

## Item 06 - Biennial City Auditor Salary Adjustment



Francis Upton IV, Chair  
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Angi Fisher  
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Suzanne Doran, Executive Director

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**TO:** Public Ethics Commission  
**FROM:** Suzanne Doran, Executive Director  
**DATE:** April 3, 2026  
**RE:** Biennial City Auditor Salary Adjustment as Required by City Charter Section 403(1), for the April 15, 2026, Special PEC Meeting

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In November 2022, Oakland voters passed Measure X, which amended Oakland City Charter Section 403(1) to include setting the City Auditor salary level to the duties of the Public Ethics Commission (PEC or Commission). Every two years, the Commission is responsible for adjusting the City Auditor salary based on criteria specified by City Charter Section 403(1). This memo explains the criteria, summarizes salary survey data, and provides a staff recommendation with options for the biennial salary increase consistent with the criteria.

## Background

The City Auditor is the department head for the [Office of the City Auditor](#) and oversees a staff of approximately nine full time equivalent (FTE) positions.<sup>1</sup> The current City Auditor was most recently elected in March 2024.

Prior to 2023, the City Auditor's salary was set by the City Council. In November 2022, Oakland voters passed Measure X, which amended the process for adjusting the City Auditor's salary and assigned the responsibility to the Commission. Measure OO, passed by voters in November 2024, further amended Section 403(1) by changing the adjustment to a biennial (every other year) adjustment rather than a yearly adjustment. Section 403(1) of the City Charter provides that:

The salary of the City Auditor shall be set every two (2) years by the Public Ethics Commission, to provide for competitive compensation and equitable alignment and, taking into account the top of the range for the highest paid professional employee in the Office of the City Auditor and salaries for other City department heads, and shall be comparable to the salaries of public sector auditor positions in California cities and counties selected by the Commission. The City Auditor's salary may not be reduced during the City Auditor's term of office, except as a part of a general reduction of salaries for all officers and employees in the same amount or proportion.

Year	PEC-Authorized	Percent
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<sup>1</sup> This represents the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions as reported by the City's Finance Department. Data provided by Shaleen Singh, Human Resources Operations Supervisor, Finance Department, February 23, 2026.

The Commission last adjusted the salary for City Auditor by 6.3 percent in 2024, resulting in a PEC-adjusted annual salary of **\$226,612.19**. Payroll adjustments must be included in the citywide salary schedule adopted by City Council and take effect on the first payroll period after the beginning of the new fiscal year, which begins July 1. This annual salary amount is applied across 26 bi-weekly pay periods in the City of Oakland’s financial software system, but the actual annual salary is **\$226,612.10** due to numerical rounding in the system.<sup>2</sup> The table above shows salary increases approved by the Commission from 2023 through 2024.

	<b>Annual Salary</b>	<b>Increase</b>
2024	\$226,612.19	6.3
2023	\$213,137.51	17.6

## **Analysis**

**Highest Paid Professional Employee** – In adjusting the Auditor’s salary, the Charter requires that the Commission take into account, “the top of the range for the highest paid professional employee in the Office of the City Auditor.” The Assistant City Auditor is the highest paid direct report for the City Auditor. The maximum annual salary for the Assistant City Auditor position in the Office of the City Auditor currently is **\$192,620.28** per year. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward area rose 5.4 percent from December 2023 to December 2025.<sup>3</sup> Since the July 2024 City Attorney salary adjustment, non-sworn represented employees and most City of Oakland department heads received a salary increase of two percent effective March 1, 2025. No negotiated salary increases for 2026 or 2027 had been agreed upon for non-sworn employees at the time of writing as the contracts will expire on June 30, 2026, and the City is presently entering bargaining with all unions.

According to the City’s Human Resources Department, best practices dictate a differential of at least 15 to 20 percent between a supervisor/manager and their highest paid direct reporting employee, although among executive management this is not always achieved. For the City Auditor salary to be 15 to 20 percent above the salary of the highest direct reporting employee would be a salary between **\$221,513.32 and \$231,144.34**. The City Auditor presently makes **17.6** percent more than the highest paid professional employee, which is within that range.

