clerk CIS <clerk.cis@lacity.org>

Urgent: Replace PDF Attachment to WNC Community Impact Statement — CF 26-1238

1 message

Sheida Ashley <sheidaashley@gmail.com> Thu, Nov 5, 2026 at 8:30 AM
To: "clerk.cis@lacity.org" <clerk.cis@lacity.org>

Dear City Clerk,

The Westside Neighborhood Council's Community Impact Statement submitted on November 3, 2026, under Council File 26-1238 included a PDF attachment with a formatting problem.

We request that the defective PDF be replaced with a corrected version (attached), without altering the substance of the CIS or the Council's position.

Please advise whether the attachment can be replaced directly or whether a new submission is required.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Sheida Ashley

Westside Neighborhood Council Charter Reform Representative

WNC Inspector General CIS Recommendation Letter.pdf
780K

WESTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
P.O. Box 64370 Los Angeles CA 90064
www.wncla.org (310) 474-2326

November 2, 2026

To: Los Angeles City Council Ad Hoc Committee on Charter Review
Re: Council Files: 26-0489 and 26-1238
Support for a Charter Amendment Establishing an Independent Citywide Inspector General (CRC 26)
Position: SUPPORT

The Westside Neighborhood Council (WNC) strongly supports reconsideration of the Charter Reform Commission's proposal to establish an **independent Citywide Inspector General (IG)** with meaningful investigative authority over City departments, senior management, and public officials.

Los Angeles has a significant gap in government oversight. When allegations of serious misconduct or dereliction of duty involve senior officials within a City department, Angelenos have no clearly established, independent Citywide investigative authority to turn to. Internal investigations conducted by the very departments whose leadership is under scrutiny cannot substitute for independent oversight.

The City Has Already Recognized This Problem

In its November 30, 2023 report under Council File 23-0188, the Los Angeles City Ethics Commission acknowledged that Los Angeles lacks a centralized Office of Inspector General. Its report examined established oversight models in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Jacksonville, and other jurisdictions that have established this role.

These jurisdictions demonstrate that independent oversight can include broad investigative authority, subpoena powers, access to departmental records, compelled employee testimony, public reporting, and referrals for criminal prosecution.

The Ethics Commission also identified the fundamental policy questions that must be resolved: the Inspector General's independence, jurisdiction, investigative and enforcement powers, funding, and relationship to existing oversight bodies.

The Charter Reform Commission subsequently advanced **CRC 26**, proposing an Inspector General with authority to audit and investigate City officials and departments. As this proposal was not advanced to the ballot, the underlying need for independent oversight remains unresolved.

The Consequences of Inadequate Oversight

A documented complaint involving senior LADBS officials illustrates a critical gap in City oversight. Despite substantial evidence of alleged misconduct, including the removal of officially issued enforcement records, withholding of investigative documents, and interference with administrative due process, a Westside resident has been unable to secure an independent investigation after seeking assistance from oversight agencies, including the Ethics Commission, the Controller's Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Unit, and the District Attorney's Public Integrity Division.

The District Attorney directs criminal complaints to law enforcement, while LAPD indicates that it lacks a designated unit to investigate such matters. **This cycle of referrals and institutional inaction leaves serious allegations of corruption unresolved, with no independent investigation, meaningful accountability, or effective avenue for redress.**

This illustrates a fundamental structural problem: Los Angeles has several offices that receive complaints but operate within limited areas of authority and jurisdiction, with no centralized, independent Citywide Inspector General responsible for investigating serious allegations of departmental misconduct.

The consequences extend beyond individual complainants. Inadequate oversight can compromise public records, undermine administrative due process, obstruct legal remedies, expose taxpayers to liability, and erode public confidence in City government.

WNC Recommendations

The Westside Neighborhood Council urges the Committee to revive the Inspector General proposal and advance a Charter amendment establishing an independent Citywide Office of Inspector General with:

1. **Citywide investigative jurisdiction** over corruption, abuse of authority, obstruction of administrative processes, and serious misconduct involving City officials and departments.
2. **Subpoena authority and unrestricted access to relevant City records**, subject to applicable law.
3. **Authority to compel cooperation and testimony** from City employees and officials, with appropriate legal protections.
4. **Structural and financial independence**, including a protected budget and safeguards against political interference.
5. **Whistleblower and complainant protections** against retaliation.
6. **Public reporting and accountability**, including investigative findings, corrective recommendations, and mandatory departmental responses.
7. **Authority to refer evidence of criminal misconduct** directly to appropriate investigative and prosecutorial agencies.

