Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney
Hydee Feldstein Soto

REPORT NO. R26-0380

JUN 26 2026

REPORT RE:

DRAFT CHARTER AMENDMENTS MODIFYING AND CLARIFYING VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE CITY CHARTER; DRAFT BALLOT RESOLUTIONS AND ELECTION ORDINANCES PLACING THE CHARTER AMENDMENTS ON THE NOVEMBER 3, 2026 BALLOT

The Honorable City Council
of the City of Los Angeles
Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Honorable Members:

On June 17, 2026, the City Council requested this Office to prepare the documents necessary to modify and clarify various sections of the City Charter regarding a wide variety of topics. This Office hereby transmits the proposed Charter changes in the form of seven ballot measures to submit to the voters of the City, and two additional ballot measures to submit to the voters of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), at the City's General Municipal Election to be held on November 3, 2026. We have approved the draft Charter amendments and the associated election ordinances and ballot resolutions as to form and legality.

Background

In May and June of this year, the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee (Rules Committee) held a series of meetings to review and discuss the recommendations for changes to the City Charter submitted by the Charter Reform Commission, City offices and departments, and in City Councilmembers' own motions. On June 12 and June 15, 2026, the Rules Committee deliberated the various

proposed Charter changes synthesized in the report of the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) dated June 10, 2026, and advanced its recommendations to the full City Council. The Rules Committee's recommendations included more than 30 proposals for Charter changes to present to the voters at the City's general election to be held on November 3, 2026.

On June 17, 2026, the City Council considered all of the Rules Committee's recommendations, including Councilmembers' motions proposing Charter changes. At the conclusion of its deliberations, the City Council ultimately approved more than 30 specific Charter changes for the November ballot. The City Council requested that this Office draft the documents necessary to submit these Charter changes to the voters in the form of several ballot measures for the November 3, 2026, ballot.

Summary of the Proposed Charter Amendments

The proposed Charter changes have been grouped into seven ballot measures to submit to City voters and two additional ballot measures to submit to LAUSD voters, as described below. We have identified the Charter changes that would be included in each ballot measure and, for ease of reference, have noted the associated item number from the CLA's Charter Reform Recap report reflecting the City Council's actions of June 17, 2026, as well as the original reference number of the Charter Reform Commission, Rules Committee, or Council File number related to each proposed change.[1] In some places, we also have indicated where we have clarified language contained in the recommendation to better fit the stated intent and goal of the proposal.

1. City Infrastructure, Budget, Finance, and Contracting

The following proposed changes to the City Charter would be presented to the voters in a ballot measure regarding Infrastructure, Budget, Finance, and Contracting:

A. R2-4/CRC 1 -- Public Works Director and Bureaus (Sections 507, 581, 582, 1001): removes references to existing Bureaus of the Department of Public Works; empowers Director of Public Works to be the department's general manager and better defines this role in relation to the Board of Public Works; allows changes to the Board of Public Works to be made by ordinance, including the authority to eliminate the Board of Public Works in its entirety.

[1] "R#" refers to the numbered recommendations contained in the CLA's Charter Reform Recap report and approved by the City Council on June 17, 2026 (CF 26-0489). The other abbreviations -- "CRC," "Rules," and "CF" – refer to the reference numbers for charter changes recommended by the Charter Reform Commission, Rules Committee, and Council Files also utilized in the Rules Committee report of June 17.

B. R5/CRC 2 -- Capital Infrastructure Plan (new Section 323): establishes a Capital Infrastructure Plan with the parameters, governance, and administration of the program and capital planning process to be established by ordinance.

C. R14/CRC 11 -- Business Enterprises (Section 104(g)): removes the existing Charter restriction prohibiting the City from engaging in specified businesses enterprises.

D. R16/CRC 59 -- Two-Year Budget (Multiple Sections): establishes a biennial budget cycle encompassing a period of two consecutive fiscal years, unless otherwise provided by ordinance. The measure will still require the City to set an amount appropriated for each fiscal year to facilitate certain annual financing functions set forth in other sections of the Charter, like the tax levy provisions in Section 331.

E. R25/CRC 63 -- Contracting Low Bid Exception for Critical Infrastructure and Software (Section 371): allows exceptions to competitive bid requirements for contracts relating to critical infrastructure, as defined, and for software service or maintenance when such service or maintenance is obtained from the manufacturer of the software or its exclusive agent.