**Other City Department Heads** – In adjusting the Auditor’s salary, the Charter requires that the Commission take into account “salaries for other City department heads.” The salary range for Oakland department heads is from **\$200,000.04 to \$350,792.40** (See the Appendix for complete salary survey data). The mean annual salary for a department head (excluding the City Auditor) is **\$271,702.04** per year and the median annual salary is **\$270,415.08**. Of Oakland’s 23 department heads, the City Auditor salary is **the second lowest salary**.

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<sup>2</sup> According to the City’s current Salary Ordinance, the City Auditor’s actual annual salary is \$226,612.10, \$ .09 below the PEC-authorized salary. Actual salary amounts may vary slightly from the authorized annual salary due to standard payroll system calculation and rounding when annual amounts are applied across pay periods. Salary data provided by Anjali Saxena, Payroll Manager, Finance Department. January 29, 2026.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA Consumer Price Index. December 2023 – December 2025. Data retrieved January 28, 2026 from <https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CUURS49BSA0>. Inflation formula: (CPI2 – CPI1) / CPI1 x 100 = \_\_\_%

In terms of staff size, the Auditor’s Office is a small City department. Of the five departments (excluding the City Auditor’s Office) with under 20 FTE, the mean annual salary for a department head is **\$240,488.33** per year and the median annual salary is **\$239,007.96**. Oakland’s City Auditor makes 94.2 percent of the mean and 94.8 percent of the median department head salary for comparable-size departments.

**Public Sector Auditor Positions** – In adjusting the Auditor’s salary, the Charter provides that the Auditor’s compensation shall be “comparable to the salaries of public sector Auditor positions in California cities and counties selected by the Commission.”

The Commission surveyed other California cities within the four immediate higher and four lower populations compared to Oakland. However, only three cities have comparable positions, Sacramento, Long Beach, and Stockton. The salary range for the City Auditor position in those comparable-size California cities is from **\$159,978.20 to \$282,281.90** (see Appendix Table 2). The mean annual salary is **\$222,420.03** and the median annual salary is **\$225,000.00**. Oakland’s City Auditor makes 101.9 percent of the mean and 100.7 percent of the median City Auditor salary in comparable-size cities.

In accordance with the Charter criteria, staff also surveyed City Auditor salaries for surrounding Bay Area cities and the salary of the Auditor-Controller for Alameda County (see Appendix Table 3). The salary range for comparable Auditor positions in Bay Area jurisdictions is from **\$209,278.58 to \$312,575.38**. The mean annual salary is **\$273,656.42** per year and the median annual salary is **\$286,385.86**. Oakland’s City Auditor makes 82.8 percent of the mean and 79.1 percent of the median City Auditor salary in Bay Area jurisdictions.

**Summary** – A salary adjustment of 2 percent would maintain the 20 percent differential above the top of the range for the highest paid professional employee in the City Auditor’s office set by the Commission’s 2024 salary adjustment. However, the Commission has the discretion to authorize a different amount, if it concludes that amount better meets the Charter criteria. The table below provides a summary comparison of the current City Auditor salary with the criteria identified in the City Charter as well as a comparison of three salary increase options. The first option is a 2 percent increase which maintains the City Auditor salary at 20 percent of above the highest paid employee in the City Auditor’s office. Options 2 and 3 show higher increases based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index since the last salary adjustment.

		Current Salary	2% increase	5% increase	5.4% increase
<b>City Auditor salary</b>		\$226,612.10	\$231,144.34	\$237,942.71	\$238,849.15
	Mean	Difference (%)	Difference (%)	Difference (%)	Difference (%)
Top Paid Employee	\$192,620.28	17.6	20.0	23.5	24.0
Other Department Heads (n=22)	\$271,702.04	-16.6	-14.9	-12.4	-12.1
20 FTE or less Department Heads (5)	\$240,488.33	-5.8	-3.9	-1.1	-0.7
Comparable-Size Cities (3)	\$222,420.03	1.9	3.9	7.0	7.4
Bay Area Jurisdictions (4)	\$273,656.42	-17.2	-15.5	-13.1	-12.7

## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend the Commission adopt a resolution at its April 15, 2026, meeting based on the salary survey data and criteria set forth in City Charter Section 403(1), adjusting the City Auditor’s annual salary by **one** of the three options below, effective in the first pay period after July 1, 2026.

