



Advisory Bodies Program

Current State Analysis

December 2024



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Introduction

In 2024, the Advisory Bodies Program conducted an inventory of the City of Portland’s advisory bodies (also known as boards and commissions). This inventory was conducted to:

- 1) Gather information to report on and analyze the current state of the City’s advisory bodies.
- 2) Support the engagement officer and the incoming city council to make decisions around the City’s advisory bodies moving forward.

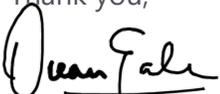
In the process of conducting this inventory, the Advisory Bodies Program sought to gather information about each advisory body such as their websites, who staffs them, how often they meet, who appoints their members, and basic documents such as bylaws and/or charters (not to be confused with the city charter).

In addition, the Advisory Bodies Program sought to understand the authority and purpose of each advisory body. Listed in the inventory are the authoritative documents for each advisory body, whether found in the city charter, city code, or elsewhere. Supplementing this, the Advisory Bodies Program went to great lengths to examine each advisory body’s authoritative documents to ascertain why they exist and what they are supposed to do.

Finally, the Advisory Bodies Program found that the number of advisory bodies was inflated. At the beginning of the inventory, it was estimated there were approximately 117 advisory bodies across the City of Portland. At the conclusion of this inventory, the true number was found to be 77 advisory bodies. This current state analysis will address this finding.

If there are any questions around the findings of the inventory and this resultant analysis, please contact me at ocean.eale@portlandoregon.gov.

Thank you,



Ocean Eale

Advisory Bodies Program Analyst
Office of Community & Civic Life

Background

Advisory bodies existed in some form at the City of Portland since at least 1942 when the City Charter first clarified City Council's creation and authority powers over boards and commissions. Advisory bodies were first covered by Section 2-102, which was later amended as Section 2-103 on November 6, 1962.¹

Since then, advisory bodies have been created by various entities at the City of Portland, including by City Council, ballot measure, and by bureaus. Beyond the City Charter defining City Council's creation and authority powers, however, the City has lacked standard definitions, official policies, and processes regarding the formation and function of advisory bodies.

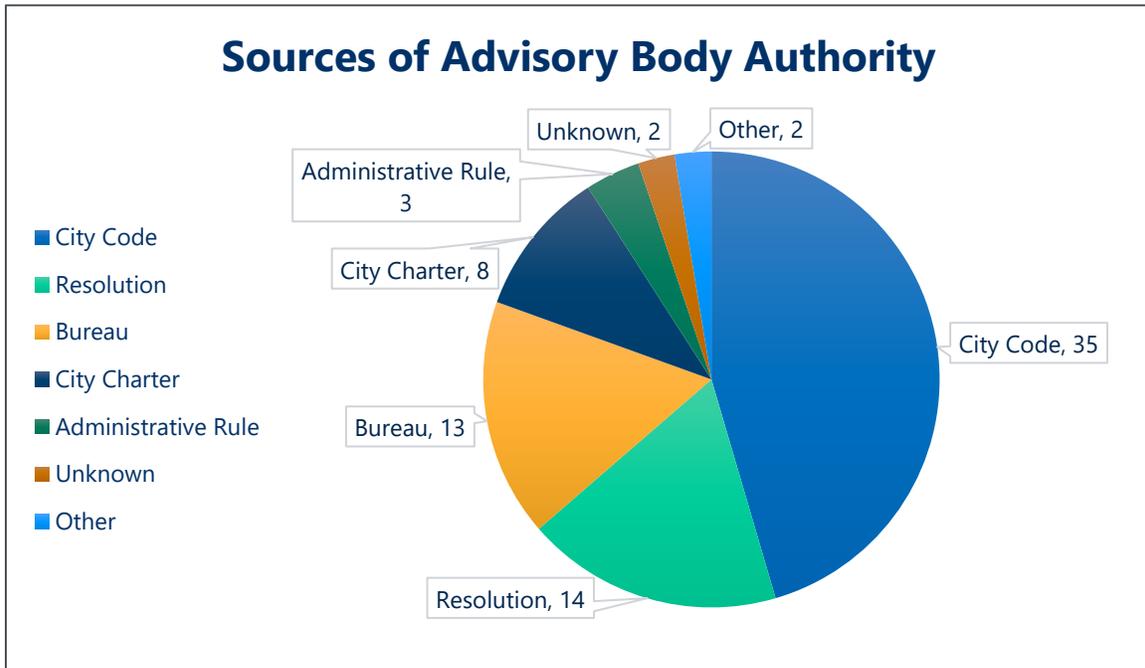
In 2017, City Council attempted to rectify the processes of advisory bodies through passing Resolution 37328, which created the Advisory Bodies Program. Codified in ADM-17.02, the Advisory Bodies Program was charged with creating uniform processes for the function of the City's advisory bodies, including processes for recruitments, trainings, and bylaws.²

