

EXECUTIVE OFFICE



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

EDWARD YEN
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 383
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 974-1411 • www.bos.lacounty.gov

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS

HOLLY J. MITCHELL

LINDSEY P. HORVATH

JANICE HAHN

KATHRYN BARGER

June 20, 2025

TO: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Janice Hahn

FROM: Edward Yen *Edward Yen*
Executive Officer

SUBJECT: **REPORT BACK ON ADOPTING A DELIBERATIVE POLICYMAKING
STRUCTURE: IMPLEMENTING A PROCESS TO REVIEW
LEGISLATION AT CLUSTER MEETINGS (ITEM NO. 3, AGENDA OF
DECEMBER 17, 2024)**

PURPOSE OF MEMORANDUM

On December 17, 2024, the Board of Supervisors (Board), directed the Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors (EO), and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to:

Provide a written report back . . . , with an assessment of the first months of the pilot program, including, but not limited to, strengths, challenges, and any recommendations for improvement, that will help the Board assess if the pilot program should be extended or made permanent.

In response to the directive, the EO and CEO reviewed the workflow to ensure Board motions were properly submitted and included on cluster agendas; analyzed the number of motions submitted, filed, and revised after cluster meetings; and examined trends in public attendance since Board motions were introduced. The review also included consultations with CEO cluster facilitators, EO staff overseeing Board operations, and County Counsel, along with surveys distributed to all Board offices and relevant departmental representatives to gather feedback.

This report will discuss the key benefits and concerns experienced by participants in the cluster process including the Board Offices, County Departments, the EO, and the CEO. It will also examine the procedural ambiguities identified that may need to be addressed if the pilot program is extended or made permanent and will include a list of recommendations provided by participants.

PROCESS FOR INTRODUCING BOARD MOTIONS AT CLUSTER MEETINGS

To ensure Board motions are properly submitted and included on cluster meeting agendas, a formal process was established to coordinate the EO and CEO while ensuring compliance with Board Rules.¹

Under this process, the EO receives the motion after the Board Chair and the motion's author determine the appropriate cluster meeting.² The motion is then uploaded to a shared SharePoint platform. The CEO facilitator adds the motion to the agenda for the identified meeting. SharePoint access is limited to designated EO and CEO staff to prevent potential Ralph M. Brown Act violations.³

After the motion is introduced, the CEO facilitator uploads the meeting transcript and any written public comments to SharePoint for the EO. The EO then includes the motion, transcript, and public input on the agenda for the next regular Board meeting, scheduled two weeks after the cluster meeting.⁴

Overall, this process has supported effective coordination between EO and CEO staff and has functioned smoothly without significant issues.

CLUSTER MOTION PROCESS: OBSERVATIONS AND OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

To evaluate the pilot program, input was gathered through surveys and conversations with key participants in the cluster process, including the Board Offices, County Departments, the EO, the CEO, and County Counsel. The goal was to collect insights on the perceived strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in introducing motions at cluster meetings before they advance to the full Board. The feedback revealed a range of perspectives, highlighting key benefits, current challenges, and recommendations to improve the process's overall effectiveness.

¹ On December 17, 2024, the Board adopted a pilot program whereby motions would be introduced at the following five cluster meetings: (1) Health and Mental Health Services Cluster; (2) Operations Cluster; (3) Public Safety Cluster; (4) Community Services Cluster; and (5) Family and Social Service Cluster, two weeks prior to being placed on the Board agenda.

² Rules of the Board of Supervisors of the Los Angeles County, Section 22.1(a) at: [Rules of the Board](#)

³ See [Government Code section 54954.2\(a\)\(1\)](#).

⁴ Rules of the Board of Supervisors of the Los Angeles County, Section 22.1(b) at: [Rules of the Board](#)

Key Benefits:

Preparation and Motion Quality

The introduction of Board motions through Cluster meetings has provided County Departments, Board Offices, the EO and CEO with earlier access to proposed items. Participants reported that this advance notice allowed for additional time to conduct internal reviews, coordinate feedback, offer input prior to formal Board consideration, and prepare the Board agenda. Some participants noted that early visibility helped reduce last-minute surprises and enabled more informed briefings. Authors could refine motions based on questions and feedback and be better informed.

