

City of Los Angeles

CALIFORNIA

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October 16, 2026

Honorable Members of the
Ad Hoc Committee on Charter Review
c/o Office of the City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**SUBJECT: PROVISIONS AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE SUBMISSION OF
CHARTER AMENDMENTS TO VOTERS**

Honorable Members:

In accordance with Motion (McOsker-Nazarian; CF 26-1238), the Office of the City Clerk (City Clerk), with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) and City Attorney's Office, hereby submits this report on the applicable provisions of the Los Angeles City Charter and California Elections Code governing the submission of Charter amendments to the voters.

**Summary of Applicable Provisions and Procedures Governing the Submission of Charter
Amendments to Voters**

California State Law

Under Article XI, Section 3 of the California State Constitution, a Charter amendment may be placed before the voters by the City's governing body.

The City Council, as the governing body of the City, may take action to submit a Charter amendment to the voters of the City as further provided in the City Election Code. [See California Constitution, Article XI, Section 3(b); California Government Code Section 34458(a).] A Charter amendment generally must be submitted to the voters at the City's General Municipal Election, but in some cases, the amendment can be submitted to voters at the City's Primary Nominating Election. (See California Election Code Sections 1415 and 9255.)¹

A Charter amendment requires approval by a majority of the electorate in order to be adopted. [California Constitution, Article XI, Section 3(a).]

Los Angeles City Election Code Requirements and Recommended Considerations

Prior to taking formal actions to place a Charter amendment on a ballot, the City Council typically requests a City department to work with the CLA and City Administrative Officer (CAO) to report

¹ A Charter amendment may be placed on a primary ballot only if it does not alter any procedural or substantive protection, right, benefit, or employment status of any local government employee or retiree or of any local government employee organization. (Cal. Elections Code Sections 1415(a) and 9255.)

with recommendations regarding the proposed Charter amendment. This process can take an indefinite period of time, often requiring more than 4-5 months of research and reporting for complicated measures. Furthermore, Charter amendments that necessitate a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review or meet-and-confer obligations must be identified earlier in the ballot consideration process as these obligations must be completed before the Council can act to place the measure on the ballot. In order to initiate the process for CEQA review or meet-and-confer obligations, it is recommended that instructions should be given to the appropriate City departments to begin any necessary work while policy-related issues are being discussed during the development of ballot measures. For the 2028 Municipal Election cycle, this process should begin before June 2027 for Charter amendments intended to be placed on the March 2028 Primary Nominating Election ballot and before January or February 2028 for Charter amendments intended to be placed on the November 2028 General Municipal Election ballot.

In order to place a Charter amendment on the ballot, the City Council must adopt a ballot resolution containing the language of the proposed changes to the Charter, as well as an election ordinance that calls for an election for the Charter amendment with a specified election date. (City Charter Section 402; City Election Code Sections 600 and 601.)²

The deadlines for placement of Charter amendments on a ballot are governed by Chapter VI of the Los Angeles City Election Code. Specifically, Section 601 of the City Election Code states that the City Council must first adopt a motion not less than **125 days** prior to the date of the election requesting the City Attorney to prepare and present all necessary resolutions and election ordinances to place a Charter amendment on the ballot.³ The City Council must then adopt the ballot resolutions containing the full text of the proposed Charter amendment language and the ordinance calling the election for the Charter amendment, not less than **110 days** prior to the applicable election.⁴

It should be noted that although the Election Code requires the City Council to act 125 days before the election to request the City Attorney to prepare all election-related documents, it is recommended that the City Council make this request well before the 125-day deadline. In accordance with past practice, acting earlier provides the City Attorney enough time to research and draft the appropriate language for a ballot measure, and allows the City Council to provide input on any necessary changes before the final 110-day deadline.

For any Charter amendments intended for the City's March 7, 2028 Primary Nominating Election, the deadline for adopting motions requesting the City Attorney to draft Charter amendment language is November 3, 2027; and the deadline for adopting all final ballot resolutions and election ordinances is November 18, 2027.

For any Charter proposals intended for the City's November 7, 2028 General Municipal Election, the deadline for adopting motions requesting the City Attorney to draft Charter amendment language is July 5, 2028; and the deadline for adopting all final ballot resolutions and election ordinances is July 20, 2028.

Please note that these deadlines for the November 2028 General Election ballot will likely fall during a City Council Recess. Therefore, the City Clerk recommends that all motions requesting the City Attorney to prepare all necessary resolutions and election ordinances to place Charter amendments on the November 2028 ballot be adopted no later than mid-June

² The ordinance calling an election for a Charter amendment, like all ordinances adopted by the City Council, is subject to the Mayor's approval or veto.

³ Los Angeles City Elec. Code § 601 (a) (2021). It is recommended that the City Council adopt these motions far in advance of the legal deadline to provide enough time for drafting and collaborating with Council on the language of the Charter amendment.

⁴ Los Angeles City Elec. Code § 601 (b) (2021)

2028, and all final ballot resolutions and election ordinances be adopted no later than Jun 30, 2028. The City Clerk will provide specific dates after the 2028 Council recess schedule is finalized.