The Advisory Bodies Program has largely fulfilled this mission and continues to do so. However, questions remain regarding the definition of an advisory body as well as how and when advisory bodies are formed.

¹ Section 2-103 boards and commissions. Portland.gov. <https://www.portland.gov/charter/2/1/103>

² ADM-17.02 - City Advisory Bodies - Strengthen Transparency and Accountability and Enhance Community Service Opportunities. (2017). Portland.gov. <https://www.portland.gov/policies/administrative/city-advisory-bodies-boards-and-commissions/adm-1702-city-advisory-bodies>

Sources of Advisory Body Authority



City Code

35 advisory bodies (45% of total advisory bodies) are found in City Code. These advisory bodies were created by City Council through the passing of an ordinance; they can only be repealed or amended by ordinance.

Resolution

14 advisory bodies (18% of total advisory bodies) were created by resolution at City Council. Resolutions are less formal than ordinances and are not enshrined in City Code, the City Charter, or in City Administrative Rules. Resolutions can be amended or repealed by City Council.

Bureau

13 advisory bodies (17% of total advisory bodies) were created by the City's bureaus; more specifically by the bureau's director, their staff, and/or the commissioner-in-charge of that bureau. These advisory bodies are specific to that bureau and do not report to City Council. Compared to those found in the City Code, City Charter, and City Administrative Rules; advisory bodies created within the bureaus have limited to no authority and can be easily repealed by the bureau director.

City Charter

8 advisory bodies (10% of total advisory bodies) are found in the City Charter. These advisory bodies were created by a ballot measure successfully passed by Portland voters and can only be amended or repealed by a ballot measure successfully passed by Portland voters.

Administrative Rule

3 advisory bodies (4% of total advisory bodies) are found in Administrative Rule. These advisory bodies are formally adopted by the City Council, by a City official pursuant to rule-making authority expressly delegated by the City Council through a binding resolution or ordinance, or by the City Auditor pursuant to rule-making authority granted by the City Charter or delegated by the City Council. Administrative Rules are repealed through the same process as their adoption.

Other

2 advisory bodies (3% of total advisory bodies) were created through special means: either by means of an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) or as required per legal settlement.

IGAs are agreements made between two or more government entities defining shared roles and responsibilities between different jurisdictions. The Clean Air Construction Intergovernmental Oversight Committee was created through and is governed by an IGA. It is the only advisory body created through an IGA; the Multnomah Youth Commission—created through a resolution passed by City Council—is also governed by an IGA.

The Behavioral Health Unit Advisory Committee was created as the result of a legal settlement by the City of Portland with the U.S. Department of Justice. It is the only advisory body in the City of Portland created this way.

Unknown

The creation and authority of 2 advisory bodies (3% of total advisory bodies) are currently unknown. These advisory bodies are the Accounting Advisory Committee (Budget and Finance Service Area) and the Labor Management Benefits Committee (City Operations Service Area).

Duration

Outside of these sources of authority, there are time durations for advisory bodies as well. Most advisory bodies are designed to last in perpetuity until they are amended or repealed by their authority source. Some advisory bodies are designed to exist for a limited duration, usually a set period or until certain goals are met. There are also advisory bodies that exist in perpetuity but have a designated convening schedule, such as the charter commission, which meets for a set period every ten years.

