



MALIA M. COHEN
CALIFORNIA STATE CONTROLLER

March 11, 2024

TO: Sally Lieber, Chairperson, Second District
Ted Gaines, Vice Chair, First District
Mike Schaefer, Board Member, Fourth District

FROM: Malia M. Cohen, State Controller
Antonio Vazquez, Board Member, Third District

RE: March 19, 2024 Board Meeting, Agenda Item 11, Review and Update of the Board Member Strategic Plan

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Board an update on Controller Cohen's action items: Goals 1 & 2 of the Board Member Strategic Plan Goals, Priorities, and Actions.

Background:

In November of 2019, under the leadership of then Board Member Antonio Vazquez and Chairperson Malia M. Cohen, the Board hosted a Strategic Planning Session to establish strategic priorities for the Board to reimagine the Board of Equalization and begin the process to deliver on the future state of the Board and the Agency.

Approved by the Board at the June 23, 2020 Board Meeting, the Strategic Plan is foundational to the Board's commitment to good governance, enhancing the taxpayer's experience and services, enhancing the employee's experience, educating the public, and telling the Board of Equalization story. The Board approaches this work through a comprehensive and collaborative approach.

In 2022, after ensuring business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board re-committed to the priorities delineated in the Strategic Plan and initiated quarterly updates.

Subsequently, the Board has made continuous updates on our Strategic Plan progress.

This agenda item will address Controller Cohen's action items associated with Goals 1 and 2 of the Board Member Strategic Plan Goals, Priorities, and Actions. Specifically, it will provide an opportunity to report on current progress to date.

Strategic Plan Overview

The Board's Strategic Plan consists of four goals. The goals are as important and relevant today as when the Board established them in 2019 and adopted them in 2020.

- Goal 1:** Ensure the Board’s constitutional mandates are being performed in the most cost effective, efficient and timely manner with the 58 elected Assessors and California taxpayers in the forefront.
LEAD: Controller Cohen
- Goal 2:** Establish and meet workload priorities and provide direction for Board Members to achieve statewide objectives and workload in a manner that ensures maximum transparency and opportunity for open discussion.
LEAD: Controller Cohen.
- Goal 3:** Develop an education and outreach plan
LEAD: Board Member Gaines
- Goal 4:** Develop an Agency-Wide Branding Campaign to ensure that California taxpayers, elected officials, business associations, non-profits, veterans and other constituencies are knowledgeable about the Agency, and the Board as well as their responsibility for property tax administration.
LEAD: Board Members Gaines and Schaefer.

Strategic Plan Update – Goals 1 & Goal 2

Controller Cohen is responsible for the following goals and her updates are listed below.

- Goal 1:** Ensure the Board’s constitutional mandates are being performed in the most cost effective, efficient, and timely manner with the 58 elected Assessors and California taxpayers in the forefront.
- 1.a. Establish that the Agency has the resources and infrastructure necessary to fulfill its workload.**
- 1.a.1. Direct the Executive Director to conduct an assessment of the Agency to determine whether the Agency has the resources and infrastructure necessary to fulfill its workload.
 - 1.a.2. Direct the Executive Director to provide the Board a report on the outcome of the assessment and the recommendations on addressing the resource and infrastructure gaps.
 - 1.a.3. Direct the Executive Director to develop a plan of action to address the resource and infrastructure gaps within the next three years.
 - 1.a.4. Collaborate with the Executive Director to champion the resource and infrastructure needs within the Administration and the Legislature as well as other relevant constituencies.

As previously reported, the Executive Director provided a preliminary report and a subsequent report out on this goal. After further discussion with the Executive Director and reviewing what the Board intended in establishing Goal 2, the Executive Director will facilitate a formal assessment of the organization to confirm that the Agency has the full authorities, resources, and infrastructure necessary to carry out its constitutional and legislative responsibilities.

Once the assessment is completed, the Executive Director will provide the Board a full presentation on the assessment results with an associated recommended plan of action to address the resource needs. The anticipated completion date is July of 2024.

Based on the Board action at that time, the Board and the Executive Director will partner to champion the resource and infrastructure needs within the Administration and the Legislature as well as other relevant constituencies

1.b. Assure Board Member fiscal responsibility, ethical accountability, and commitment to public service.

- 1.b.1. Continue to have the Executive Director provide quarterly Agency fiscal reports.
- 1.b.2. Initiate the quarterly reports on the constitutional functions carried out by CDTFA and the State Controller's Office
- 1.b.3. Conduct an annual review of and formal in-person training on the Board Governance Policy.

As previously reported, the Executive Director and the Controller have partnered to successfully complete 1.b. of Goal 2. This work is continuous and has been institutionalized in the Board's workload planning documents.

1.c. Establish that the Board Members have the resources and infrastructure necessary to fulfill their Constitutional responsibilities and associated workload.

- 1.c.1. Collaborate with the Executive Director to secure one additional exempt position supported by facility savings to ensure that each Board Member has a confidential Executive Assistant.
- 1.c.2. Collaborate with the Executive Director to conduct an assessment of the Board Members' Offices to determine whether the respective offices have the resources and infrastructure necessary to fulfill their Constitutional responsibilities and associated workload.
- 1.c.3. Develop a plan of action to address the resource and infrastructure gaps within the next three years.
- 1.c.4. Collaborate with the Executive Director to champion the resource and infrastructure needs with the Administration and the Legislature as well as other relevant constituencies.

As previously reported, with the exception of 1.c.1, the work associated with this action will remain on hold until 1.a. is completed. The Controller and the Executive Director will work with the Administration and explore options available to address 1.c.1. in the next legislative session. The anticipated completion date for 1.c.1. is December of 2024.

Goal 2: Establish and meet workload priorities and provide direction for Members to achieve statewide objectives and workload in a manner that ensures maximum transparency and opportunity for open discussion.

2.a. Determine the Board’s 2020-2023 strategic priorities.

- 2.a.1. Complete the CA Tax Modernization Initiative which includes convening statewide informational hearings and stakeholder town halls, conducting surveys and the review of laws, regulations and processes.
- 2.a.2. Identify and assess stakeholders’ priorities.
- 2.a.3. Publish the findings of the initiative.
- 2.a.4. Develop a work plan for the Board to address the findings and associated priorities.

As previously reported, the Board convened three statewide informational hearings and implemented several associated initiatives and review of laws, regulations, and processes. In addition, this year, the Board convened one additional information hearing.

Controller Cohen will partner with the Chairperson and the Executive Director to explore convening two additional statewide informational hearings focused on emerging issues facing property tax administration. Once the hearings are convened, Controller Cohen will work with the Chairperson and the Executive Director to complete 2.a.2.-2.a.4.

The anticipated completion date for Goal 2.a. is December of 2024

Conclusion

Acknowledging all of the above, our discussions, collaboration, and commitment to the Strategic Plan will enable us to continue the meaningful, intentional, and substantive framework to guide the work of Board for the next several years.

This work is imperative to fulfilling our governance responsibilities.

CC: Mr. Gary Gartner, Chief Deputy, Office of Chair Sally Lieber
Mr. Matt Cox, Chief Deputy, Office of Vice Chair Ted Gaines
Ms. Deborah Bautista-Zavala, Chief Deputy, Office of Member Antonio Vasquez
Mr. Cody Petterson, Chief Deputy, Office of Member Mike Schaefer
Ms. Yvette Stowers, Executive Director
Mr. Norm Scott, Acting Chief Counsel