



- **Board of Directors**  
***Community and Workplace Culture Committee***

7/8/2025 Board Meeting

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7-1

## **Subject**

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Amend Metropolitan Administrative Code Division VI (Personnel Matters) to create a Principal Assistant position to the Ethics Officer; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

## **Executive Summary**

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Metropolitan's Administrative Code Division VI (Personnel Matters) currently authorizes Principal Assistant positions for three executive Department Heads: the General Manager, General Counsel, and General Auditor. The Ethics Officer, Metropolitan's remaining executive-level Department Head, does not currently have an authorized Principal Assistant. This action proposes amending Sections 6400(b) and 6500 and adding Section 6473 to authorize a Principal Assistant position reporting to the Ethics Officer. Notably, this action does not increase staffing within the Ethics Office. It authorizes the Ethics Officer to reclassify an existing vacant position to the new classification of Principal Assistant Ethics Officer.

## **Proposed Action(s)/Recommendation(s) and Options**

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### **Staff Recommendation: Option #1**

#### **Option #1.**

Amend Metropolitan Administrative Code Division VI (Personnel Matters) to create a Principal Assistant position to the Ethics Officer.

**Fiscal Impact:** There will be a difference of \$15,000 that will be in the Ethics Office current fiscal year 25/26 budget.

**Business Analysis:** The Administrative Code will be amended to create a Principal Assistant position to the Ethics Officer.

#### **Option #2**

Do not amend Metropolitan Administrative Code Division VI (Personnel Matters) to create a Principal Assistant position to the Ethics Officer.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.

**Business Analysis:** The Administrative Code will not be amended to create a Principal Assistant position to the Ethics Officer.

## **Alternatives Considered**

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Not Applicable

## **Applicable Policy**

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Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 6400: Creation of Offices

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 6500: Management and Confidential Employees – General

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities

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**Related Board Action(s)/Future Action(s)**

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Not Applicable

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**Summary of Outreach Completed**

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Not Applicable

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**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

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**CEQA determination(s) for Option #1:**

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves organizational, maintenance, or administrative activities; personnel-related actions; and/or general policy and procedure making that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. (Public Resources Code Section 21065; State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(2) and (b)(5).)

**CEQA determination(s) for Option #2:**

None required.

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**Details and Background**

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**Background**

The Ethics Officer is one of Metropolitan’s four executive-level Department Heads, alongside the General Manager, General Counsel, and General Auditor. The Administrative Code currently authorizes Principal Assistant positions for the other three, codified in the following sections:

- Section 6411 – General Manager - Principal Assistants
- Section 6438 – Assistant General Counsel and Deputies General Counsel
- Section 6452 – Assistant General Auditor

These roles are also explicitly listed in Section 6400(b)(1)-(3). The Ethics Officer currently lacks a corresponding designation. This proposal amends Section 6400(b) to add a new subsection (4) establishing the Principal Assistant Ethics Officer, thereby aligning all executive departments under a consistent executive leadership structure.

This action also supports the fulfillment of statutory obligations under the Metropolitan Water District Act, as amended by Senate Bill 60 (Hayden, 1999). Specifically, Section 126.7 requires Metropolitan to:

“... establish and operate an Office of Ethics ... staffed with professional, qualified persons ... that shall operate as an independent entity not subject to political influence.”

The statute further requires the Ethics Office to:

- Adopt ethics rules for approval by the Board
- Educate board members, staff, and contractors
- Investigate complaints concerning rule violations
- Propose penalties for such violations
- Maintain independence, professional competency, and oversight capacity

Authorizing a Principal Assistant Ethics Officer directly supports these statutory objectives and strengthens the Ethics Office’s capacity in the following ways:

- *Continuity of Operations*: Ensures executive coverage during absences, recusals, or vacancies in the Ethics Officer role.
- *Delegation of Executive Functions*: Allows the Ethics Officer to assign sensitive, high-level duties to a qualified, executive professional.
- *Conflict Management*: Enables independent handling of matters where staff involvement could create real or perceived conflicts.
- *Policy, Compliance, and Advisory Support*: Enhances delivery of core functions including investigations, compliance monitoring, education, and reporting.