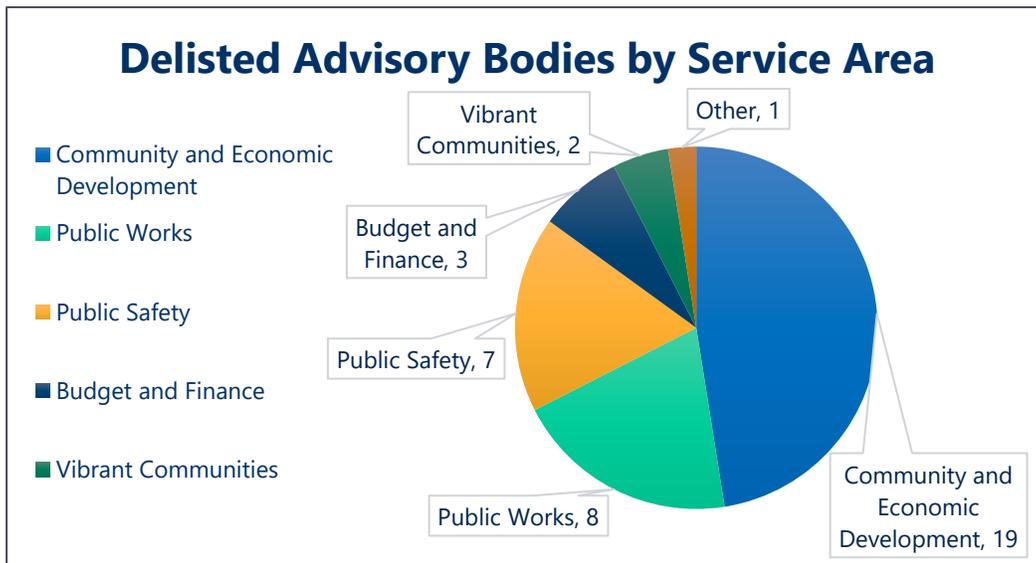
Delisted Advisory Bodies

As a result of this inventory, the official number of advisory bodies decreased from 117 down to 77 advisory bodies; 40 advisory bodies were found to either have ceased to exist or were mislabeled.

Of the advisory bodies that ceased to exist, some were designed to be limited duration while others were repealed by the authority that created them. In the case of the Portland Housing Bureau, three of their advisory bodies were combined into one generalized advisory body. Additionally, some of the advisory bodies that ceased to exist were Bureau/Budget Advisory Committees (BACs), which bureaus are no longer required to rely on, per a memo by Mayor Wheeler in August 2024.³

Of the advisory bodies that were mislabeled, most were internal work groups specific to City employees or were not formalized groups with any authority. In the case of the Portland Clean Energy Fund, those advisory bodies were found to be subcommittees of the Portland Clean Energy Fund Community Benefits Fund Committee.

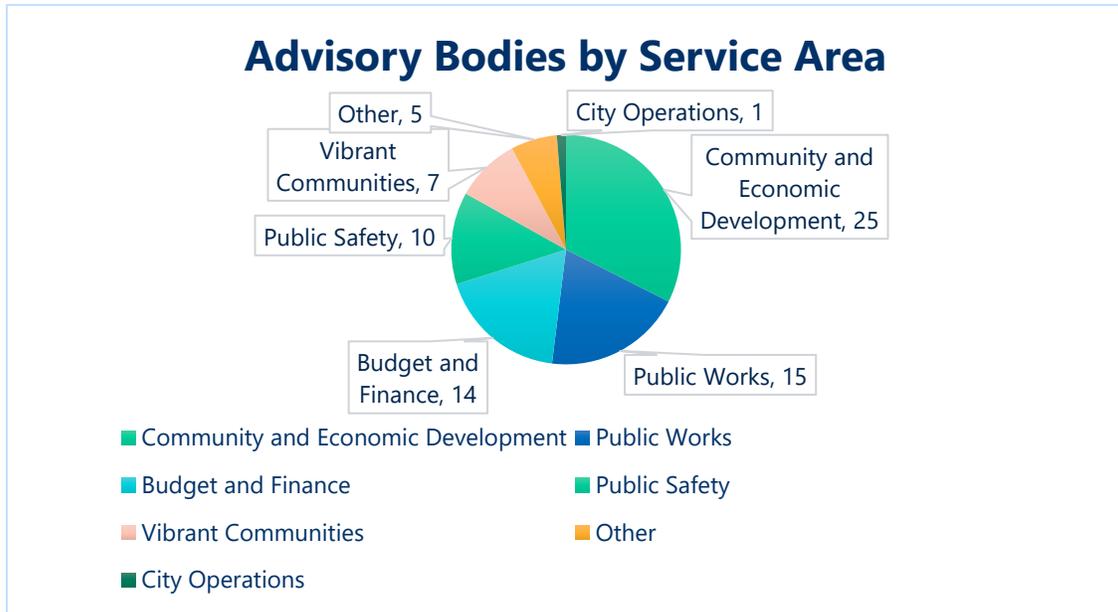
In the case of the Portland Police Bureau, five were removed as part of the Coalition of Advisory Groups (CAGs). CAGs are entirely community led and are not under the authority of any government agency/entity. CAGs lack policy and budget authority. CAGs were also designed with assistance from the City Attorney's office to not need to comply with public meeting and public records law.