	Monthly	Annual
<b>Current City Auditor salary</b>	\$18,884.34	\$226,612.10
<b>Option 1: 2.0% increase</b>	\$19,262.03	\$231,144.34
<b>Option 2: 5.0% increase</b>	\$19,828.56	\$237,942.71
<b>Option 3: 5.4% increase</b>	\$19,904.10	\$238,849.15

Following Commission approval, Commission staff will finalize and transmit the salary adjustment resolution to the City Administrator, the Department of Human Resources to amend the salary ordinance, and the Treasury Division - Payroll to implement the increase.

Attachment: Draft resolution

## APPENDIX: SALARY SURVEY DATA

**Table 1: City Department Head Salaries**

Director Title	Annual Salary	Similar-Sized Departments
Chief of Police	\$350,792.40	
Chief of Fire	\$326,699.76	
City Attorney	\$320,958.82	
Director of Public Works	\$313,598.76	
Director of Transportation	\$313,598.76	
Director of Finance	\$289,000.08	
Director of Housing & Community Dev	\$270,415.20	
Director of Library Services	\$270,415.20	
Director of Information Technology	\$270,415.20	
Director of Animal Services	\$270,415.08	
Director of Planning & Building	\$270,415.08	
Director of Human Resources Management	\$270,415.08	
Director of Economic & Workforce Dev	\$267,642.96	
Director of Workplace & Employment Stnd	\$250,957.92	\$250,957.92
City Clerk	\$243,467.76	\$243,467.76
EEO & Civil Rights Director	\$239,008.08	
Executive Director CPRA	\$239,007.96	\$239,007.96
Director of Race and Equity	\$239,007.96	\$239,007.96
Executive Director, Public Ethics Comm	\$230,000.04	\$230,000.04
Director of Human Services	\$230,000.04	
Inspector General	\$229,510.80	
<b>City Auditor</b>	<b>\$226,612.10</b>	<b>\$226,612.10</b>
Director of Parks & Recreation	\$200,000.04	
<b>Mean salary (Excluding City Auditor)</b>	<b>\$271,702.04</b>	<b>\$240,488.33</b>
<b>Median salary (Excluding City Auditor)</b>	<b>\$270,415.08</b>	<b>\$239,007.96</b>

Data source: Salary data provided by Anjali Saxena, Payroll Manager, City of Oakland Finance Department, January 29, 2026.

**Table 2: California Cities City Auditor Salaries**

Jurisdiction	Population	Annual Salary
City and County of San Francisco	831,703	N/A
City of Fresno	543,428	N/A
City of Sacramento	518,161	\$225,000.00
City of Long Beach	458,222	\$282,281.90
<b>City of Oakland</b>	<b>419,556</b>	<b>\$226,612.10</b>
City of Bakersfield	408,373	N/A
City of Anaheim	328,580	N/A
City of Stockton	319,731	\$159,978.20
City of Riverside	313,676	N/A
<b>Mean (Excluding Oakland)</b>		<b>\$222,420.03</b>
<b>Median (Excluding Oakland)</b>		<b>\$225,000.00</b>

Data source: Published salary schedules and/or salary information provided by public records request as of March 17, 2026.