The Inspector General should complement—not replace—existing oversight and law enforcement agencies, while closing the critical gaps in accountability between them.

Conclusion

The Westside Neighborhood Council maintains that **independent oversight is essential to restoring public confidence in Los Angeles City government.**

The Ethics Commission's 2023 report and the Charter Reform Commission's CRC 26 proposal have already established a foundation for this reform. An Inspector General must have meaningful investigative powers, not merely an advisory role, to ensure accountability for misconduct by City officials.

No City department should be solely responsible for investigating allegations of serious misconduct against its own leadership.

We strongly urge the Committee to advance CRC 26 as a proposed Charter amendment for voter consideration.

Submitted by:

Terri Tippit

Terri Tippit, Chair
Westside Neighborhood Council
Los Angeles, California

Attached: November 30, 2023 LA City Ethics Commission Initial Report on Independent Auditor/Investigator's Office

Los Angeles City
ETHICS COMMISSION

November 30, 2023

The Honorable City Council
c/o Holly Wolcott, City Clerk
200 North Spring Street
City Hall—3rd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Initial Report on Independent Auditor/Investigator's Office
FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Dear Councilmembers:

Earlier this year, Council President Krekorian and President Pro Tempore Harris-Dawson introduced a motion requesting the Ethics Commission to report back on best practices and other recommendations concerning the potential establishment of an independent auditor or investigator's office to provide focused oversight and monitoring of land use, development, and construction services. *See* Council File No. 23-0188.

As an initial response to the motion, this letter provides data from other jurisdictions and suggests policy questions to consider when discussing the establishment of an independent auditor/investigator's office. The Ethics Commission has created an ad hoc working group, which includes newly appointed Commissioners Aryeh Cohen and Alex Johnson, to consider this significant issue. The Ethics Commission will make specific recommendations in the coming months, based on the working group's input.

A. Background

The City of Los Angeles does not have a centralized Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Instead, select City departments employ an internal inspector general and related staff to carry out various audit and investigative functions specific to the department. The largest City departments currently utilizing inspectors general are the Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and the Police Department (LAPD). Both positions were created to combat actual and perceived issues within the departments.

The LAPD's OIG was created by a ballot measure in 1995 and reports directly to the Board of Police Commissioners, rather than the chief of police. The primary function of LAPD's OIG is to "monitor, audit, and oversee the Department's disciplinary system." Since its inception, these responsibilities have expanded to include the authority to initiate an audit of any aspect of LAPD operations. It has 36 staff positions and an annual budget of approximately $12 million, and its authority is derived from section 573 of the Los Angeles City Charter.

The LADWP OIG was created in 2019 as part of former Mayor Garcetti's LADWP reform efforts and saw its first inspector general hired in 2022. The inspector general is a member of the LADWP executive team, appointed by the general manager. With an annual budget of approximately $5 million and approximately 20 staff members, the OIG oversees four key units of LADWP operations: internal audit, the ethics office, corporate performance, and corporate protection and risk analysis.

B. Best Practices in Other Jurisdictions

1. Structure

Outside of Los Angeles, the use of an OIG, a single inspector general, or a similar position or department exclusively for planning processes is extremely rare. Instead, other major jurisdictions tend to employ a centralized office of inspectors general, which most commonly operates in one of the following ways: 1) by assigning individual employees from the centralized office to work full-time on each of the various departments of the affiliated government; or 2) responding to complaints involving all departments by assigning investigations or audits as they become necessary.

In New York City, the work of an inspector general is carried out by the Department of Investigation (NYC DOI). The NYC DOI is led by a civilian commissioner who is nominated by the mayor and confirmed by the city council. The commissioner is required by law to be a member of the New York State Bar and to have at least five years of law enforcement experience. New York City Charter (NYC Charter) § 801.

Within the NYC DOI, there are inspectors general assigned to each of the departments in the city. While each department was previously assigned its own exclusive inspector general, the city consolidated its operation in the 1970s to more closely resemble its current format in which the 12 inspectors general are divided into squads and assigned to multiple departments. For example, the NYC DOI inspector general assigned to the Department of City Planning is also assigned to the Department of Buildings, the Buildings Special Investigation Unit, the City Planning Commission, and the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The City of Chicago's Office of Inspector General is a centralized department led by an individual chosen by the Mayor from a pool of candidates established by a five-member selection committee. The selection committee is required by the Chicago Municipal Code (MCC) to select and employ a "national executive search firm with experience in government oversight." MCC § 2-56-020(d). The requirements for prospective candidates are also enumerated in the MCC, and include metrics that are both subjective (*e.g.*, leadership and integrity) and objective (*e.g.*, bachelor's degree and five years of experience in certain fields). MCC § 2-56-020(a).