³ Mayor Wheeler Memo Preliminary Fiscal Outlook and Fiscal Year 2024-25 Supplemental. (2024). Portland.gov. <https://www.portland.gov/cbo/documents/mayor-wheeler-memo-preliminary-fiscal-outlook-and-fiscal-year-2024-25-supplemental/download>

Service Area Overview

The City has 77 advisory bodies, including 5 categorized as "Other." The Community and Economic Development Service Area hosts nearly one-third of them, the highest among all service areas.



Budget and Finance Service Area

There are 14 advisory bodies in the Budget and Finance Service Area. Of the 14 advisory bodies, 12 are in the Office of Management and Finance (OMF), and 1 advisory body each in the City Budget Office (CBO) and the Bureau of Fire and Police Disability and Retirement (FPDR).

Advisory Body	Source of Authority	Duration
Charter Commission	City Charter 13-301	Designated Convening Schedule
Civil Service Board	City Charter 4-4	Perpetual
Fire and Police Disability and Retirement Board of Trustees	City Charter 5-201	Perpetual
Government Transition Advisory Committee	City Charter Measure 26-228	Designated Convening Schedule
Independent District Commission	City Charter 3-108	Designated Convening Schedule
Salary Commission	City Charter 2-207	Designated Convening Schedule
Investment Advisory Committee	City Code 3.88	Perpetual
Deferred Compensation Committee	City Code 5.09.030	Perpetual
Technology Oversight Committee	Administrative Rule ARB BTS-1.07	Perpetual

Clean Air Construction Intergovernmental Oversight Committee	30008791 Clean Air Construction Intergovernmental Agreement	Perpetual
Community Budget Advisory Board	Resolution 36347	Perpetual
Fair Contracting Forum+	Resolution 37041	Perpetual
Office of Management and Finance Budget Advisory Committee	Office of Management and Finance	Perpetual
Accounting Advisory Committee	Unknown	Unknown

City Operations Service Area

The City Operations Service Area has only 1 advisory body: the Labor Management Benefits Committee. The authority of this advisory body is unclear. It appears to operate more as an internal work group as its membership consists of City leadership and designated staff.

Community and Economic Development Service Area

There are 25 advisory bodies in the Community and Economic Development Service Area. Of the 25 advisory bodies, 13 of them are in Portland Permitting and Development (PPD), 7 are in the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS), 4 are in the Portland Housing Bureau (PHB), and 1 is in Prosper Portland.

Advisory Body	Source of Authority	Duration
Bond Oversight Committee	City Charter Measure 26-179	Limited Duration
Building Code Board of Appeal	24.10.080	Perpetual
Community Involvement Committee	3.132	Perpetual
Cully Tax Increment Finance District Committee*	Ordinance 191071	Perpetual
Design Commission	33.710.050	Perpetual
Development Review Advisory Committee	3.30.030	Perpetual
Electrical Code Board of Appeal	26.03.070	Perpetual
Healy Heights Radiofrequency Advisory Committee**	33.710.120	Perpetual
Historic Landmarks Commission	33.710.060	Perpetual
Mechanical Code Board of Appeal	27.01.031	Perpetual
Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission	3.115	Perpetual
Noise Review Board	18.06.020	Perpetual
Planning Commission	33.710.040	Perpetual
Plumbing Code Board of Appeal	25.07.020	Perpetual

