

Review & Potential Action:

*Establishing a Los Angeles
County Ethics Commission*

Goals Today

- **Review and Discussion of Subcommittee Report & Proposed Charter Language Recommendation**
- **Potential action to approve recommendations**



Recall: Measure G (2024)

*“By **2026**, there shall be an **independent Los Angeles County Ethics Commission** ... [that] shall ... investigate allegations of misconduct by County officials [and] monitor and enforce laws in coordination with other agencies related to governmental ethics.”*

LOS ANGELES COUNTY CHARTER, SEC. 11.68



Recall Charter Conflict Concerns

- We have prepared “**gold standard**” language that ensures the future ethics commission will be *independent*.
- Some provisions of the County’s Charter as presently written may limit the County’s ability to create an independent commission **by ordinance**.



Strategic Plan

Discussed and agreed upon March 11:

- Propose “Gold Standard Language” as **Charter Amendment**
- Propose points for **conforming ordinance**
- Provide **Budget Recommendation** to start the development of the Commission and Office in **June Budget**
 - Year 1: \$6.5 million
 - Year 2 & annually thereafter: Minimum of \$13.8 million



Recall

Distinguish between:

- *Temporary* **Ordinance Language** to be approved by the Supervisors.
- *Long term* **Charter Amendment** changes to be placed on the ballot by the Supervisors and adopted by voters.



Proposal Summary:

Commission, Office of Ethic Compliance, & Budget Estimate

Overview of the Report

Methodology

- *Temporary* **Ordinance Language** to be approved by the Supervisors.
- *Long term* **Charter Amendment** changes to be placed on the ballot by the Supervisors and adopted by voters.



Overview of the Report

Stress the need for a charter reform

Ethics Commission

- *7 Member Ethics Commission*
- *Mixed Appointments*
- *Eligibility Criteria, During and Post Service Restrictions*
- *5 Year Terms, outline process for removal and vacancies*



Overview of the Report

Office of Ethics Compliance & Compliance Officer

- Anticipate 54-member staff
- Six core divisions: *Enforcement, Legal, Education and Training, Policy and Regulatory, IT/Disclosure, and Administrative.*
- Legal Counsel: Authority for In-house attorneys & external independent counsel
- Dedicated Budget: Minimum \$13.8 million



Overview of the Report

Additional Information

- Detailed information on the formation of the Interim Ethics Ordinance (p. 22)
- Appendix 1: Draft Charter Amendment Language (p. 29)
- Appendix 2: Summary of the Draft Charter Amendment Language (p. 42)
- Appendix 3: Proposed Initial Staffing (p.48)



Public Comment, Discussion, & Potential Action

Thank you!

Extra Slides

Potential Charter Conflict Concerns

- The Ethics Commission's ability to control its office and fire/hire its Director is a **core** and **standard** best practice to ensure **independence**.

Jurisdiction	Executive Director Selection	Executive Director Removal
FPPC	Commission appoints	Commission removes
Los Angeles (City)	Commission appoints	Commission removes
San Diego (City)	Commission appoints	Commission removes
San Francisco	Commission appoints	Commission removes
Oakland	Commission nominates 2-3 candidates; City Administrator appoints from nominees	Commission removes

How to move forward?

Consideration for Timeline:

- In order to get any ethics commission established in 2026, we will need a **budget allocation**.
- Supervisors are scheduled to discuss their budget priorities and send to the CEO's office in their **April 14th meeting**.



Potential Charter Conflict Concerns

- **Removal of Commissioners:** current charter language specifies that the Board of Supervisors maintains authority to remove commissioners.
- **Independent Counsel:** current charter language specifies that County Counsel represents and advises county officers.
- **Budget:** current charter language allows Board to alter or cut the Commission's budget at-will



Ordinance vs Charter

- **Ordinance:** Can be amended at any time
 - Any Ethics Commission protections created by Ordinance can be changed by a future Board at any time.
- **Charter:** Akin to the County's constitution, can only be amended by vote of County voters



How to move forward?