F. R26/CRC 64 -- Technical and Other Defects in Contract Bids (Section 470(c)(12)(H)): allows City contracting authorities to waive technical defects in bids and allows cure opportunity for errors or omissions Ethics Commission disclosure forms. The proposed amendment would authorize a City contracting authority, in its discretion and as provided by ordinance, to waive administrative or technical defects in a bidder's or proposer's mandatory disclosure form, or to allow such defects to be cured. Technical or administrative defects are limited in nature and could include, for example, checking an incorrect checkbox, failing to check a checkbox, an incorrect page number listing, a typographical error, or the omission of certain minor, non-substantive information. The proposed amendment would also authorize a bidder or proposer to cure defects in their disclosure form involving errors or omissions of substantive information required by the Ethics Commission, the extent of which and process to be provided by ordinance. Substantive information could include, for example, the name and address of a bidder, proposer, subcontractor, or principal required to be listed, the identification of the contract and awarding authority, and the certification signature.

G. R34/Rules 7 -- Mortgaging City Property (Section 104(a)): removes the existing Charter restriction that currently prohibits the City from mortgaging City-owned property. Under Section 18 of Article XVI of the California Constitution, however, the City would remain restricted from taking on mortgage debt without the approval of 2/3 of the voters voting at an election to be held for that specific purpose.

2. City Planning Department

The following proposed changes to the City Charter would be presented to the voters in a ballot measure regarding the Planning Department:

A. R9/CRC 6 – Replace the Area Planning Commissions with a new Neighborhood Appeals Commission (Section 552): restructures the Area Planning Commissions into a single, new Neighborhood Appeals Commission consisting of at least seven members and allows the new Neighborhood Appeals Commission to consider de novo appeals.

B. R10/CRC 7 – Council Exercise of Section 245 with regard to City Planning Commission and Neighborhood Appeals Commission Actions (Section 245): establishes a 30-day time limit for the City Planning Commission or Neighborhood Appeals Commission to concur with or dissent from the Council upon remand after the Council asserts jurisdiction under Section 245. The Commissions' action on remand shall be referred to the City Council for a final vote and the City Council must act within 21 days or the action of the Commission becomes final. For purposes of this proposal, calendar days that City Council is in recess, arising from a City Council adopted recess schedule, are excluded from the time limit by when City Council shall act.

C. R11/CRC 8 – General Plan Amendments Approval (Section 555): creates a new time limit rule for the City Council, which would deem a General Plan Amendment approved by the City Council if the City Council does not act within 75 days of the City Planning Commission and Mayor's approval of the General Plan Amendment.

D. R12/CRC 9 – Floor Area Restriction (Section 104(e)): allows the Council to change the existing floor area restriction by ordinance.

E. R13/CRC 10 – Quasi-Judicial Review (Section 561): authorizes the Department of City Planning to be responsible for the independent review and approval, conditional approval, or denial of quasi-judicial applications; further specifies that the duties of quasi-judicial review shall be performed by designated City Planning staff, which shall include, but not be limited to, the Office of Zoning Administration, a Deputy Advisory Agency, and Hearing Officers, as authorized by ordinance, all of whom shall be appointed by the Director of Planning, subject to the civil service provisions of the Charter. Under this proposal, the Office of Zoning Administration remains responsible for the investigation and determination of all applications for variances from any of the regulations and requirements of the City's zoning ordinances.

3. City Ethics, Elections, and Governance

The following proposed changes to the City Charter would be presented to the voters in a ballot measure regarding Ethics, Elections, and Governance:

A. R17/CRC 27 – Ethics Commissioners and Executive Director Restrictions on Running for City and LAUSD Offices (Section 700): prohibits a member of the Ethics Commission and the Executive Director of the Ethics Commission from running for City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles Board of Education offices for five years after the last date of service. The language of this proposal has been adjusted to make clear that the prohibition period runs from the last of date of service, rather than from the end of the term of office. The adjustment was made to avoid a situation where a member resigns early in their term and would be prohibited from running for office for the remainder of the term (even though they have left office) and an additional five years thereafter – for a potential prohibition of nine years. The adjusted language establishes a five-year post-***service*** ban on running for City or LAUSD office.

B. R18/CRC 32 – Increased Civil Penalties for Ethics Violations (Section 470(o)(2)): increases the monetary penalty for ethics violations to the greater of $15,000 per violation, or three times the amount improperly reported or contributed, adjusted annually for changes in the Consumer Price Index.