The CEO's office is supportive of the motion cluster process. It provides an opportunity for the CEO's office to evaluate motions and provide meaningful feedback. Before this process, the CEO was often asked to provide feedback on motions within 24 hours or less – not always, but often. The CEO felt such short turnarounds were not conducive to a productive dialogue, especially for motions with a substantial fiscal or operational impact.

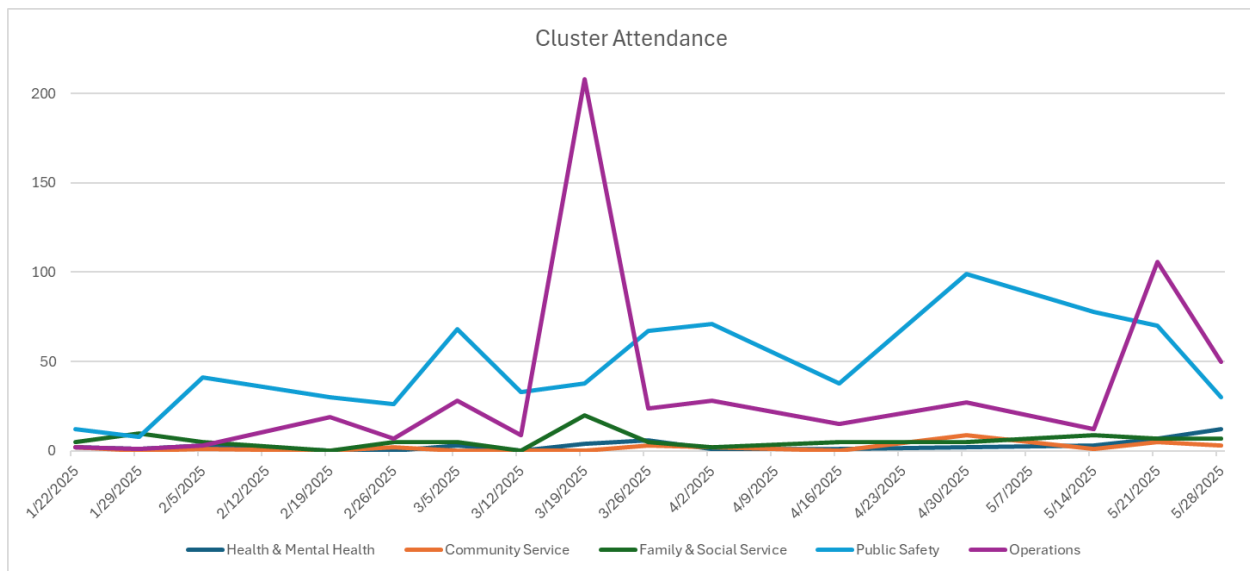
Increased Transparency and Public Attendance

Many participants highlighted the enhanced transparency of the process and noted increased public attendance and participation, both in person and virtually, at two of the five Cluster meetings, especially when high-interest topics were discussed. The Public Safety and Operations Clusters saw the greatest impact, with higher attendance on days when topics of significant public interest were addressed. These included:

- March 5, 2025: Motion filed on Transparency in Planning During Probation's Ongoing Crisis (Public Safety Cluster)
- March 19, 2025: Motion filed on Los Angeles County Homeless Services System Realignment (Operations Cluster)
- April 30, 2025: Motion on Expanding Employment Opportunities for Formerly Incarcerated Wildland Firefighters and Board Letter for School Resource Officer (Public Safety Cluster)
- May 21, 2025: Motion filed on Establishing Municipal Advisory Councils for Unincorporated East Los Angeles and the Coordinated Homelessness Response between the County and City of Los Angeles (Operations Cluster)

Notably, facilitators from both the Public Safety and Operations Clusters also reported strong attendance on days when no motions were filed.

The chart below depicts public attendance trends (both in person and virtual) across the five cluster meetings during the pilot program. Peak attendance occurred at two of the five meetings where topics of heightened public interest were discussed. Attendance data from before the pilot program was implemented is unavailable, as public participation numbers were not recorded by cluster facilitators during that period.