Recommendation from the subcommittee:

- Propose “Gold Standard Language” as **Charter Amendment**
- Propose bullet points for **conforming ordinance**
- Provide **Budget Recommendation** to start the development of the Commission and Office in June Budget



From the Subcommittee: Summary of Changes

Proposal: **Staffing Needs for Office of Ethic Compliance**

Staffing Needs - Process

- County Counsel estimate (Oct. 2024): 73-93 FTE
- The Subcommittee reviewed org charts and staffing practices for **peer jurisdictions**, including FPPC, LA, SF, Oakland, San Diego
- County Executive Officer Kellie Johnson (former Oakland Ethics ED and Enforcement Chief) and Nicolas Heidorn (former Oakland Ethics ED) then drafted a model org chart based on Measure G requirements and expected staffing needs

Peer Jurisdictions

- The two closest peer jurisdictions are **City of Los Angeles** and **City and County of San Francisco**.

	Elected Officials	Employees	Lobbyists	From 700 filers
San Francisco	18	34,800	212	5,955
LA City	18	50,300	790	10,450
LA County	13*	117,100	402	12,000
*after Board expansion and election of County Executive				

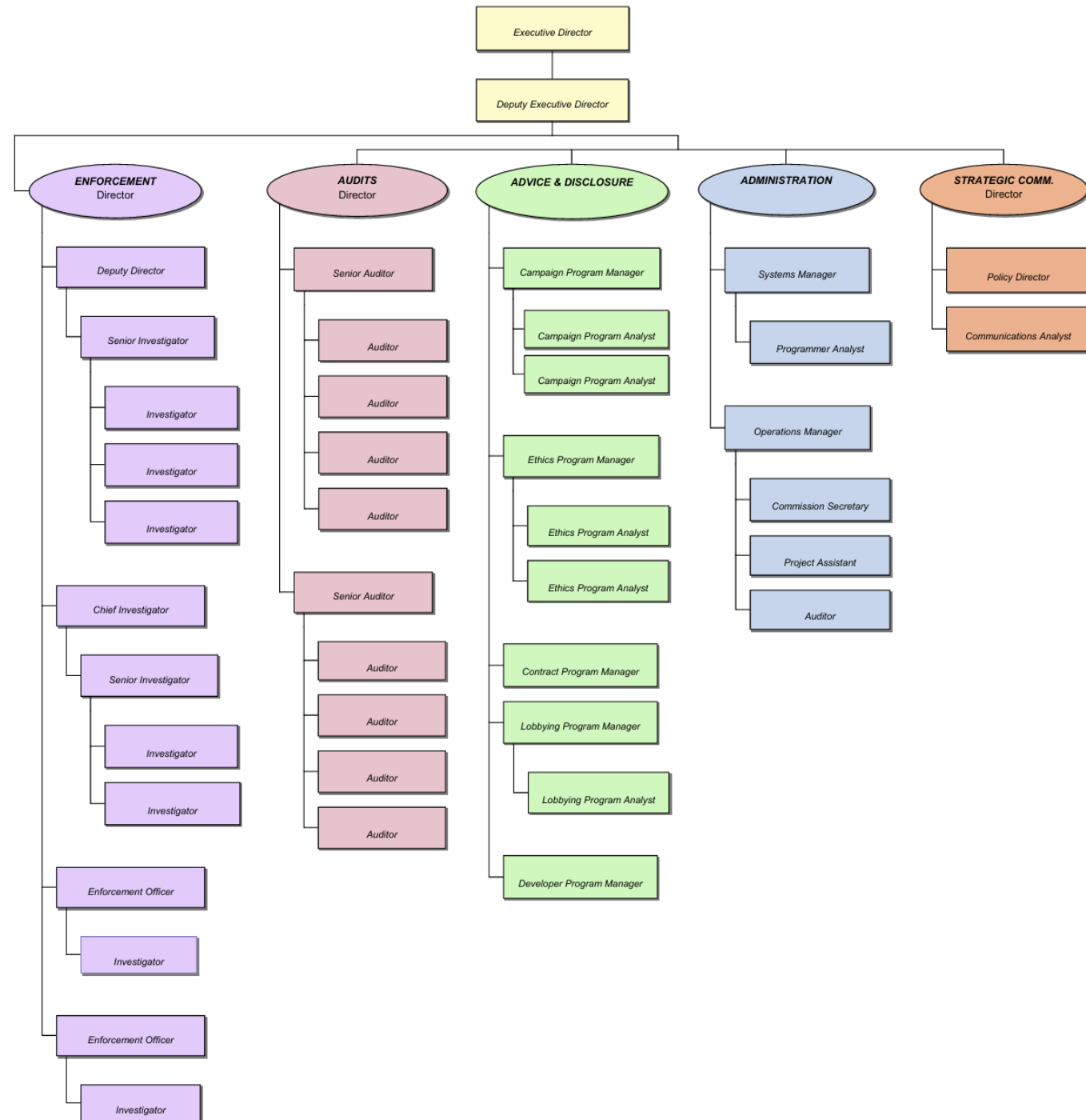
Staffing Needs

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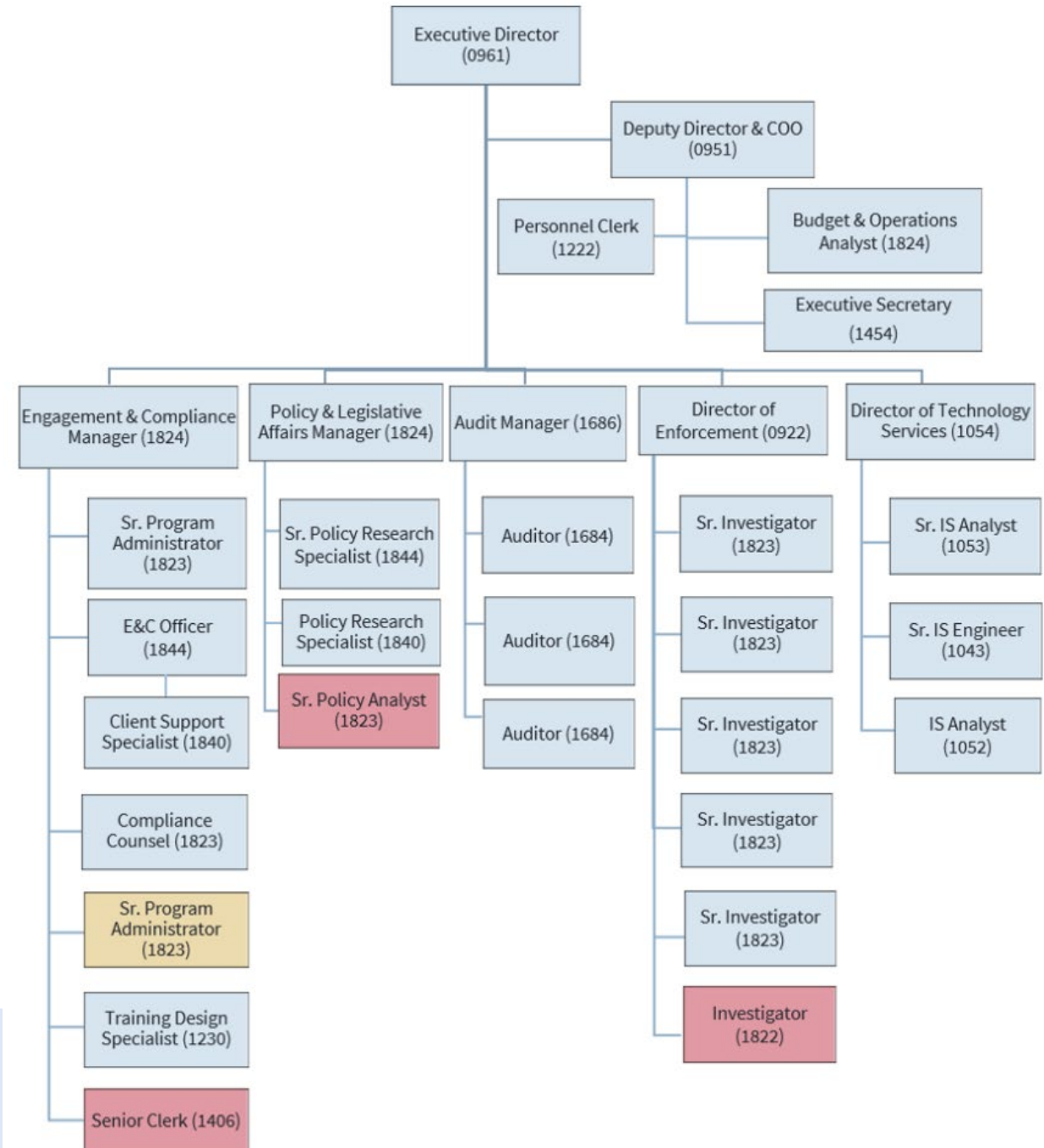
	Elected Officials	Employees	Lobbyists	From 700 filers	Ethics Staffing:
San Francisco	18	34,800	212	5,955	28
LA City	18	50,300	790	10,450	46
LA County	13*	117,100	402	12,000	Proposed: 54

