




OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Mark Jomsky, City Clerk 
DATE: September 18, 2023
RE: Potential Charter Study Task Force Charge and Scope

On September 11, 2023, the City Council received information and considered a recommendation from City staff (see attached staff report) regarding the formation of a Charter Study Task Force to review possible Charter Amendments related to City governance issues. Following discussion, the City Council directed staff to return at the next meeting to provide the following additional information:

- An updated list of topics for potential study by a Charter Study Task Force, incorporating Council's comments from the September 11th meeting; and
- Final Report from the 1998 Charter Study Task Force that examined the Citywide Elected Mayor issue.

The following topics incorporate what staff understood as having received consensus for possible Charter study:

- City Council vacancy appointment process and ability to call a special election to fill an unanticipated Council vacancy;
- City Council term limits;
- Vice Mayor appointment timing and term; and
- Timing of Mayoral election in relation to Council District elections.

In addition, the City Council discussed and appeared to reach consensus to add the following topics to the list of possible Charter study topics by a Task Force:

- City Council compensation, and specifically, adding a dedicated childcare allowance for Councilmembers
- Campaign contribution limits for Mayor and City Council elections

Meeting of: 09/18/23
Agenda Item No. 15

For these topics, City staff proposes the following timeline for the Task Force to study and recommend changes to the City Charter for City Council consideration:

- > October 16, 2023 – Charter Task Force appointments
- > November 2023 through May 2024 – Task Force to Review Issues and Approve Recommendations for City Council Consideration
- > May/June 2024 – Final Report on Recommended Charter Amendments Submitted to City Council
- > June/July 2024 – Council's Opportunity to Review/Consider Recommended Charter Amendments

Lastly, the City Council discussed the issue of the Council-Manager form of government, and possibly reviewing increased authority for the Mayor and City Council. Ultimately, however, there did not appear to be consensus to authorize a Task Force to study this topic. Staff was asked to provide background information on the issue of establishing a directly elected Mayor and the 1998 Task Force's discussion regarding the current Council-Manager form of government. In response to this request, staff is providing relevant portions of the prior Charter Reform Task Force's Final Report from June 1998 (Attachment A to this cover memo).

Once the City Council agrees on the topics to be studied, staff is recommending the Council formally set the topics as the scope of study for the Task Force. The City Council may also choose to require that any topics outside the approved scope must first be submitted for City Council approval to study prior to the Task Force commencing such activity. In terms of the Task Force's charge, it is recommended that the City Council approve the following:

- > Study and fully examine topics submitted by City Council to Task Force
- > Provide recommendations on those topics, including whether or not to amend the Charter, as part of a Final Report submitted to the City Council by May/June 2024
- > Provide recommended amendments in a priority topics list, keeping in mind the number of ballot measures that might create voter fatigue issues
- > Provide recommended ballot question(s) for Charter amendment(s)
- > Provide recommended changes/amendments/additions to City Charter text

In terms of technical changes to the City Charter that City staff is requesting, there are three topics that will be presented for City Council consideration:

1. Amending language related to the annual Light & Power Fund transfer to the General Fund to use current accounting terminology;
2. Increases to procurement and purchasing limits; and
3. Clean-up provisions within the Charter;
 - a. Replacing gender specific language with gender-neutral language;

- b. Removing any reference to Primary Elections for Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education; and
- c. Correcting citations and references in Article XVIII of the City Charter (no substantive changes).

As discussed at the September 11th City Council meeting, staff intends to bring the proposed technical changes to Council committees prior to submitting completed topics to the full City Council for consideration. To potentially address some of the voter fatigue concerns raised by the City Council when discussing the November 2024 General Election ballot, City staff will make efforts to expedite the “clean-up” and procurement charter amendments listed above to meet required deadlines for the March 2024 Primary Election. City Council can expect these technical charter amendment measures to occur within the following general timeline:

- > October 2023 – Charter amendments presented to Council committee(s)
- > November 2023 – Council committee(s) to approve and forward recommendations to City Council, including ballot question(s) and amended City Charter text
- > December 4, 2023 – Last meeting for City Council to adopt resolutions to submit Charter Amendment(s) to voters for the March 5, 2024 Primary Election ballot
- > December 8, 2023 – California Elections Code Deadline – 88th Day prior to the March 5, 2024 Election

AMENDED STAFF RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the City Council:

- (1) Find that the proposed action is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (“Common Sense Exemption”);
- (2) Establish the Scope and Charge for a Charter Study Task Force to review City Governance Topics set by the City Council; and
- (3) Provide direction to staff on Technical Charter Amendment Topics for City Council consideration and action to place on the March 5, 2024 Primary Municipal Election ballot.

Attachment A – Final Report from 1998 Charter Reform Task Force (certain attachments to the report omitted)