

ETHICS COMMISSION APPROVES SWEEPING REFORMS

The Ethics Commission voted unanimously today to approve the most comprehensive set of restrictions on contributions and fundraising since the Ethics Commission was first established. The ban would prohibit campaign contributions to City candidates from non-individuals (businesses and other entities) and from individuals who are parties to a discretionary land use entitlement, including developers. The ban would extend to fundraising and bundling and would apply to any committee controlled by a City officeholder or candidate.

The Ethics Commission also voted to prohibit elected officials from asking restricted sources to make donations to third parties, referred to under state law as behested payments. A restricted source includes a lobbyist, a lobbying firm, a bidder, a contractor, a person who has attempted to influence the elected official in the previous 12 months, and a person who has been a party to a proceeding involving a permit or entitlement that was pending in the previous 12 months before the elected official or a body to which the elected official belongs. The vote also approved four exceptions to the ban, for states of emergency, solicitations communicated to the general public, services provided to the City, and grant applications on behalf of the City.

“The Ethics Commission took a strong stand today for ethical, accessible, and transparent government,” said Ethics Commission President Melinda Murray. “The Ethics Commission exists to help foster confidence in the way the City operates, and we believe today’s reforms are essential to restoring public trust.”

In another item, the Ethics Commission voted to promote participation in the electoral process by reducing the number and value of contributions that a City candidate must collect in order to qualify for public matching funds. The approved amounts are based on one-seventh of the per-person contribution limit and, under current law, would be \$11,400 for City Council candidates, \$32,100 for City Attorney and Controller candidates, and \$64,200 for Mayoral candidates. Finally, the Ethics Commission voted to clarify the requirement that candidates must participate in a debate or conduct a town hall meeting to qualify for public funds.

Amendments to City law that are approved by the Ethics Commission must be adopted by the City Council to become effective. The amendments approved at today’s meeting will be forwarded to the City Council for their consideration and action.

Campaign contributions and behested payments that are reported may be searched and viewed through the [Public Data Portal](#).