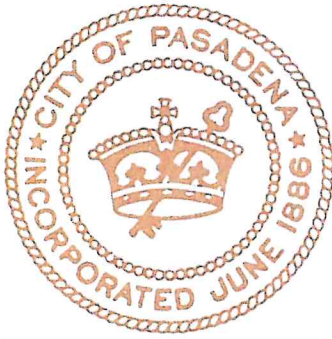




Agenda Report

August 31, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: City Manager's Office

SUBJECT: DISCUSS AND PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON RESTRUCTURING CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the action proposed herein is covered by the commonsense exemption set forth in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(c) as CEQA only applies to projects that may have a significant effect on the environment; and
2. Discuss and provide guidance on restructuring City Council Committees including committee size, meeting times, meeting dates, and equitable member participation.

BACKGROUND:

The City Manager's Office has prepared this report to present options for restructuring the City Council Committee system, with the goal of improving efficiency, streamlining workflow, and maximizing participation among all elected officials. Currently, the City Council operates with six standing committees codified in the Pasadena Municipal Code. The Committees are the: Finance Committee, Economic Development and Technology Committee, Legislative Policy Committee, Public Safety Committee, Municipal Services Committee, and Housing, Homelessness, and Planning Committee. At a minimum, the meeting dates and times will need to be shifted if the City Council meetings are moved to Tuesday. In addition to date and time selection, this report evaluates the opportunities of reducing the number of committees to three, four, or five, and examines related factors such as committee size, meeting times, and equitable member participation.

Current Committee Meeting Schedule

The Finance Committee has historically met on second and fourth Monday prior to the City Council meeting. Membership on this committee has varied due to the early start time and the recognition that it can make for a long Monday. The first through fourth Tuesdays

all have a Council Committee currently scheduled. The Municipal Services Committee meets on the second and fourth Tuesday, Legislative Policy meets on the first Tuesday, and Economic Development and Technology meets on the third Tuesday. The Housing, Homelessness, and Planning Committee meets on the first Wednesday and members of that committee have expressed an interest in meeting twice each month. Public Safety meets on the third Wednesday. There are no City Council Committee meetings held on Thursday; however, the Council Chamber is currently used by either the Community Police Oversight Committee or the Pasadena Rental Housing Board on the first three Thursdays of each month. Those two meetings could be relocated from the Council Chamber if City Council Committee meetings are moved to Thursday.

The table below shows the current usage of the Council Chamber by week:

Week of the Month	Date	Time
Week 1		
Legislative Policy Committee	1st Tuesday	5:00 PM
Housing, Homelessness and Planning Committee	1st Wednesday	5:00 PM
Pasadena Rental Housing Board	1st Thursday	6:00 PM
Week 2		
Finance Committee	2nd Monday	4:00 PM
Municipal Services Committee	2nd Tuesday	5:00 PM
Community Police Oversight Commission	2nd Thursday	6:00 PM
Week 3		
Economic Development & Technology Committee	3rd Tuesday	5:00 PM
Public Safety Committee	3rd Wednesday	5:00 PM
Pasadena Rental Housing Board	3rd Thursday	6:00 PM
Week 4		
Finance Committee	4th Monday	4:00 PM
Municipal Services Committee	4th Tuesday	5:00 PM

Committee Restructuring Options

Reducing the number of City Council Committees from six to three, four, or five offers several potential benefits, including enhanced focus, reduced scheduling conflicts, and increased efficiency. A three-committee structure would require broader scopes for each committee, potentially consolidating related subject areas. Four committees could allow for more specialized focus while still streamlining operations. A five-committee option maintains a balance between specialization and efficiency, preserving more distinct subject matter areas while modestly reducing overall committee count. Each option should be evaluated for its ability to address core City Council priorities and accommodate workload distribution.

Following is a proposal of how a 4-committee structure could work:

1. Infrastructure, Utilities & Sustainability Committee

Potential consolidation:

- Municipal Services Committee (MSC) less Transportation
- Finance Committee (where finance matters relate to capital projects, rate-setting, capital improvement program)
- Environmental / Sustainability-related items

Rationale:

Finance and MSC have some overlapping oversight responsibility, and sustainability is already tightly connected to infrastructure and utilities (e.g., PWP, Public Works). A combined committee could oversee physical, utility, environmental, and long-term capital systems—without handling land-use matters that could conflict with Planning Commission jurisdiction and the HHPC.

2. Housing, Human Services & Economic Vitality Committee

Potential consolidation:

- Housing, Homelessness & Planning Committee (HHPC)
- Economic Development and Technology Committee
- Public Health / Human Services areas

Rationale:

HHPC would remain due to its recent establishment and full work plan and could add Economic Development and Public Health. Public Health provides critical services to our most vulnerable populations and there is great coordination and synergy around homelessness, case management, and supportive housing. By adding Economic Development, City Council can balance its workload and broaden the committee's community-facing policy portfolio. This grouping aligns social outcomes (housing, health, homelessness) with economic mobility, business climate, and community well-being.

