



**Executive Directive 24-03**

**Comprehensive Charter Reform**

*August 20, 2024*

San Francisco's current charter was adopted by the voters in 1995, nearly 30 years ago. At the time Bill Clinton was president, the DVD was about to be released, and Mission Bay was an underdeveloped industrial space. While the needs of our residents and businesses have grown significantly since then, our City's ability to govern has not evolved to effectively meet the challenges of today.

Over the last three decades, the Charter has been amended over and over, adding new departments, creating new positions, setting in place new legal requirements, restricting city spending, and adding other bureaucratic barriers that have not been created through a holistic view of what it means to govern. This coming November we have eight Charter Amendments alone that our voters are considering.

This does not mean all of those amendments have been bad or of ill intent, and in fact many have been beneficial to the City. But each of these changes has an impact, and these impacts build on each other and often have unintended consequences. Our Charter is like a home, and at some point, you add so much clutter and weight that it becomes hard to move around, and the roof starts to collapse.

The current Charter, with its layers of bureaucracy added over the years, has created inefficiency and diffused accountability across our governance structures. The good news is that we can fix this by stepping back and reconsidering the Charter as a whole. That time is now.

It's time we roll up our sleeves and work collaboratively, without division, to bring comprehensive charter reform to ensure government works better for the people of San Francisco. As elected officials, it is our duty to effectively lead, act decisively, and deliver results without making excuses. Our response to COVID-19 demonstrated what we can accomplish when we cut through bureaucracy and get to work. We acted and saved lives. We led the nation, and we can do it again.

Today's Executive Directive is a commitment to the future of San Francisco. It will set a public process to do the long and hard work necessary to set a new Charter. It will bring together our entire city leadership, under the guidance of the City Controller and City Administrator, to work with good government experts, community members, workers, and businesses for a year-long process to establish long-term changes that improve our City.

This Executive Directive does not contain explicit changes that must be made to the Charter, other than that they must be made to improve the effectiveness of government and improve the delivery of services to our residents.

This is about setting forth the process for the most significant change our Charter has seen in 30 years. While one of the mantras of my Administration has been to break down barriers quickly to make government work better, this is one time when we must be thorough and comprehensive. We must take our time to do this right.

It's about taking the time to find the best solutions inside and outside of City Hall. It's about doing what is necessary to build a government that works for and represents the needs of its people.

**Directive:**

Through this Executive Directive, I hereby direct the following to be completed by July 1, 2025:

- I. The City Controller and City Administrator shall establish a thorough outreach and implementation process, outlining public meeting timelines and input requirements from city leadership, residents, businesses, and labor partners, with an end goal of placing comprehensive Charter Reform on the November 2026 ballot.
- II. The City Controller and City Administrator, working with the support of the City Attorney and good government experts, shall collect data and analyze opportunities to reform the Charter to increase the effectiveness of government and improve the delivery of services to our residents. These areas should include, but are not limited to, consolidating City Departments, overhauling Commission structures, improving accountability in the Executive Branch, and updating the legislative process to ensure that new rules can be implemented.
- III. The City Controller and City Administrator, working with the support of the City Attorney and good government experts, shall propose a range of recommendations for consideration to improve the identified areas.
- IV. The Office of the Mayor, the City Controller and City Administrator, working in partnership with the Board of Supervisors, shall collect input from internal stakeholders, commissioners, residents, businesses and labor partners, as well as conduct public meetings both inside and outside of City Hall to consider the different recommendations for Charter Reform.
- V. The Office of the Mayor, working in partnership with the Board of Supervisors and City Attorney, shall finalize the charter reform measure for the 2026 ballot.

This Executive Directive takes effect immediately and will remain in place until rescinded by future written communication.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "London Breed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "London" and the last name "Breed" clearly distinguishable.

London N. Breed  
Mayor, City and County of San Francisco