Portland Clean Energy Fund Benefits Fund Committee	7.07.050	Perpetual
Portland Advisory Committee on Housing	3.38	Perpetual
Renewable Fuel Standard Technical Advisory Committee	16.60	Limited Duration
River Community Advisory Committee	28.03.015	Perpetual
Structural Engineering Advisory Committee	24.10.085	Perpetual
Sustainability and Climate Commission	Title 3***	Perpetual
Bureau of Development Services Budget Advisory Committee	Administrative Rule ADM-4.05	Perpetual
Advance Portland Advisory Committee	Resolution 37617	Limited Duration
Cannabis Policy Oversight Team	Portland Permitting & Development	Perpetual
Financial Advisory Committee	Portland Permitting & Development	Perpetual
North/Northeast Oversight Committee	Portland Housing Bureau	Perpetual

*Cully Tax Increment Finance District Committee was created by Ordinance 191071.

**Healy Heights Radiofrequency Advisory Committee is inactive, not having met in more than 20 years. However, it remains in existence in city code.

***Sustainability and Climate Commission was created by Ordinance 191710, currently in Title 33. However, it will be expanded on and moved to Title 3 in early 2025.

Public Safety Service Area

There are 10 advisory bodies in the Public Safety Service Area. Of the 10 advisory bodies, there are 4 advisory bodies each in the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) and the Community Safety Division (CSD), and 1 advisory body each in the Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC) and Portland Fire and Rescue (PFR).

Advisory Body	Source of Authority	Duration
Police Accountability Commission	City Charter Measure 26-217	Perpetual
Citizen Review Committee	City Code 3.21.080	Perpetual
Police Review Board	City Code 3.20.140	Perpetual
Fire Code Board of Appeal	City Code 31.10.080	Perpetual
Behavioral Health Unit Advisory Committee*	Legal Settlement between the City of Portland and the U.S. Department of Justice	Perpetual
Portland Committee on Community Engaged Policing	Resolution 37384	Perpetual
Training Advisory Council	Resolution 36912	Perpetual

BOEC User Board	Bureau of Emergency Communications	Perpetual
Focused Oversight Team Community Oversight Group (FITCOG)	Mayor's Office	Perpetual
Police Equity Advisory Council	Portland Police Bureau	Perpetual

Vibrant Communities Service Area

There are 7 advisory bodies in the Vibrant Communities Service Area. Of the 7 advisory bodies, 4 are in Portland Parks and Recreation, 2 advisory bodies under the Portland Children's Levy, and 1 advisory body in the Office of Arts and Culture.

Advisory Body	Source of Authority	Duration
Arts Access Fund Oversight Committee	City Code 5.73.050	Perpetual
Golf Advisory Committee	City Code 3.86	Perpetual
Portland Parks Board	City Code 3.27	Perpetual
Urban Forestry Commission	City Code 11.20.020	Perpetual
Portland Children's Levy Allocation Committee	Resolution 37343	Perpetual
Portland Children's Levy Community Council*	Portland Children's Levy	Perpetual
Portland Parks Levy Oversight Committee	Portland Parks and Recreation	Limited Duration

*The Portland Children's Levy Community Council was created to advise the Portland Children's Levy Allocation Committee, Bureau Director, and Staff.

Public Works Service Area

There are 15 advisory bodies in the Public Works Service Area. Of the 15 advisory bodies, 13 are in the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), and 1 advisory body each in the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) and the Portland Water Bureau (PWB).

Advisory Body	Source of Authority	Duration
Fixing Our Streets Oversight Committee	City Code 7.02.500	Limited
Portland Utility Board	City Code 3.123	Perpetual
Private For-Hire Transportation Advisory Committee	City Code 16.40.960	Perpetual
Towing Services Advisory Committee	City Code 3.98	Perpetual
Lloyd Meter Revenue Allocation Committee	Administrative Rule TRN-3.105	Perpetual
Bicycle Advisory Committee	Resolution 34954	Perpetual
Central City in Motion Working Group	Resolution 35395	Perpetual