**Table 3: Salary Trends California Cities**

Jurisdiction	2024 Survey	2026 Survey	Change (%)
City of Sacramento	\$233,228.03	\$225,000.00	-3.5%
City of Long Beach	\$263,791.90	\$282,281.90	7.0%
City of Stockton	\$150,794.88	\$159,978.20	6.1%
<b>Mean</b>	<b>\$215,938.27</b>	<b>\$222,420.03</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$233,228.03</b>	<b>\$225,000.00</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>

**Table 4: Bay Area Jurisdictions City Auditor Salaries**

Jurisdiction	Annual Salary
County of Alameda	\$292,448.00
City and County of San Francisco	N/A
City of Alameda	N/A
City of Berkeley	\$209,278.58
City of Fremont	N/A
City of Hayward	N/A
City of Mountain View	N/A
<b>City of Oakland</b>	<b>\$226,612.10</b>
City of San Jose	\$312,575.38
City of Santa Clara	\$280,323.72
<b>Mean (Excluding Oakland)</b>	<b>\$273,656.42</b>
<b>Median (Excluding Oakland)</b>	<b>\$286,385.86</b>

Data source: Published salary schedules and/or salary information provided by public records request as of March 17, 2026.

**Table 5: Salary Trends Bay Area Jurisdictions**

Jurisdiction	2024 Survey	2026 Survey	Change (%)
County of Alameda	\$253,323.20	\$292,448.00	15.4%
City of Berkeley	\$189,839.26	\$209,278.58	10.2%
City of San Jose	\$264,311.28	\$312,575.38	18.3%
City of Santa Clara	\$259,198.92	\$280,323.72	8.2%
<b>Mean</b>	<b>\$241,668.17</b>	<b>\$273,656.42</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$256,261.06</b>	<b>\$286,385.86</b>	<b>10.5%</b>

**CITY OF OAKLAND  
Public Ethics Commission**



**RESOLUTION NO. 26-03  
[Proposed 4-15-26]**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SALARY INCREASE FOR THE OFFICE OF CITY AUDITOR PURSUANT TO OAKLAND CITY CHARTER SECTION 403(1)**

By action of the Oakland Public Ethics Commission:

**WHEREAS**, Oakland City Charter section 403(1) provides: “The salary of the City Auditor shall be set every two (2) years by the Public Ethics Commission, to provide for competitive compensation and equitable alignment and, taking into account the top of the range for the highest paid professional employee in the Office of the City Auditor and salaries for other City department heads, and shall be comparable to the salaries of public sector auditor positions in California cities and counties selected by the Commission. The City Auditor's salary may not be reduced during the City Auditor's term of office, except as a part of a general reduction of salaries for all officers and employees in the same amount or proportion”; and

**WHEREAS**, Oakland City Charter section 207 charges the City Council with fixing the compensation of all City employees, officers and officials unless otherwise provided by the Charter; and

**WHEREAS**, Ordinance No. 12187 C.M.S., the “Salary Ordinance,” as amended, sets forth a salary schedule reflecting all classifications of employment within the City including those of city employees and city officers; and

**WHEREAS**, a salary adjustment to **[INSERT ADOPTED AMOUNT]** annually would provide competitive compensation and equitable alignment of the City Auditor’s salary by providing the City Auditor with a salary that is at least 15 percent above the top of the range for the highest paid professional employee in the Auditor’s Office, that is comparable with the salaries of City Auditors in other comparable-size cities and Bay Area jurisdictions, and that also accounts for the salaries of other City department heads.

Now, therefore be it:

**RESOLVED**, that the Commission does hereby authorize an annual salary of **[INSERT ADOPTED AMOUNT]** for the office of City Auditor as mandated by City Charter Section 403(1), effective as of the first payroll period of Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

**CERTIFICATION RE: APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION**

The foregoing Resolution was presented for approval at a duly noticed meeting of the City of Oakland Public Ethics Commission held on April 15, 2026, where a quorum of the membership of the Commission was present. The Commission approved the resolution by a vote of \_\_\_ to \_\_\_.

AYES:

**CITY OF OAKLAND  
Public Ethics Commission**



**RESOLUTION NO. 26-03  
[Proposed 4-15-26]**

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Suzanne Doran, Executive Director  
Oakland Public Ethics Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DRAFT**