Coalition of Communities of Color and Partner Organizations Workshop Report

Prepared for

Portland Charter Commission

November 2021

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Project Background

About the Charter Review and Community Engagement

At least once every 10 years, the City Council appoints 20 Portlanders to a Charter Commission to review the City Charter and recommend changes. The Charter Commission is working to engage Portlanders in a conversation about how our City Charter can best respond to our diverse communities' needs. The Charter Commission is approaching their work in two phases; phase one is focused on recommendations to the City of Portland's **Form of Government** and **City Council elections**, while phase two is yet to be determined.

The Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) is working with the City of Portland on the design and implementation of community education and engagement activities to meaningfully engage Portland communities in the Charter Review process. The CCC's primary focus of engagement is to involve Portlanders who have been historically left out of City Hall decision-making, including communities of color, immigrants, refugees, renters, and many more communities. The CCC has partnered with culturally-specific organizations to execute robust and vibrant community engagement. The organizations who are a part of the Fall Collaborative and are participating in the Charter Review Workshop series are:

- Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon
- Hacienda CDC
- Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization
    - Africa House Center
    - Pacific Islander and Asian Family Center
    - Slavic and Eastern European Center
- Muslim Educational Trust
- Native American Youth and Family Center
- Next Up
- Street Roots
- Unite Oregon
- Urban League of Portland
- Verde

About the Charter Review 101 Workshop Series

Curriculum: To educate community members about the Charter Review process in an accessible way, the Coalition of Communities of Color decided to design a **two part workshop**.

The first part of the workshop, titled the Charter Review 101 Workshop, is analyzed in this report. Part two of the workshop will be hosted in January 2022.

For part one of the workshop series, the CCC developed a 2-hour **workshop curriculum** focused on educating community members about the Charter Review process and related issues. The objective of part one was to inform community members about a high level of what the Portland Charter Commission is and to present foundational education about the form of government and City Council elections topics the Charter Commission is exploring. The curriculum consisted of two key components, an educational presentation, and a community discussion activity. The educational presentation was roughly 40 minutes total, meanwhile, the community discussion was set up for 60 minutes total.

Since knowledge about how city government and City Council elections work can be technical and difficult to understand, CCC felt strongly that two workshops were needed to best lay the foundation for community members to familiarize themselves with the issues the Charter Commission is exploring. Part one of the workshop series aimed to establish a broad understanding of what a city government does and how voting connects to communities by encouraging participants to reflect on their general experiences and interactions with these systems. Part two of the workshop series will provide more in-depth education about the policy options the Charter Commission is weighing. The discussion activity analyzed in this report was not meant to seek explicit policy input from participants, but rather focus on their broad lived experiences. Part two will be an opportunity to seek more refined policy input from participants.

Role of Partner Organizations: Partner organizations from the Fall Collaborative were responsible for hosting a workshop with their community base in the month of November 2021 and will be responsible for hosting part two of the workshop in the month of January 2022. Part two of the workshop will dive deeper into the specific policy orientations the Charter Commission is seeking additional community input and feedback about. Partner organizations engaged in targeted outreach to their community base to recruit participants for the workshop series. Outreach varied per organization and included multi-lingual outreach, phone call outreach, social media outreach, and other digital communications outreach. Portlanders of color and historically disenfranchised Portlanders were prioritized in outreach efforts, including community members who have a meaningful connection or spend a lot of time working, playing, etc. in Portland. The role of partner organizations was to engage in outreach and host a workshop with their community base.

Total Engagement: Ten workshops total were hosted; the CCC hosted one Pilot Session workshop in October 2021, and the remaining 9 workshops were hosted by partner organizations in November 2021. One organization from the Fall Collaborative (APANO) was unable to host a workshop event, and engaged their base in a **workshop survey** instead, based on the discussion questions from the workshop discussion activity.

The baseline goal of engagement across the 10 workshop events and the workshop survey was 150 total participants (10-15 per organization). The target goal of engagement was 240 total

participants (15-20 per organization). Across these activities, **a total of 204 participants were engaged** (186 workshop event participants, and 18 workshop survey participants).

About the Evaluation and Limitations

It is crucial to understand that this workshop structure and analysis were impacted by numerous limitations, whether that be, time, technology, familiarity with topics discussed, staff capacity, or the capacity of communities to engage. Every participant entered the workshop with varying levels of knowledge or interaction with the city government or City Council elections, marking an important factor to consider as the discussion analysis is grappled with.

Discussion groups were recorded to ensure a more effective evaluation process. A few groups experienced technical difficulties, but the majority of discussions were directly transcribed. Facilitators who helped to facilitate their discussion were responsible for note-taking during the conversation, or thereafter, to help capture as much detail of information as possible. After compiling the audio/video files, transcriptions, and notes, the CCC staff and Charter Commission staff worked to identify themes per organization and as a whole. These themes were identified by closely assessing the available materials and taking note of which sentiments were repeated the most often or seemed to resonate deeply with participants. The structure of analysis looks at problems and barriers that participants identified and ideas and suggestions that can help alleviate those concerns. Themes were divided by the form of government and City Council elections.