Central Eastside Industrial Council Transportation Parking Advisory Committee	Resolution 36938	Perpetual
Northwest Parking District Stakeholder Advisory Committee	Resolution 186191	Perpetual
Pedestrian Advisory Committee	Resolution 35185	Perpetual
Portland Freight Committee	Resolution 36167	Perpetual
Boise Parking District Stakeholder Advisory Committee	Portland Bureau of Transportation	Perpetual
Building a Better 82 nd Community Advisory Group	Portland Bureau of Transportation	Limited
Columbia Boulevard Wastewater Treatment Community Advisory Committee	Bureau of Environmental Services	Perpetual
Transportation Network Company (TNC) Driver's Advisory Committee	Portland Bureau of Transportation	Perpetual

Other Advisory Bodies

There are 5 advisory bodies that exist beyond the realm of the service areas.

The New Portlanders Policy Commission and the Multnomah Youth Commission operate under the authority of the Engagement Officer, while the Office of Equity and Human Rights Bureau Advisory Committee operate under the authority of the Equity Officer. Both the Engagement Officer and the Equity Officer report to the Assistant City Administrator, who in turn reports to the City Administrator.

The Business License Appeal Board and the Portland Elections Commission are under the authority of the City Auditor's Office. The City Auditor's Office is headed by the City Auditor, who is elected by Portlanders separately from the Mayor and City Council.

Advisory Body	Source of Authority	Duration
New Portlanders Policy Commission	City Code 3.131	Perpetual
Business License Appeal Board	City Code 6.04.140	Perpetual
Portland Elections Commission	City Code 2.16.130	Perpetual
Multnomah Youth Commission*	Resolution 181290	Perpetual
Office of Equity and Human Rights Bureau Advisory Committee	Office of Equity and Human Rights	Perpetual

*The Multnomah Youth Commission is an advisory body for youth aged 13-21 in Multnomah County. It was created by Resolution 181290, but it is governed by an Intragovernmental Agreement between the City of Portland and Multnomah County.

Recommendations

Annual inventory updates

In conducting the inventory, the number of advisory bodies was reduced from 117 down to 77 advisory bodies. Some of the advisory bodies were repealed or consolidated in 2024, but many of the advisory bodies ceased to exist in the last four years or were mislabeled as advisory bodies.

The Advisory Bodies Program needs to conduct annual updates to the inventory so that the City of Portland can have accurate information on the number and operation of advisory bodies across the City.

Definitions

The City lacks a single, clear definition of what an advisory body is. Portland City Charter, Section 2-103 *Boards and Commissions* establishes that:

The Council may create and establish such boards and commissions as it may deem necessary in addition to boards and commissions established by this Charter, and may abolish or alter from time to time any boards or commissions it has established or may establish. All powers and duties of abolished boards and commissions shall be exercised and performed by the Council.

Functionally, *Advisory bodies* is used as a catch-all term for *boards* and *commissions*. However, the City Charter also lacks a clear definition of what boards and commissions are. The City Charter should be amended to include such definitions.

Furthermore, the City lacks a single, clear definition for what a *workgroup* is. Workgroups function similarly to advisory bodies, but they tend to be less formal and internal to the City. What limited authority an advisory body may have, workgroups have even less authority. Nonetheless, advisory bodies and workgroups are often conflated with one another. To avoid this in the future, the City needs to define what workgroups are.

Number of advisory bodies

Portland currently has 77 advisory bodies. The number of advisory bodies will change next year. New advisory bodies will be created to oversee the new tax increment finance districts city council created in 2024. Other advisory bodies may be repealed, such as the remaining BACs, depending on whether the next city council implements the GTAC's recommendation to replace individual bureau BACs with service area BACs.

One question consistently asked by the outgoing city council is whether Portland has too many advisory bodies. There is no clear-cut answer to this question.

Portland's number of advisory bodies are in line with other cities. Among fellow west coast cities, Seattle, WA has 72 advisory bodies ⁴ and San Francisco, CA has 135 advisory bodies.⁵ Portland is currently the 27th largest city in the United States; Detroit, MI and Louisville, KY are 26th and 28th, respectively.⁶ Detroit has 23 advisory bodies ⁷ while Louisville has 66 advisory bodies.⁸

The more important question to address is whether the advisory bodies as they exist function well enough that Portlanders feel properly engaged and empowered to have a say in their government. It is the job of the engagement officer and the city council to answer that question and the right number of advisory bodies is likely to be found in the answer.