Chicago's inspector general is appointed by the mayor for a term of four years, and may be reappointed for additional four-year terms subject to the approval of the city council. MCC §

2-56-020(c). The inspector general and employees in the OIG have the authority to investigate most aspects of city government, including the activity of city officials, employees, agencies, lobbyists, contractors, and those participating in city bidding or certification processes. MCC § 2-56-050(a). The department does not have jurisdiction over Chicago Public Schools, Park District, Housing Authority, or Transit Authority.

Both Chicago's inspector general and employees of the OIG are prohibited from seeking or holding most public offices during their term of appointment or employment. MCC § 2-56-150. The inspector general is required to pledge in writing that for two years following departure from office, the inspector general will not seek or hold any public office that includes the City of Chicago in its jurisdiction. The pledge is non-binding. *Id.*

Chicago's OIG is divided into the following sections: communications and outreach; public safety; audit and program review; investigations; legal; and operations. The audit and program review section is responsible for publishing reports that aim to improve the efficiency of city services, including planning processes. The audit and program review section releases an annual plan each year that includes potential objectives to address within each department. For 2023, it undertook a review of the Department of Planning and Development's public benefits agreements with developers and its zoning board of appeals processes.

In the City of Houston, the OIG was created by Mayoral Executive Order (Hou. EO) 1-39 and is housed within the city's Legal Department. The inspector general reports directly to Houston's city attorney, rather than a board or commission. *Id.* The OIG, itself, contains a subsection for the Office of Police Reform and Accountability, which in part assists citizens in the filing of complaints of misconduct against Houston police officers. *Id.*

Similarly, Philadelphia's OIG was established in 1984 by executive order as an independent, centralized office within the city's executive branch. Philadelphia Executive Order (Phil. EO) 4-94; Phil. EO 7-14. Unlike most other major jurisdictions, Philadelphia's inspector general reports to and is removable at the sole discretion of the mayor. Phil. EO 7-14 § 1. Currently, the OIG includes three deputy inspectors general, a deputy inspector general for public safety, a public relations officer, and an administrative officer.

In 2015, the City of Jacksonville, Florida created an OIG through a combination of legislation and charter referendum. There, the OIG is selected by the Inspector General Selection and Retention Committee (IGSR Committee), which is comprised of the following or their designees: the president of the Jacksonville City Council; the state attorney of the Fourth Judicial Circuit; the chair of the Jacksonville Ethics Commission; the chair of the Jacksonville TRUE (Taxation, Revenue and Utilization of Expenditures, an advisory body focused on the city's short- and long-term financials) Commission; the public defender of the Fourth Judicial Circuit; the chief judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit; and the mayor. Jacksonville Code of Ordinances (JCO) § 602.305(a).

Jacksonville divides its OIG into two units: investigations and audits. Each unit contains support staff led by a deputy inspector general. The staff report to the inspector general, who in turn reports to the IGSR Committee.

Like Chicago, Jacksonville's JCO establishes general qualifications for a prospective inspector general. These include a bachelor's degree, no prior felony convictions or misdemeanors involving breaches of the public trust, and "ten years of experience in government auditing, investigation, or prosecutorial or criminal justice administration, public administration, or business administration." JCO § 602.304. Also like Chicago, Jacksonville's inspector general is appointed for a term of four years, renewable at the discretion of the IGSR Committee. JCO § 602.305(b). The Selection and Retention Committee also has the authority to remove the inspector general, based on specific charges of "neglect of duty, abuse of power or authority, discrimination, or ethical misconduct." JCO § 602.305(d).

Neither the cities nor counties of San Diego or San Francisco utilize an inspector general. In 2018, nine Bay Area counties approved a ballot measure to create an OIG for the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system. That ballot measure established a funding source for the office by increasing bridge fees. The BART inspector general is appointed by the Governor of California and reports the results of the office's audits and investigations to a three-member board of directors. Public Utilities Code (PUC) § 28841.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) employs an inspector general who is appointed by and reports directly to the LA Metro Board of Directors (Metro Board). The Metro Board is comprised of 14 members, which include the five county supervisors, the mayor of Los Angeles, two public members appointed by the mayor of Los Angeles; one Los Angeles City Council member appointed by the mayor of Los Angeles, and four Los Angeles-area individuals currently serving as a mayor or member of a city council. PUC § 130051.