Interdepartmental Coordination

Cluster meetings created a structured forum for early engagement among County Departments, Board Offices, and, in some cases, community organizations. These meetings supported cross-departmental coordination and enabled clarification of roles and responsibilities prior to Board submission. This format also helped Departments and facilitators align more efficiently on complex issues, such as housing or social services.

Internal Workload and Scheduling

Participants indicated that previewing motions in clusters enabled more deliberate internal planning and staff coordination, particularly for items involving fiscal or operational implications. This advance review alleviated some of the time constraints typically associated with preparing for Board meetings and allowed for more structured internal briefings.

Points of Concern:

Timeline Considerations and Responsiveness

Participants identified challenges related to the overall timeline associated with cluster review. While the process improved motion quality and coordination, routing motions through clusters extended the time required for placement on a Board agenda by several weeks. Board offices working with time-sensitive or external partners expressed concern that these delays impacted their ability to respond effectively to emerging needs.

Logistical and Staffing Constraints

Several Departments reported limited notice prior to a motion's inclusion on a cluster agenda, often receiving one to two days of advance warning. This constraint hindered staff scheduling and preparation. Participants responsible for multiple subject areas reported attending several clusters in a single week, which increased administrative burdens and, in some cases, led to extended meeting durations. Clusters with broader scopes, such as Operations and Public Safety, occasionally experienced overloaded agendas and incomplete discussions due to time limitations.

Public Participation

Although some clusters experienced improved public engagement, participation remained inconsistent across the five cluster meetings. High-interest items attracted more attendees in two of the meetings, while the other three continued to see significantly lower public turnout. Facilitators from the two clusters that saw increased attendance on days featuring high-interest topics noted that, historically, public participation was consistently higher when such subjects were discussed prior to the introduction of motions with the same advocates and organizations attending as before. Standard business-hour scheduling and inconsistent comment protocols across clusters were identified as potential barriers to broader participation.

Process Implementation and Clarity on Exemptions

Participants noted areas of uncertainty regarding the cluster process, including the criteria for exemptions and the appropriate routing of motions. Instances were cited in which motions were directed to the wrong cluster meeting, resulting in coordination issues. Additionally, the absence of clear protocols for confirming exemption eligibility contributed to further delays. Concerns were also raised about the subject-matter expertise of those Chairing or facilitating the discussions, as motions were introduced only at the five original clusters, not at other cluster meetings run by departments with subject-matter expertise.

Perceived Value and Redundancy

In some cases, participants questioned whether cluster review materially influenced the content or outcome of motions. Items with limited discussion at the cluster level frequently received more substantive debate during Board meetings, suggesting that the process may be duplicative under certain circumstances.

While many participants valued the concept of the cluster review process, many questioned the overall effectiveness of the pilot. Several noted that despite the additional review, significant amendments to motions still occurred on the Board floor. Some felt that cluster meetings did not provide the space for real-time dialogue or Board-level decision-making. Others observed that department input was often limited or constrained by concerns around public accountability, with some even suggesting a culture of hesitation or fear of retaliation that limited open participation.

MOTION ACTIVITY BEFORE AND AFTER CLUSTER PROCESS

To evaluate the impact of introducing motions during cluster meetings, the EO conducted a comparative analysis of motion activity before and after the adoption of the pilot program.

The review focused on two five-month periods. The first period, from September 10, 2024, through January 14, 2025, preceded the introduction of motions at cluster meetings. During this time, 10 Board meetings produced a total of 236 motions filed. After excluding 96 motions deemed exempt under Section 22.2(f) of the Board's Rules, 140 motions remained eligible for analysis. Of these, 44 were subsequently revised on the supplemental agenda, resulting in a 31.4 percent revision rate.

The second period, from January 21, 2025, through May 13, 2025, included 12 Board meetings held after the implementation of the cluster process with a total of 170 motions filed. During this time, 47 motions were introduced through the cluster process, with 25 undergoing revisions or amendments after the cluster meeting, resulting in a 53.2 percent revision rate.