Recommendations on certain advisory bodies

The overall purpose of the inventory and the current state analysis is not to make wholesale recommendations on which advisory bodies should be repealed or consolidated, or whether new advisory bodies should be created. Instead, it is to provide the engagement officer and the city council the most up-to-date information available to make informed decisions on advisory bodies in both the short- and long-term.

However, the Healy Heights Radiofrequency Advisory Committee has not met in more than 20 years, but still exists because it is written in City Code (33.710.120). Unless the Healy Heights Radiofrequency Advisory Committee were to come back and meet on a designated convening schedule, city council should repeal 33.710.120 from City Code so that the Healy Heights Radiofrequency Advisory Committee would no longer exist.

Additionally, this analysis endorses the recommendations made by the Government Transition Advisory Committee (GTAC) regarding the bureau/budget advisory committees (BACs). Relevant to this analysis, GTAC recommended that the City "conclude bureau-specific budget advisory committees" as well as "create advisory committees that aren't strictly budget-specific but rather include budget and performance monitoring and program oversight for each of the new service areas."⁹ Given the consolidation of bureaus into service areas, it would be redundant to have BACs for each individual bureau and more efficient to have BACs for service areas instead.

⁴ *Boards & Commissions* | [seattle.gov](https://www.seattle.gov/boards-and-commissions). (2021). [seattle.gov](https://www.seattle.gov/boards-and-commissions).

<https://www.seattle.gov/boards-and-commissions>

⁵ *List of Commissions & Boards – City Attorney of San Francisco*. (2024). [sfcityattorney.org](https://www.sfcityattorney.org/good-government/list-of-commissions-boards/). <https://www.sfcityattorney.org/good-government/list-of-commissions-boards/>

⁶ US Census Bureau. (2024). *City and Town Population Totals: 2020-2023*. [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-total-cities-and-towns.html). <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-total-cities-and-towns.html>

⁷ *Boards, Authorities, and Commissions - Citizen Manual*. (2021, August 15). [Citizen Manual](https://citizenmanual.com/resources/departments-oversight/boards-authorities-and-commissions/).

<https://citizenmanual.com/resources/departments-oversight/boards-authorities-and-commissions/>

⁸ *Louisville Metro Government: Boards*. (2014). [Granicus.com](https://louisville.granicus.com/boards/w/21dcd36a1c72b6dd). <https://louisville.granicus.com/boards/w/21dcd36a1c72b6dd>

⁹ (2024). *The Government Transition Advisory Committee's RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY LEADERS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT*. In *Portland.gov* (Recommendation D6, p. 15). City of Portland, Oregon. <https://www.portland.gov/transition/documents/government-transition-advisory-committees-recommendations-city-leaders-new/download>

Conclusion

Over six months of emails, meetings with stakeholders, and thorough research of city code, administrative rules, ordinances, resolutions, bylaws, and charters, the Advisory Bodies Program proudly presents an accurate inventory of the City's advisory bodies and a current state analysis.

In the process, we learned that there are 77 advisory bodies across the City's six service areas (including 5 categorized outside of the service areas). We ascertained their placement in the new government structure, as well as their sources of authority, and the challenges they face. Key issues include the need for consistent inventory updates, clearer definitions of advisory bodies, and evaluating whether these bodies effectively engage and empower Portlanders.

This work lays the foundation for addressing broader questions about the role and number of advisory bodies, ensuring they meet the community's needs both now and in the future. We hope it proves insightful and useful to the Engagement Officer and City Council as they move forward with decisions that will shape the future of Portland's advisory bodies. We also acknowledge the valuable contributions of our stakeholders, especially advisory body liaisons across all service areas, and look forward to ongoing collaboration to address these important issues.

Ocean Eale

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About City of Portland Office of Community & Civic Life

The Office of Community & Civic Life (or just Civic Life) connects the people of Portland with their City government to promote the common good. Founded in 1974, Civic Life works to build stronger communities by supporting and empowering Portlanders to get involved with their local government through civic engagement, community leadership, and support for neighbors.



<http://portland.gov/civic/>

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Traducere și interpretariat | Chiaku me Awewen Kapas |
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