied to most Board-created advisory bodies.
- Encourages more deliberate consideration before forming ad hoc subcommittees, ensuring that they are used only when justified and aligned with transparent, standardized processes.

**Cons:**

- Imposes significant administrative and staffing demands, including formalized agenda preparation, noticing timelines, minute-taking, and compliance monitoring for every meeting, regardless of the subcommittee's scope or duration. When new ad hoc or standing subcommittees are created, staff's administrative workload would include preparing an anticipated financial impact based on the scope of work of the subcommittee.
- Reduces flexibility for Board members to meet quickly or engage in preliminary or exploratory discussions, as Brown Act requirements may limit the ability to convene on short notice.
- May reduce the Board's ability to use ad hoc subcommittees for narrowly focused or time-sensitive issues due to additional procedural requirements and resource needs.

**Option 4: Establish No Policy and Determine Transparency Requirements at the Time Each Ad Hoc Subcommittee Is Created**

**Pros:**

- Provides the Board with maximum flexibility to tailor operational and transparency requirements based on the purpose, scale, and anticipated workload of each individual subcommittee.
- Allows the Board to align expectations with available staffing resources by setting requirements that reflect current capacity and the specific needs of the issue being studied.
- Avoids the creation of a standardized policy that may not fit all subcommittee structures, particularly short-term or narrowly defined efforts.

**Cons:**

- Results in inconsistent public access and documentation practices across subcommittees, which may create confusion for community members seeking information or wishing to follow subcommittee work.
- Requires the Board to establish procedural expectations each time a subcommittee is created, which may introduce delays and increase administrative burden for Board offices and staff.
- May generate perceptions of uneven transparency if requirements vary significantly between subcommittees, potentially affecting public trust in County processes.

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**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

This action supports the 2026–2031 Strategic Plan initiatives related to Transparency and Accountability and Community Engagement by establishing consistent public access to information and materials associated with Board ad hoc subcommittees.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ebony N. Shelton', written in a cursive style.

EBONY N. SHELTON  
Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Attachment 1: Proposed Board Policy A-75