The comparison revealed two key findings: (1) the total number of motions submitted by Board Offices after implementation of the cluster process fell by approximately 66 percent, and (2) the revision rate increased by approximately 22 percentage points after the cluster meetings.

The charts below show these comparisons.

Pre-Cluster Process				
Board Meeting Dates	Total Motions Filed	Number of Motions Eligible for Clusters	Number of Revised Motions	Revision Percentage
9/10/2024	34	14	6	42.9%
9/24/2024	41	25	8	32.0%
10/8/2024	27	16	5	31.3%
10/22/2024	18	9	2	22.2%
11/6/2024	26	15	4	26.7%
11/26/2024	31	21	8	38.1%
12/3/2024	13	11	2	18.2%
12/17/2024	17	13	4	30.8%
1/7/2025	14	7	2	28.6%
1/14/2025	15	9	3	33.3%
Overall	236	140	44	31.4%

The number of motions does not include those deemed exempt under Section 22.2(f) of the Rules of the Board.

Cluster Process				
Board Meeting Dates	Total Motions Filed	Number of Motions Introduced at Clusters	Number of Revised Motions Following Clusters	Revision Percentage
1/21/2025	8	0	0	N/A
2/4/2025	12	3	1	33.3%
2/11/2025	6	1	1	100.0%
2/18/2025	10	1	1	100.0%
3/4/2025	13	3	2	66.7%
3/11/2025	8	1	0	0.0%
3/18/2025	11	4	2	50.0%
4/1/2025	32	13	7	53.8%
4/8/2025	7	2	0	0.0%
4/15/2025	15	7	1	14.3%
5/6/2025	21	2	2	100.0%
5/13/2025	27	10	8	80.0%
Overall	170	47	25	53.2%

PROCEDURAL AMBIGUITIES NEEDING CLARIFICATION

In assessing the pilot program, several areas of procedural ambiguity were identified that would need clarification if the pilot program is extended or made permanent, particularly regarding exemptions from the cluster review process.

Scope of A-Items on the Agenda

Recent Board meetings have included A-items unrelated to declared emergencies. While there were certain exemptions for A-items related to specific emergencies, such as homelessness, wildfires, or juvenile probation, the current rules do not explicitly exempt all A-items. Clarification is needed on whether the A-items should be exempt from the cluster process.

Nature of Proclamations Without Substantive Directives

Questions have arisen about how to classify proclamations that provide administrative guidance, highlight existing programs, or serve an informational function. These items have been treated as “non-substantive” under the current framework. There is interest in establishing clearer criteria to define what constitutes a “substantive” directive.

Motions Pertaining to Declared Emergencies

Motions related to declared emergencies have been exempted from cluster review. There have been questions as to whether this exemption should be limited to emergencies arising from natural disasters only. Currently, an “emergency” for exemption purposes is any declared local emergency, which includes, for instance, the homelessness, wildfires, and probation emergencies.

Nominations and Appointments

Nominations to commissions and committees are typically placed on the Board agenda by the Executive Office without a Board motion. However, there may be instances where such nominations are sought to be made via motions. The process could be clarified in the rules to exempt motions involving nominations.

Motions Affecting the Board’s Meeting Schedule

The Board rules currently do not address whether motions that modify the Board’s meeting calendar, such as cancellations or rescheduling, qualify for an exemption. There should be clarification on whether procedural calendar items should be formally exempted.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Motions involving the land acknowledgment statement are not addressed in the existing list of exemptions.

Annual Reorganizational Procedures

Items related to the Board's annual reorganization, including the election of the Chair Pro Tem, are not explicitly exempted under the current rules. Given their procedural and recurring nature, clarification is needed.

Decision-Making Authority Over Exemptions

The current rules do not specify who has the authority to determine whether a motion is exempt from the cluster process. The Board should consider designating a decision-maker, such as the Board Chair, a Department Head or their designee, or another designee to make exemption determinations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The key participants in the cluster process, including representatives from the Board Offices, County Departments, the EO, the CEO, and County Counsel were surveyed and asked to identify potential improvements to the process. The following reflects the insights they shared, including suggestions, observations, and perceived gaps.