In short, the proposed classification fulfills both internal organizational needs and advances the Legislature's directive to fully staff and support a robust, independent Ethics Office. The difference in salary grade between the current vacant and proposed position would be approximately \$15,000 annually, but this will be offset by minor overall adjustments to the Ethics Office's annual budget.

**Proposed Administrative Code Amendments:**

To implement this action, the following changes to the Administrative Code are recommended:

1. Amend Section 6400 (Creation of Offices) to add a new subsection Section 6400(b)(4) to include the newly authorized Principal Assistant Ethics Officer.
2. Amend Section 6500 (Management and Confidential Employees – Hourly Pay Rate Schedule) to add a reference to the Principal Assistant Ethics Officer under Salary Grade 81.
3. Create new Section 6473, entitled Principal Assistant Ethics Officer, with the following provisions:

**§ 6473. Principal Assistant Ethics Officer.**

(a) The Ethics Officer may designate a Principal Assistant Ethics Officer who shall perform such duties and render such services to the District as may be prescribed and assigned by the Ethics Officer, with the same authority and effect as if performed by the Ethics Officer personally.

(b) During the Ethics Officer's absence, recusal, or inability to act, or in the event of vacancy due to death, resignation, or removal, the Principal Assistant shall perform all duties and exercise all powers of the Ethics Officer until a successor is appointed and qualified.

(c) The Principal Assistant Ethics Officer may act in the name of the Ethics Officer or in their own name, as directed, and such acts shall be equally valid and effective. In the event of a permanent vacancy, the Principal Assistant shall act in their own name.

The foregoing proposed amendments to Administrative Code Sections 6400(b) and 6500 and new Section 6473 are found at **Attachment 1** (with changes marked) and **Attachment 2** (clean copy).

All amendments and changes are effective upon Board approval unless specified otherwise.

  
Abel Salinas  
Ethics Officer

7/2/2025

Date

**Attachment 2 - The Administrative Code of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (clean copy)**

Ref# e12701294

**§ 6400. Creation of Offices.**

The following offices are hereby created:

(a) Executive Offices:

General Manager  
General Counsel  
General Auditor  
Ethics Officer

(b) Principal assistants within the executive offices, with number as authorized from time to time by the Board.

(1) Principal assistants to the General Manager:

Assistant General Manager(s) and/or Chief Operating Officer  
Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer  
Deputy General Manager(s)

(2) Principal assistants to the General Counsel:

Assistant(s) General Counsel

(3) Principal assistants to the General Auditor:

Assistant(s) General Auditor

(4) Principal assistants to the Ethics Officer:

Principal Assistant(s) Ethics Officer

(c) Other Offices:

Controller  
Treasurer  
Board Executive Secretary  
Deputies General Counsel, with number as authorized from time to time by the Board.

**§ 6500. Hourly Pay Rate Schedule.**

(a) The hourly pay rate (as that term is defined in subdivision (h) of Section 6200) and schedule of positions occupied by unclassified service employees not in an appropriate unit recognized pursuant to Section 6108 shall be as follows:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Title</u>
* * *		
81	\$91.51-125.03 (\$190,341-260,062)	Assistant General Auditor Budget and Treasury Manager

Executive Legislative Representative  
Human Resources Manager III  
Strategic Comm. & Policy Advisor  
Principal Assistant Ethics Officer

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## Article 5

### ETHICS OFFICER

Sec.

6470. Powers and Duties

6471. Authority to Obtain Professional Services

6472. Reports to Community and Workplace Culture Committee

6473. Principal Assistant Ethics Officer

#### § 6473. Principal Assistant Ethics Officer.

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(c) The Principal Assistant Ethics Officer may act in the name of the Ethics Officer or in their own name, as directed, and such acts shall be equally valid and effective. In the event of a permanent vacancy, the Principal Assistant shall act in their own name.

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## (4) Principal assistants to the Ethics Officer:

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