**after Board expansion and election of County Executive*

Los Angeles

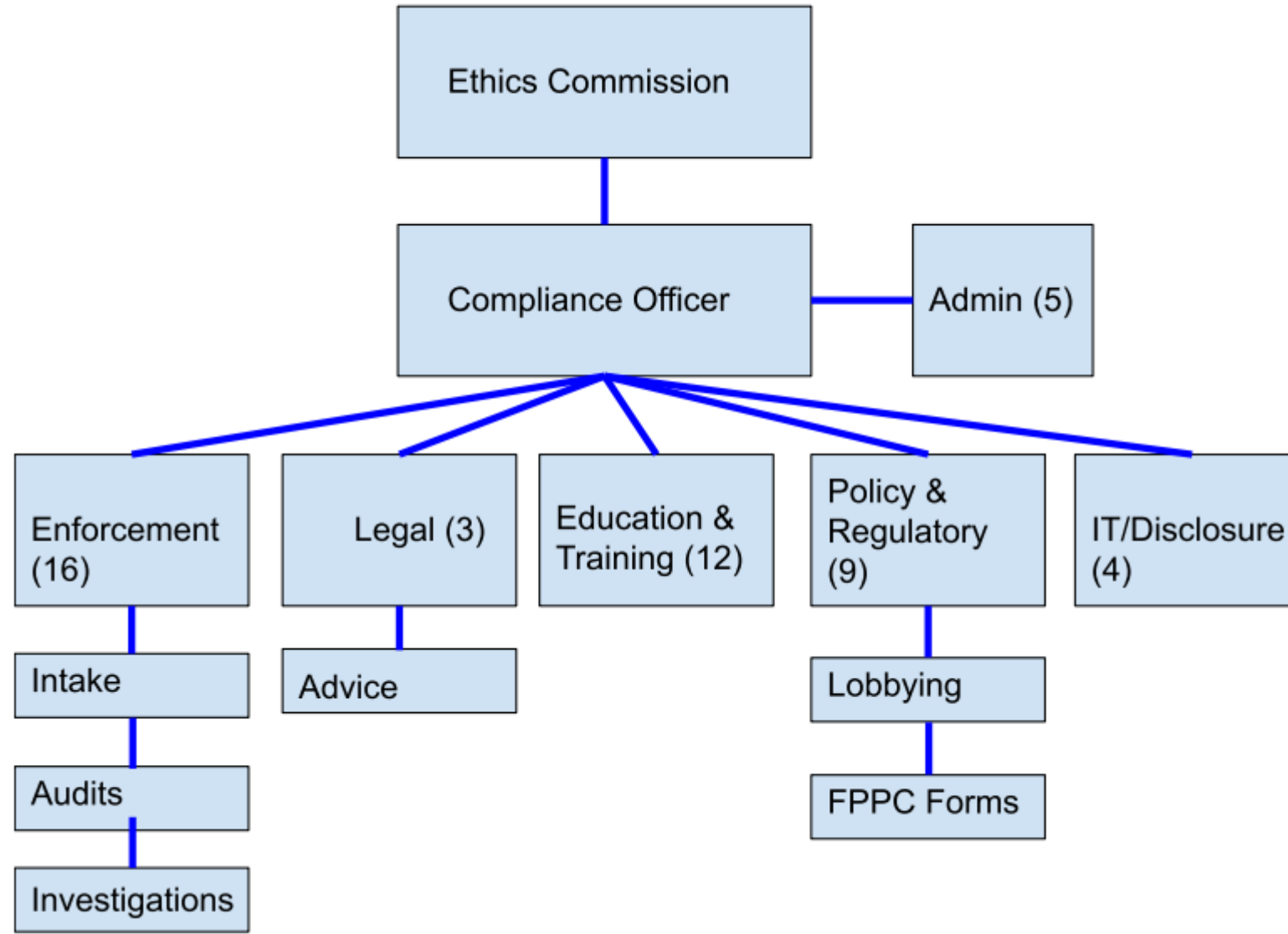


San Francisco



Los Angeles County (Proposed)

- Modelled Org Chart to estimate needs
- Draft Ordinance allows Office of Ethics to set its own staffing based on needs



Budget Estimate

- Some existing units would likely be transferred over (e.g. Lobbying Registration unit)

Public Comment:

Discussion: Community Feedback from March 7

GRTF Ad Hoc Subcommittee on the Establishment of an Independent Ethics Commission

Thank you!