Participants shared a wide range of feedback on the cluster pilot process, offering both critiques and suggestions for improvement. Overall, while there was no single viewpoint on the future of clusters, a key theme across the responses was the need to enhance clarity, accessibility, and effectiveness.

Summary of recommendations and changes identified by participants:

Revise Timelines and Scheduling:

Several participants focused on the need for clearer timelines and scheduling tools. Participants noted inconsistency across clusters in when motions are accepted and posted, with some allowing submissions as late as Friday mornings. A suggested improvement was the creation of an online calendar with clear submission deadlines aligned to Board meetings, including adjustments for canceled hearings and holidays.

Additionally, the current minimum three-week delay between filing a motion and appearing on the Board agenda was widely seen as too long especially for urgent or time-sensitive items. Respondents called for greater flexibility in the timeline and the

criteria used to define urgency, emphasizing the need for the County to be able to respond quickly to evolving community needs and external policy changes.

Improve Public Comment Process:

Public engagement was another area where many saw room for growth. Participants suggested standardizing the process to improve the public engagement citing inconsistent practices between clusters and long waits for community members to speak. Others raised concerns about accessibility, particularly in the hybrid meeting format. Improving technology and providing more ways for people to participate, whether in person, remotely, or via written comment, were seen as essential steps toward greater transparency and inclusion.

Support More Outreach and Public Education:

Many participants suggested stronger outreach and public education about the cluster process. Explaining that without a clear understanding of how the process works and how public input is used, it is difficult for the community to engage meaningfully. Some suggested that Departments and Board Offices could proactively engage with the public when they anticipate controversy or confusion around a motion.

Encourage Consistency and Coordination Across Clusters:

Internally, there were numerous calls for greater consistency and coordination across clusters. Practices vary widely from how motions are presented to how public feedback is handled. Suggestions included requiring standardized slide decks for presentations, limiting comment time equally across meetings, and ensuring that departments are notified within a reasonable amount of time when they are named in a motion. Early involvement from departments was seen as critical both to flag any potential implementation issues and to provide a realistic assessment of resource needs and tradeoffs.

Make Cluster Process Optional or Eliminate the Program:

Some participants recommended shifting to a more flexible or optional process, where the use of clusters would be at the discretion of the motion author or determined based on the complexity or controversy of the item. A few proposed that only motions likely to benefit from collaborative vetting should go through the process. Several suggested that a formal committee system attended by Board members might be a more effective alternative for motions requiring policy discussion and collaboration.

Several respondents called for the complete elimination of the cluster process, arguing that it delayed important motions without delivering the intended benefits of deeper collaboration or community input. For those open to continuing the pilot in some form, the consensus was that substantial structural changes including increased flexibility, better technology, clearer timelines, and more meaningful public and departmental engagement would be required for the process to be successful and worthwhile.

Clarify Exemptions and Procedures in Board Rules:

As noted above, should the program be extended or made permanent, multiple areas may benefit from clarifications, particularly concerning exemptions from the cluster review process. Key issues include the scope and treatment of the A-items on the agenda, the definition of substantive proclamations, and the criteria for motions tied to declared emergencies. Additionally, the process for nominations and appointments, motions affecting the Board's meeting calendar, and the land acknowledgment statement could benefit from clearer guidance. Annual reorganizational items and the authority to determine exemptions are also undefined.

CONCLUSION

The introduction of motions at cluster meetings has produced mixed results. While many participants noted improvements in the quality of motions, increased transparency, and more time for review, these benefits were not universally experienced. Some expressed the view that the process requires further refinement, highlighting the need for a clearer structure, stronger public engagement, and more well-defined procedures. They also emphasized that the process hindered their ability to respond effectively to emerging community needs.

In addition, available data revealed notable trends that may warrant further examination: since the pilot program began, the number of motions filed has decreased by approximately 66 percent, while revisions increased by approximately 22 percent after cluster meetings.

EY: sk

c: Chief Executive Office
County Counsel