Like both Jacksonville and Chicago, the LA Metro inspector general is appointed for a four-year term, renewable at the discretion of the Metro Board. PUC § 130051.28(a). The Metro Board also has the authority to remove the inspector general by a two-thirds vote or when the "inspector general violates a federal or state law or regulation, a local ordinance, or a policy or practice of the authority, relative to ethical practices, including, but not limited to, the acceptance of gifts or contributions." PUC § 130051.28(a)(1), (2). While LA Metro employs a chief executive officer (CEO), the inspector general reports directly to the Metro Board.

Audits and investigations are separate functions at LA Metro, and the OIG retains specialists, such as engineers, to assist with technical matters. Its annual budget sets aside approximately $1 million for the retention of outside experts. LA Metro also employs a chief ethics and compliance officer, separate and apart from the OIG.

Finally, one municipal organization that does utilize a structural emphasis on planning processes is the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The

M-NCPPC is a joint agency chartered by the State of Maryland in 2017, with jurisdiction over Montgomery County and Prince George's County, the area immediately surrounding Washington, D.C.

The M-NCPPC consists of seven departments, including the OIG, created by the Maryland State Legislature and led by a single department head. Maryland Land Use Statutes (MD Land Use Code), Division II, Title 15, Subtitle 5, Section 15-502. Each of the departments reports to and is governed by a board of ten commissioners, five from the Montgomery Planning Board and five from the Prince George's Planning Board.

The Maryland State Legislature created an audit committee within the M-NCPPC. *Id.* at 15-401. The audit committee is responsible for the selection of the inspector general, "on the basis of professional ability and personal integrity, without regard to political affiliation." *Id.* at 15-503(a)(1)-(2). An inspector general is appointed by the audit committee for a term of four years, and may serve a maximum of three terms. *Id.* at 15-503(b)(1)-(2). While the audit committee is responsible for the appointment of the inspector general, removal requires a majority of the M-NCPPC, including the votes of at least three members from each county. *Id.* at 15-503(b)(4).

2. Powers and Authority

The powers and duties granted or delegated to OIGs most typically include audit and investigative authority. While the most common practice across major jurisdictions requires OIGs to publish reports on their audit and investigation activity—either directly to the public online or to the OIGs reporting authority, such as its board or commission—some jurisdictions also permit the OIG to make non-binding policy recommendations. These recommendations can include updates or improvements to a department's internal policies, such as additional checkpoints for oversight or review, as well as substantive changes to the law.

Similarly, the enforcement functions of an OIG can include either an advisory role in which penalties recommended by the OIG are considered and carried out by another department, or substantive enforcement authority vested in the OIG itself. One commonality across major jurisdictions is the process by which investigations are initiated. While audits can lead to enforcement actions, investigations into wrongdoing are most commonly initiated as a result of a whistleblower complaint. The OIG in every major jurisdiction in the county utilizes a complaint hotline or webpage similar to the Ethics Commission's complaint hotline and webpage. Each department relies heavily on tips and complaints for the initiation of its investigations.

In New York, the NYC DOI conducts both audits and investigations for the purpose of eliminating "corrupt or other criminal activity, conflicts of interest, unethical conduct, misconduct and incompetence" within its assigned agencies. New York City Mayoral Executive Order No. 16, July 26, 1978. The commissioner is granted broad authority to "make any study or investigation which in his opinion may be in the best interests of the city, including but not limited to investigations of the affairs, functions, accounts, methods, personnel or efficiency of

any agency." NYC Charter § 803(b). At the discretion of the OIG, these audits and investigations can result in what the department calls "policy and procedure (PPR) recommendations."

The NYC DOI provides relevant PPR recommendations directly to city agencies and, since 2014, publishes them in an online PPR tracking system called the DOI PPR Portal. The DOI PPR Portal is publicly accessible and displays information including a description of the recommendation itself, acceptance and implementation status, implementation dates, and any agency comment. Staff have conveyed that matters involving the Department of City Planning are relatively uncommon, and those that do arise often concern contractor wage issues or safety concerns.

Although these are non-binding, advisory recommendations, they are based on the findings of a particular audit or investigation and are frequently implemented by the impacted departments. Since the creation of the DOI PPR Portal in 2014, various city departments have adopted approximately 3,450 policy recommendations, while only 215 were rejected. The portal can be accessed at nyc.gov/site/doi/about/ppr-portal-report.page.