C. R20/Rules 5 – Referendum Signatures (Section 461): increases the signature requirement for referendary petitions from 10% to 15% of votes cast in the last Mayoral election, the same number of signatures required for initiative petitions.

D. R21/CRC 47-53 – Neighborhood Councils (Sections 900-914): makes several technical and terminology-related changes to provisions applicable to Neighborhood Councils and provides that the definition of a Neighborhood Council stakeholder shall be provided by ordinance. The proposed change to the title of Section 905 is intended merely to clarify that the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment was responsible for drafting the implementation of the "initial" plan for a citywide system of neighborhood councils after the adoption of this Charter provision in 1999.

E. R24/Rules 2 – LAPD Inspector General (Section 573): increases the authority of the LAPD Inspector General by removing the authority of the Board of Police Commissioners to direct the Inspector General to not commence or continue an investigation or audit.

F. R24/Rules 2 – LAFD Independent Assessor (Section 523): increases the authority of the LAFD Independent Assessor by removing the authority of the Board of Fire Commissioners to direct the Independent Assessor to not commence or continue an investigation or audit.

G. R31/CRC 39 – Language Access (Section 103): strengthens language access to City services as further provided by ordinance.

H. R32/Rules 4 – Council Conduct of Business (Section 242): removes requirements in the Charter related to City Council meeting days and other conduct of Council business.

I. R33/Rules 6 – LAPD/LAFD Transfer of Powers (Section 514(b)): removes specified language from the provision regarding the transfer of powers of LAPD and LAFD, such that both departments would remain exempt from Section 514 transfers if a transfer or consolidation of department powers would significantly alter or affect the "primary purpose" of the departments.

4. Eligibility to Vote in City Elections

The following proposed change to the City Charter would be presented to the voters in a ballot measure regarding Eligibility to vote in City Elections:

A. R36/CF 26-0638 – Expanding Voting Eligibility in City (Section 408): gives the City Council the discretion to adopt an ordinance to expand eligibility to vote in elections for City offices to residents of the City who are not citizens of the United States. The provision also states that an ordinance expanding eligibility may be adopted after the passage of the ballot measure and then amended only within the two years following final adoption of a decennial redistricting plan.

5. City Department of Recreation and Parks Budget

The following proposed change to the City Charter would be presented to the voters in a ballot measure regarding the Department of Recreation and Parks Budget:

A. R6/CRC 4 – Increase to the Department of Recreation and Parks' Budget (Section 593): increases the minimum allocation for the Department of Recreation and Parks budget from the current level of 0.0325% to 0.065% of assessed value of all property as assessed for City taxes, phased in over ten years in equal increments, and with exceptions during Council-declared fiscal emergencies.

6. City Airports, Harbor, and Water and Power Departments

The following proposed changes to the City Charter would be presented to the voters in a ballot measure regarding Proprietary Departments:

A. R27/CRC 65 -- Proprietary Department Leases (Section 607): allows the Department of Water and Power and the Department of Airports to have the same power as the Harbor Department to enter into 66-year leases, subject to Council approval.

B. R86/CF 25-0118 – Harbor Public Access Investment Plan (Section 651): requires the Harbor Department to allocate funds from its annual operating income to invest in waterfront public access projects and provides the Board of Harbor Commissioners with sole authority to determine the appropriate amount to allocate to the

Public Access Investment Plan each fiscal year consistent with the board's fiduciary duties under the California Public Resources Code.

C. R87/CF 26-0426-S2 – Harbor Workforce Impact Disclosures (Section 652): requires disclosure of workforce impacts as a condition for certain Harbor Department leases and development agreements; authorizes an exemption from the requirement for entities with revocable permits granted on a month-to-month basis and for small businesses, as defined by the Board of Harbor Commissioners.

D. R97/CF 26-0637 – Port Warden (Section 1700): allows any Port Warden (Chief) who is not a City employee at the time of appointment to elect to participate in either the Los Angeles Fire and Police Pensions or the Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System.

E. R102/CF 26-0659 – Composition of Board of Airport Commissioners (Section 630): changes the composition of the Board of Airport Commissioners to require that at least three members reside within the area surrounding the Los Angeles International Airport and two members reside within the area surrounding Van Nuys Airport, and provides that further subarea residency requirements can be established by ordinance.

7. City Police Department

The following proposed changes to the City Charter would be presented to the voters in a ballot measure regarding the Los Angeles Police Department.

