



Public Ethics Commission



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Oakland Public Ethics Commission Illuminates Problems with the City's Policy and Process for Distributing Oakland Coliseum and Oracle Arena Tickets

The Public Ethics Commission (Commission) issued a comprehensive report Monday night on the City's process for handing out tickets to events at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum and Oracle Arena. The report, *Ensuring Ethical and Transparent Distribution of City Tickets*, follows the Commission's November 2016 public hearing on the issue, describes significant flaws with the current system, and offers solutions to fix those problems. The Commission next will draft for the City Council a revised ticket distribution policy that redesigns the process to ensure that ticket distribution and use is for legitimate public purposes and complies with state and local ethics laws.

In the report, the Commission explains that the City of Oakland receives 20 luxury suite tickets to every Warriors game and other Oracle Arena events, and 18 luxury suite tickets to every Raiders and Oakland A's games and Coliseum events, along with another set of 18 field tickets to A's games, resulting in thousands of tickets to the City each year. Most tickets go directly to Councilmembers rather than to the City's executive branch which is responsible for the management of City assets.

A few key findings in the report:

- "The City receives and distributes thousands of tickets each year in a manner that is poorly managed, allows tickets to be handed out to officials despite some officials failing to report ticket information as required by law, and permits public officials and other ticket recipients to claim purported reasons for the use of each ticket that is inconsistent with the nature or extent of their ticket use."
- "The receipt and use of tickets by City officials who are involved in negotiating, drafting, and approving the contracts under which the tickets are provided to the City presents significant, inherent ethics concerns in the areas of conflicts of interest and self-dealing."
- "City tickets have been viewed as a perk of office or employment rather than a public asset to be managed and utilized for a public purpose as required by law."

The use of Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum and Oracle Arena tickets was the subject of news articles last summer that highlighted the number of City-owned tickets that some elected officials received and personally used. The Public Ethics Commission opened an investigation of the receipt and use of City tickets by elected officials to determine whether any laws were broken, and the Commission further initiated this policy and process review to address underlying problems inherent in the City's policy and process for handing out tickets. The report wraps up the policy review; the investigation is still ongoing.

"The Commission's draft report details foundational problems in the current system, which results in a significant number of tickets being used personally by city officials and their families, thousands of tickets left unaccounted, and another several thousand tickets wasted. Given that these tickets are city assets, these problems raise issues concerning ethics, transparency, and the stewardship of city resources," said Commission Chair Marc Pilotin.

The Public Ethics Commission (www.oaklandnet.com/pec) was created by voters in 1996 and has grown significantly in recent years due to the new Government Ethics Act and City Charter amendment passed in 2014. The Commission is an independent City agency, governed by a seven-member citizen board, responsible for ensuring compliance with the City's ethics, campaign finance, and transparency laws. The Commission's activities include policy leadership, education, ethics and campaign finance disclosure, investigations, and administrative prosecution.

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