Though not specific to its OIG, the NYC DOI is a law enforcement agency with broad criminal and civil investigative authority. It also acts as the investigative arm of the city's Conflicts of Interest Board. Following its investigations, it may refer for criminal prosecution cases of fraud, corruption, and other illegal activity by city employees.

Chicago's OIG also regularly issues recommendations as part of the summary reports that follow its audits and investigations. Like New York, the recommendations are non-binding. However, when the Chicago OIG issues a recommendation for discipline or another administrative action in a report, the responsible authority (such as a city department) is required to respond to the recommendation within 30 days. MCC § 2-56-065. The response is required to include a description of the disciplinary or administrative action taken, a request for an extension, or a detailed explanation of any decision to not pursue or to pursue different disciplinary or administrative action than that recommended by the OIG.

Chicago's OIG includes its recommendations within its departmental audit reports, which also contain its findings, conclusions, and any response offered by the department undergoing the audit. All audit reports are made available on a webpage that contains a master list of all reports and publications issued by Chicago's OIG, which can be filtered by both the type of report and the applicable city department.

When the Chicago OIG receives an initial complaint, it may choose to conduct its own investigation or refer the complaint to another governmental agency, another governmental IG, or an outside law enforcement agency. If it decides to pursue its own investigation, the OIG has the authority to issue subpoenas based on a reasonable belief that misconduct has occurred within the programs or operation of the city government. Subpoenas issued by the Chicago OIG are required to be served in the same manner as subpoenas issued under the rules of the Illinois

Supreme Court. The office may also refer a complaint to the OIG's ethics officer when the substance of that complaint involves an ethics issue.

In its mandatory quarterly reports to the city council, the OIG lists the number of complaint referrals it made and the recipient agency or department. In the first quarter of 2023, Chicago's OIG made 641 referrals to the Civilian Office of Police Accountability and three to the Chicago Department of Planning and Development. The quarterly reports include a variety of information, including summaries of OIG investigations which have been open for longer than 12 months and status updates on departmental adjustments made in response to previous audits.

Philadelphia's OIG shares several significant traits with its counterpart in Chicago. For instance, like Chicago, the Philadelphia OIG also has the authority to issue subpoenas. The OIG is also entitled to examine all relevant city documents and to order testimony from any city employee. In contrast to the Chicago OIG's quarterly reports to the council, Philadelphia's inspector general is required to issue a publicly available report to the mayor on an annual basis.

Philadelphia also issues policy recommendations in conjunction with its reports, a procedure utilized by many other major jurisdictions, including New York City. While the recommendations are not binding, heads of all executive city agencies are required to issue a written response detailing any responsive action taken or planned within 30 days of receiving a report from the OIG. Further, the inspector general may, with the consent of the agency heads, designate an "integrity officer" within each of the executive agencies. These integrity officers are then required to report directly to the inspector general, rather than their departmental head, on matters concerning the OIG and the executive order governing its operations.

In Jacksonville, the OIG's enforcement capabilities are purely administrative. Staff estimate that planning issues account for approximately 10 percent of their work. Like other major jurisdictions, Jacksonville's OIG often concludes its audits and investigations by making policy recommendations to the subject agency. Jacksonville's approach to employee discipline also mirrors that of other large cities, including Philadelphia. If the activity or conduct in question involves city personnel, the OIG will provide its findings to both the responsible agency and the city's human resources department. Any employee disciplinary action resulting from an OIG audit or investigation is carried out exclusively by and at the discretion of the human resources department.

LA Metro's OIG has broad authority over subject matter that extends beyond the traditional investigations and audits concerning fraud, waste, and abuse. Because of LA Metro's core functions, including its role in large capital projects, the OIG also has the ability to investigate matters that impact the organization's far reaching and diverse operations, including contracting, efficiency, and safety. Previously, the OIG has conducted studies concerning climate change and supply chain issues at the Port of Los Angeles due to LA Metro's involvement with local highways. These reports can be initiated by staff or at the request of an LA Metro Board member.

The OIG has subpoena power, and refers criminal activity to outside law enforcement agencies at the local, state, and federal levels. While OIG audits and investigations can involve LA Metro employees, employee disciplinary action such as firings or suspensions are the responsibility of LA Metro management and are not a function of the OIG.