3. Public Safety & Governance Committee

Potential consolidation:

- Public Safety Committee
- Legislative Policy Committee
- Finance Committee (governance, administrative, budget oversight components)

Rationale:

A "Public Safety and Governance" grouping could preserve focus on PD/FD but also logically incorporates governance elements like legislative review, administrative policy, and general fund stewardship. Because this committee is inherently broad, it helps reduce overall committee count while keeping City Council oversight coherent.

4. Operations, Innovation & Community Services Committee

Potential consolidation:

- Transportation
- Departmental operational oversight (HR, IT/DoIT, Library, Parks/PRCS, Office of the Young Child, Rent Stabilization, etc.)
- Technology & Innovation

Rationale:

This committee could focus on day-to-day operational excellence, digital transformation, community services, and cross-departmental performance. It could reduce siloing by allowing multiple service departments to feed into one operations-centric oversight body.

Optimal Committee Size

The optimal committee size is generally considered to be either three or four members. A three-member configuration supports concise discussion and decision-making, while four members may provide broader representation and perspectives. Both sizes can facilitate effective collaboration, but the choice should consider the need for diverse viewpoints and the practicalities of quorum requirements. With eight elected officials, careful assignments to committees are necessary to ensure balanced participation across all committees. The City Council did previously implement a reduced quorum requirement of a committee to two members; however, that provided for significant challenges of even two members meeting to discuss a City relevant topic outside of a meeting and was quickly undone.

Standardized Meeting Times and Frequency

To promote consistency and accessibility, it is recommended that committee meetings adopt standardized start and targeted end times, and frequency of meetings. For example, meetings could begin at 5:30p.m. and conclude by 7:30p.m., providing sufficient time for discussion while accommodating the schedules of City Council members and the public. Establishing uniform times will also aid in minimizing conflicts and improving attendance. Meetings have often started late waiting for a quorum to arrive and have had to end early due to loss of quorum. Frequency of meetings has proven to be a key issue as some committees have robust work plans and the challenge of holding regular meetings has proven frustrating for City Council, staff, and the community. The inconsistent meetings have also provided for delays in moving items forward or have caused items to go directly to City Council without Committee discussion, making already full City Council agendas even more complicated.

The proposal of a four-committee structure also works well with the intent of not over-burdening any one week or individual Councilmember's schedule. If the Infrastructure, Utilities & Sustainability Committee and the Housing, Human Services & Economic Vitality Committee met twice per month, then it would make sense to schedule these on alternating Wednesdays such as the first and third and second and fourth of each month. The remaining two committees, which could likely operate on a once per month basis, could select between Mondays or Thursdays.

There is also recognition that some commissions would likely need to consider moving their regular schedules to ensure that staff can support both the City Council Committees and the Commissions. The Design Commission and Planning Commission are the two that have the greatest impact on staff workload. In this case, the Planning Commission meets on the second and fourth Wednesday, so holding the Housing, Human Services & Economic Vitality Committee on the first and third Wednesday would cause the least disruption. Design Commission is likely to move to a new day as they currently meet on the second and fourth Tuesday.

Participation Challenge

One challenge in reducing the number of City Council Committees is ensuring meaningful participation from all eight elected officials. If there is support for fewer committees and fixed sizes, strategies on committee assignments must be transparent and equitable. Rotating committee memberships and chairs, assigning roles based on expertise, or implementing cross-committee liaisons are potential solutions to maximize engagement and representation. The restructuring process should prioritize fair distribution and avoid overburdening any single Councilmember.

Summary

In summary, the City Council has several viable options for committee restructuring, should it provide that direction to staff, each with distinct advantages and considerations. Determining the optimal number and size of committees, standardizing meeting times, and ensuring equitable participation are critical factors. Next steps include soliciting input from City Council, reviewing operational data, and developing a detailed implementation plan with a timeline to support an effective transition.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The City Council's consideration of restructuring their committees maintains the public's ability to attend publicly noticed meetings and ensures the City's business is conducted in public. This is consistent with the City Council's strategic goals to support and promote the quality of life.

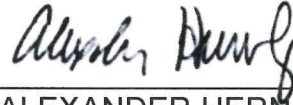
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The proposed action has been determined to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15061 (b)(3), the Common Sense Exemption that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. The consideration of restructuring City Council Committees would have no adverse impact on the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with a change in City Council Committees and their future meetings.

Respectfully submitted,



ALEXANDER HERNANDEZ
Assistant to the City Manager

Approved by:



MATTHEW E. HAWKESWORTH
Interim City Manager

Attachments (1):

Attachment A – City Council Committee Restructuring Options Matrix