

REVIEW OF CITY COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

City Council Meeting
July 8, 2025



INTRODUCTION

- City Council requested staff to bring forth a report on the scope of work of Commissions and Committees, particularly as it pertains to Commissions and Committees providing recommendations to City Council for their consideration.
- In September 2023, the City Council reviewed the City Committees, including their scope of work, membership, criteria for forming Ad Hoc committees, and the alternate positions. Based on the direction provided by the City Council; staff incorporated the recommended changes and revised Council Policy 000.2 (City Council Appointed Advisory Committees and Boards), as well as updated the Commission and Committee Handbook.
- 3 Commissions
- 8 Committees

CITY COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE	MAIN FUNCTION
Planning Commission	Considers development projects and planning applications
Parks and Community Services Commission	Provides input relating to parks, parkways, recreation programs and community services
Arts Commission	Focuses on investments in the arts
Access, Building, Fire & Housing Board of Appeal	Advises on matters pertaining to building construction
Housing and Public Service Grants Committee	Considers activities funded by U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) and Community Development Block Grants
Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee	Reviews matters concerning mobile home parks
Finance and Pension Advisory Committee	Advises on significant financial matters, the budget, and impacts
Animal Services Committee	Advises on services for animals
Fairview Park Steering Committee	Evaluates the Fairview Park Master Plan and park enhancement opportunities
Active Transportation Committee	Plans and implements an Active Transportation network
Traffic Impact Fee Ad Hoc Committee	Advises on updating and the revision of traffic impact fees

DISCUSSION

- The Municipal Code delineates Planning Commission recommendations to the City Council.
- The Municipal Code articulates that the Parks and Community Services Commission and the Arts Commission are to report its findings and recommendations to the City Council on various subject matter, however, it does not state how.
 - The City Council may want to specify the pathway in which to receive recommendations from the City Commissions.
 - Staff suggests City Council opt for a similar approach as the one currently in place with the Finance and Pension Advisory Committee.

A memorandum from the Chair will be provided to the City Council as to their recommendations. A majority of the Commission must agree on the recommendation.

- Currently, City Committees communicate and provide City Council with updates through a memo, an annual report, or they report out to the Council liaison, per the Commission and Committee Handbook.





RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council discuss the City's Commissions and Committees, along with the Commission and Committee Member Handbook, and provide specific feedback and direction on how Council prefers to receive updates or direction from their Committees/Commissions.



Strengthening the City's Cultural Leadership

Proposals to Empower the Arts Commission and
Advance Costa Mesa's Civic Identity

Problem:

A Commission without a Voice

The Costa Mesa Arts Commission is tasked with advising Council on the city's cultural future, but it lacks the tools to do so effectively. With no reporting process, no way to initiate recommendations, and no formal role in branding, capital projects, or funding discussions, the Commission cannot fully carry out its mandate. This undermines Costa Mesa's identity as the "City of the Arts."

Structure

No formal process for memos, presentations, or Council responses, unlike other bodies.

Voice

No mechanism to create or lead subcommittees despite clear authorization in municipal code.

Visibility

No budget authority or branding role, despite the Master Plan's call to "elevate the status of arts and culture."



Shepard Fairey, *Welcome Home*

Solution



Joshua Madrid, *City of the Arts*

To fulfill its mandate and help Costa Mesa live up to its identity as the “City of the Arts,” the Arts Commission needs clearer authority, strategic tools, and formal pathways to contribute. These proposals build on existing ordinance language and Master Plan goals, and they’re ready to implement.

STRUCTURE

Create a formal reporting process to City Council.

VOICE

Clarify and affirm the Commission’s right to form subcommittees and bring forward recommendations.

FUNDING

Establish a dedicated Public Art Fund used exclusively for visible, community-facing public art.

IDENTITY

Involve the Commission in civic identity efforts, including signage and visual design.

Formal Reporting Pathway

Give the Commission
a Voice at the Table

- Establish a consistent process for the Arts Commission to send memos, recommendations, and presentations to City Council.
 - Aligns with FiPAC and Planning Commission procedures.
 - Empowers the Commission to proactively shape cultural priorities.
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Subcommittee Authority

Unleash the Commission's
Capacity to Do the Work

- Reaffirm the Commission's right to form ad hoc committees per existing ordinance §12-75 (b).
 - Clarify implementation by aligning handbook and municipal code.
 - Empower the commission to lead on civic identity, arts integration, and master plan execution.
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Dedicated Public Art Fund

Build a Visible Legacy
Across the City

- Create a fund reserved solely for permanent, community-facing public art projects.
- Seed the fund with Cannabis Tax Revenue, already authorized for public benefit under the municipal ordinance.
- Explore a future policy allocating 1% of eligible CIP budgets over \$500,000—and potentially large private developments—to public art.
- Empower the Arts Commission to coordinate art integration in major City projects.

Civic Identity & Integration

Ensure the Arts Are Part
of the City's Story

- Align with the Master Plan goal to elevate the visibility and status of the arts across departments.
- Invite the Arts Commission to support visual identity efforts, including signage, placemaking, and public-facing materials.
- Involve the Commission in key city-led projects that shape Costa Mesa's image as the "City of the Arts."

The Moment to Lead

What does it mean to be the “City of the Arts?”

Costa Mesa’s Arts & Culture Master Plan ends this year. The Commission now takes the lead on shaping what comes next.

This is the right time to ask: what does it really mean to be **the City of the Arts** ? And how far are we willing to go to live up to that name?

The Commission is ready to work, but they need Council’s direction. How bold should we be? What kind of impact do we want to make? This is our chance to help set the vision.



DISCUSS CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

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INTRODUCTION

- Currently, the City does not have a Code of Ethics and Conduct established.
- The goal of the Code of Ethics and Conduct is to ensure public confidence in the integrity of local government elected and appointed officials.
- Establishing an ethics code promotes an honest, effective, and accountable city government, encouraging high standards of behavior by public officials, and assists with decision-making.
- The intent of the Code of Ethics is to achieve fair, ethical, and accountable local government for the City of Costa Mesa.
- Staff conducted research and provided two Code of Ethics and Conduct examples for reference and consideration:
 - City of Irvine (Attachments 2 and 3) and City of Gardena (Attachment 4)

PROPOSED CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

The following key components are in the draft Code of Ethics and Conduct:

- Act in the Public's Interest
- Comply with the Law
- Members Conduct
- Respect for Process
- Conduct of Public Meetings
- Merit Based Decisions
- Communication
- Conflict of Interest
- Gifts and Favors
- Confidential Information
- Use of Public Resources
- Representation of Private Interests
- Advocacy
- Policy role of Members
- Independence of Boards, Commissions, and Committees
- Positive Workplace Environment
- Implementation
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Statement of Commitment



RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council discuss the Code of Ethics and Conduct and provide feedback and direction for development of a policy.