Due to the highly variable nature of LA Metro's operations, staff emphasized the importance of diverse experience. Beyond auditors and investigators, LA Metro's OIG employs individuals with backgrounds as attorneys, planners, and engineers. This subject matter expertise is critical to the mission of the OIG, whose work frequently involves highly technical construction matters.

One example of the importance of diverse staff experience includes a recent policy change whereby the Metro Board delegated its authority to approve change orders on construction projects valued over $1 million to its CEO. In conjunction with that delegation, the Metro Board delegated its monitoring function to the OIG. As a result, the OIG now reports to the Metro Board on the subject matter of these change orders. Its retention of engineers allows the OIG to more accurately and effectively analyze and convey the substance of these high-value change orders.

Similarly, the OIG for the M-NCPPC also audits and investigates activity concerning capital projects in all stages of development, including completed facilities within its jurisdiction. As such, staff spend considerable time in the field examining facilities under the management of the M-NCPPC as part of its audit functions.

Because the M-NCPPC primarily operates as a parks and recreation department, it employs its own law enforcement agency that operates primarily within the parks under its jurisdiction. Although the commission's law enforcement agency may work with any of the seven departments, the OIG's primary focus is audits to detect fraud, waste, and abuse. When law enforcement matters concerning the OIG arise, the office primarily refers those matters to outside agencies.

3. Budget and Staff

Best practices for an OIG's budget and staff are entirely dependent on its structure. As discussed above, most major jurisdictions do not employ an inspector general exclusively for planning processes. Instead, an independent, centralized OIG typically assigns its employees to various municipal departments or takes on projects for all departments on a rolling basis. Specific budgetary and staffing questions for an independent auditor or OIG in the City of Los Angeles can only be resolved by first determining its broader structure.

In other jurisdictions, resources can vary significantly depending on the responsibilities of the OIG. For example, the NYC DOI has a broad mandate that it fulfills with a direct annual budget of approximately $50 million, excluding employees it takes on loan, and a staff of

between 400 and 450. Approximately 12 of those staff members are dedicated to planning issues, rising to 30 with the inclusion of staff assigned to housing issues.

Similarly, Chicago's OIG has approximately 103 employees and a budget of approximately $13 million. The audit program alone was allotted approximately $1.5 million for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23). Philadelphia's OIG budget for FY23 was $2.3 million, while Jacksonville's was approximately $1.4 million for approximately 12 employees. The OIG section of Houston's Legal Department has seven full-time employees, with an annual budget of approximately $1.2 million for FY23.

LA Metro's OIG currently employs approximately 20 people with an annual budget of $4.3 million. Roughly $1 million of that budget is reserved for the retention of outside experts and the commission of various studies and reports.

The BART OIG recently had its annual budget of $1 million increased to $2.7 million, with funding generated primarily through bridge fees from the Bay Area Toll Authority. PUC § 28842. Prior to the increase, BART's OIG had three full time employees: an inspector general, an assistant inspector general, and a principal investigative auditor.

C. Policy Questions

In order to ensure the effectiveness of any potential independent auditor/investigator's office, high-level policy determinations must be made. The following questions may serve as a starting point for discussion, with the caveat that answers to these questions should in no way limit or impinge upon the Ethics Commission's authority, including the authority to investigate and enforce against violations of the laws within its jurisdiction.

1. Should an OIG be established?

2. If an OIG is established, should it be assigned exclusively to land use matters, or should it be a centralized department with citywide responsibilities?

3. If the OIG is a centralized department, will existing city inspectors general (such as those currently with LAPD and DWP) be reorganized under its purview?

4. To whom should the inspector general report (the general manager, the Ethics Commission, the City Council, the Mayor, or other)?

5. What investigative authority should an OIG have, *e.g.*, subpoena power, access to documents, ability to request or compel testimony?

6. What, if any, enforcement authority should an OIG have? Should it be limited to outside referral, or include authority to carry out personnel discipline or administrative enforcement? Should it retain internal law enforcement officers?

7. What, if any, external policy role should an OIG have? Should policy recommendations be binding or non-binding? Should the subject of the recommendations be required to respond?

8. What staffing and funding levels are appropriate to accomplish the desired goals of an OIG?

9. As an oversight agency, should proposed legislative changes impacting OIG operations be subject to additional or different review processes?

D. Conclusion

Best practices in other jurisdictions and suggested policy questions are provided above to assist you in your consideration of the potential creation of an independent auditor/investigator's office for land use purposes. Specific recommendations will be made by the members of the Ethics Commission in the coming months. If you would like additional data or information, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Tyler Joseph
Director of Policy