Once the City Council adopts all final ballot resolutions and election ordinances, the City Clerk must transmit all necessary ballot measure information to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC), along with the election consolidation resolution by at least 88 days before the applicable election date.⁵

Key Dates and Milestones for the Placement of a Charter Amendment on a 2028 Municipal Election Ballot (Primary Nominating and/or General Municipal Election)

Milestone	Days before Election Day	2028 Primary Nominating Election	2028 General Municipal Election
Initial Charter amendment research and reporting (City Dept./CLA/CAO).	4-5 months	Initiate by June 2027	Initiate by November 2027
City Council adopts motion requesting City Attorney to prepare resolutions and election ordinances to place a Charter amendment on the ballot.	125 days	November 3, 2027	July 5, 2028 (Recommended deadline is mid-June 2028)
City Council adopts final Charter amendment resolutions and election ordinances.	110 days	November 18, 2027	July 20, 2028 (Recommended deadline is June 30, 2028)

If you have any questions, please contact Christopher Garcia, Assistant Division Manager of the Elections and Business Improvement District Division, at Christopher.Garcia@lacity.org, or at (213) 978-0444.

Respectfully submitted,

Signed with ClerkSign

Oct 16, 2026 4:27PM

Patrice Y. Lattimore
City Clerk

Attachment

PYL/RV/JP/CG:ih
EXE-056-26

⁵ California State Elections Code. Div.10, Part 3, § 10403.

MOTION

The Los Angeles City Charter is the foundation of how our City government works. It defines the powers and responsibilities of the Mayor, City Council, departments, boards and commissions, and establishes the systems through which the City makes decisions and delivers services to Angelenos.

Los Angeles has undertaken comprehensive Charter reform at important moments in the City's history. Following the political abuses of the Frank Shaw era, Charter changes sought to strengthen the civil service and protect City government from political interference. Decades later, concerns about accountability, executive authority, administrative management, representation, and the relationship between City Hall and its communities contributed to another comprehensive reform effort. The secession movement in the San Fernando Valley and Harbor Area brought those questions into sharper focus and helped drive the Charter reform process that culminated in voter approval of a new City Charter in 1999. That Charter changed the organization of City government, strengthened management and auditing functions, and created new mechanisms for neighborhood participation.

The issues that prompted that reform have not disappeared. Los Angeles continues to confront questions about how authority is allocated, how decisions are made and implemented, how elected officials and departments are held accountable, and how communities participate in City government. In 2024, the City again convened a Charter Reform Commission to examine these questions. While certain recommendations advanced for consideration by voters, other matters were deferred, referred for further study, or remained unresolved.

The Council has now established an Ad Hoc Committee on Charter Review to continue that work, and the Committee has an opportunity to build on work already undertaken while identifying issues that have emerged since the last comprehensive review. The Committee should begin by taking stock of what has already been proposed and studied, what remains unresolved, and how those questions fit within the Charter as a whole.

A comprehensive Charter review should begin with the experience of Angelenos and the people who understand how City government works in practice. The Committee should create meaningful opportunities for communities across Los Angeles to identify where the structure and operation of City government can be improved, while drawing on the experience of current and former City officials, labor and civic organizations, academics, practitioners, and governance experts. The goal is not simply to revise individual provisions, but to strengthen the institutions of City government so they are more effective, accountable, responsive, and prepared to meet the challenges ahead.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Clerk and Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), with the assistance of the City Attorney as appropriate, be instructed to report on the applicable provisions of the Los Angeles City Charter and California Elections Code governing the submission of Charter amendments to the voters, including applicable deadlines and procedures, and to provide a proposed timeline identifying the key dates and milestones necessary for the development, analysis, Council consideration, and submission of potential Charter amendments to the voters.

I FURTHER MOVE that the CLA, with the assistance of the City Clerk and City Attorney, be instructed to prepare and maintain a public-facing matrix for consideration by the Ad Hoc Committee on Charter Review identifying:

- Recommendations and proposals considered by the 2024 Charter Reform Commission that were deferred, identified for further study, or otherwise not finally resolved or placed before the voters;
- Pending Council Files proposing, requesting study of, or otherwise concerning potential amendments to the City Charter;
- Significant Charter-related matters identified for further study or future consideration during prior comprehensive Charter reform efforts, to the extent reasonably identifiable from existing City records;
- Other Charter-related matters previously identified by the Council, City departments, commissions, or other City bodies as warranting consideration as part of a comprehensive Charter review; and
- For each identified matter, its subject area, current status, responsible department or office, prior reports or Council actions, relevant election or procedural considerations, and any relationship to other Charter provisions or proposals under consideration.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Ad Hoc Committee on Charter Review be requested, consistent with applicable Council procedures, to provide meaningful opportunities for residents, constituents and stakeholders across the City to participate, and to solicit testimony and analysis from academics, practitioners, current and former City officials, labor and civic organizations, governance experts, and other subject-matter experts.

I FURTHER MOVE that the CLA, with the assistance of the City Attorney as appropriate, be instructed to prepare for the Ad Hoc Committee on Charter Review's initial meetings a timeline and summary of significant amendments to the City Charter, with particular emphasis on major and recent amendments, identifying the Charter sections affected, the subject matter and purpose of each change, and, where reasonably available, the circumstances or reform effort that led to its adoption. The report should highlight significant changes to the structure, authority, management, and representation of City government and provide a concise historical reference to help inform the Committee's priorities and identify areas warranting further review.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Administrative Officer (CAO), with the assistance of the City Attorney as appropriate, be requested to assist the Ad Hoc Committee on Charter Review in evaluating potential reforms, including by identifying comparable practices and Charter provisions in other jurisdictions through analyzing their fiscal, labor, and operational implications and interaction with the City Charter. The CAO should advise the Committee throughout the review on potential labor relations implications, including matters that may implicate meet-and-confer obligations, so that such considerations can be identified and addressed at the appropriate stage of the process.

PRESENTED BY: _____

TIM McOSKER

Councilmember, 15th District

SECONDED BY: _____