A. R22/CRC 54 – Los Angeles Police Department and City Council Authority (Sections 571, 574): authorizes the City Council to adopt ordinances establishing polices of the Los Angeles Police Department, except that the City Council shall not pass any ordinance that directs, prohibits, or otherwise controls the conduct of, or the deployment of personnel or equipment in a particular incident, investigation, or operation; or directs or otherwise controls the authority of the Chief of Police over the appointment, discharge, or discipline of specific individual employees under Charter Sections 574 or 1070. As used in this proposal, "policies" mean rules, regulations, standards, procedures, or directives of general application, whether applicable to the Los Angeles Police Department as a whole or to any bureau, division, unit, program, or function of the Los Angeles Police Department. For reference, the current language of the

City Charter gives control and oversight of the Los Angeles Police Department to the Board of Police Commissioners, the decisions of which are subject to Charter Section 245. The Board, under Charter Section 571, has explicit authority to issue policy and operational instructions to the Chief of Police concerning the exercise of the authority conferred on the Chief in Charter Section 574. Under this structure, the City Council's control over law enforcement operations is primarily fiscal. Once programs are funded by the City Council, the Chief of Police is left to manage the policies and operations of the department, including how and when to deploy officers, subject to instruction from the Board of Police Commissioners. Prior City Attorney guidance has noted that the Charter makes it the Police Commission's role to promulgate "rules" for the department and "issue instructions" to the Chief of Police. And it is the Chief's role to instruct employees in the context of performing their duties as the department's chief administrative officer. Finally, while this measure does not, in and of itself, change the organizational or operational structure of the department, it would give the City Council expanded authority to establish the polices of the department by ordinance. However, no current practice or policy of the Police Department would change upon enactment of this measure unless and until the City Council exercises the new ordinance-based authority to enact such policy.

8. Los Angeles Unified School District – Eligibility to Vote in LAUSD Elections[2]

The following proposed change to the City Charter would be presented to the voters of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) in a ballot measure regarding Eligibility to Vote in LAUSD Elections:

A. R36/CF 26-0638 – Expanding Voting Eligibility in the LAUSD (Section 408): gives the City Council the discretion to adopt an ordinance to expand eligibility to vote in elections for Board of Education offices to residents of the LAUSD who are not citizens of the United States. The provision also states that an ordinance expanding eligibility may be adopted after the passage of the ballot measure and then amended only within the two years following final adoption of a decennial redistricting plan.

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[2] The California Constitution authorizes the City Charter to regulate the conduct of elections for members of the LAUSD Board of Education and requires that any Charter changes related to Board of Education elections must be submitted to and approved by a majority of voters of the LAUSD in a separate ballot measure. (Cal. Const., Article IX, Section 16.)

9. Los Angeles Unified School District – Campaign Finance Rules Related to LAUSD Elections

The following proposed change to the City Charter would be presented to the voters of the LAUSD in a ballot measure regarding Ethics and Campaign Finance Rules related to LAUSD Elections:

A. R19/CRC 38 – LAUSD Campaign Finance Provisions (Section 803): removes several provisions related to LAUSD campaign finance rules from the Charter that are duplicative or rules applicable to City candidates; applies to Board of Education candidates the same campaign finance rules contained elsewhere in the Charter and in the Municipal Code applicable to Mayoral candidates.

Voter Approval and Election Requirements

Each of the City Charter amendments requires the approval of a majority of the voters of the City of Los Angeles to be adopted. Each of the two LAUSD-related Charter amendments require approval of the majority of the voters of the school district to be adopted.

City Election Code Section 601 requires that final resolutions to place a measure on the ballot must be adopted no less than 110 days before the election. For the November 3, 2026 election, that deadline is July 16, 2026. However, in light of the Council's recess schedule, the practical deadline for the City Council to adopt the resolutions containing the final language of the Charter amendments and conduct at least a first reading of the election ordinances is July 1, 2026.

Council Rule 38 Referral

The draft Charter amendments were sent to all City offices and departments and the Los Angeles Unified School District, pursuant to Council Rule 38, with a request that all comments, if any, be presented directly to the City Council when it considers these matters.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me or Assistant City Attorney Harit Trivedi at (213) 978-7100. A member of this Office will be available when you consider this matter to answer questions you may have.

Sincerely,

HYDEE FELDSTEIN SOTO, City Attorney

By
MICHAEL J. DUNDAS
Chief Assistant City Attorney

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Transmittals