It is important to note that although these discussions utilized the same materials, they were conducted by various facilitators, and with the nature of conversations, every group was unique in its orientation of discussion. Additionally, the sentiments expressed by participants within this report do not capture the lived experiences of all Portlanders or of all historically disenfranchised groups. This is a small sample of a conversation that must continue with Portlanders at large. And although some sentiments are felt more strongly within certain communities, that does not mean those experiences stand as a monolith or are representative of everyone who identifies with that community.

Collective Discussion Analysis Across All Organizations

Collective Key Themes of Form of Government

An overwhelming majority of participants across all organizations expressed that they experience a **lack of information and knowledge about the City, its services, bureaus, and processes.** These general sentiments included not knowing what the City is responsible for, what services the City provides, how to reach out to City bureaus, who to call, who is responsible for what, or how to participate in decision-making processes. There were two key components that participants emphasized concerning this theme.

- The first component is that this lack of information and knowledge is due to **barriers to accessibility**. Participants across the organizations illustrated that it was difficult for them to obtain information about the City due to specific circumstances that directly impacted their ability to be well informed. Some of the most prominent barriers that were highlighted across the organizations were the lack of access to technology, lack of access to translation, interpretation, or in-language services, and a lack of access to culturally-responsive information or services. These barriers were especially felt by the elderly, disabled, immigrant, refugee, unhoused communities, and individuals who prefer another language to English. Accessibility also means that the information that is available is difficult to understand, does not provide the full scope someone needs, or does not provide clear direction to someone who can help.
  - Participants across organizations shared that even when they have a general understanding of how to reach out to the City, it is a matter of being able to access the outlets and avenues to do so, which are a barrier. Participants had many suggestions for how to reduce barriers to accessibility including providing city-wide free wifi service, partnering with other institutions to disseminate information, more funding for quality interpretation services (more training), hiring more City staff who can provide in-language services and not just interpretation, disseminating information in more languages, having city staff who act as a community "liaison", and creating committees that can help do outreach to specific underserved communities.

- The second component that was emphasized greatly impacts this lack of information and knowledge is due to the **lack of outreach and communication from the City**. Many participants across the organizations shared that this was one of their first times attending a civic engagement event and learning the information that was being presented. Even among those who were more involved in local civic engagement, there

was a clear sentiment that the City does engage communities sufficiently to understand how to navigate the city government. Participants felt that the City's communication is not reaching the communities who are most impacted by city decisions or who are the most underserved.

- ○ Participants had many suggestions for what outreach should look like and uplifted the need for more on-the-ground outreach and outreach that meets the community where they are. This means that the City should host more educational events, civic engagement workshops, and community forums in the places that those communities frequent the most (whether that be a small business, the office of a trusted community-based organization, in cultural locations, etc.), there was a collective call to make city government feel more integrated with the community.

Another dominant theme that was evident across almost all of the organizations is that the **city government does not adequately or equitably respond to the community's needs or concerns.** One primary sentiment that was expressed is that participants felt that the City does not understand what issues they face or what their lived realities are on an everyday basis. There was also a clear sentiment that the City's response to concerns varies depending on the area of the city, and that East/Southeast Portland are not being prioritized. In addition, participants felt that the City is not taking adequate or equitable action to respond to their needs or concerns. There were two key components that participants emphasized concerning this theme.

- ● The first component that was emphasized concerning the lack of adequate or equitable response on important issues was that **the City is not taking sufficient action to meet these needs**. Four key concerns that were raised across the organizations were public safety, policing, houselessness crisis, and infrastructure issues. Participants felt that the City is not taking appropriate or responsive measures to holistically address these issues. Many personal stories were shared of 9-1-1 dispatchers not answering calls or police not following up on calls with any action. Participants also expressed concern at the growing rates of unhoused population and felt that the city elected leaders need to collectively work on a long-term solution, with an emphasis on more mental health services. Participants felt that the City is not listening to their concerns and there is a lack of accountability to deliver on necessary services and programs. Some participants felt the services and programs the City promises are not the reality of what the community receives.
  - ○ Participants suggested more transparency of what is being done and how decisions are being made is necessary. Additionally, the City following up through the entire process when people request assistance would ensure community members feel they were truly helped.
- ● The second component that was emphasized concerning the lack of adequate or equitable response on important issues, was that **community voices are not being meaningfully centered in city decision-making processes.** Participants across the organizations felt that marginalized communities are not being invited to the tables of city

decision-making and these opportunities do not take into consideration accessibility. Many of the personal stories that were shared about instances that a community member's needs were not met, echoed the lack of input and direct decision-making influence that was missing when that issue was addressed. Participants felt strongly that the City must be more intentional about creating outlets for communities to voice their needs. When asked what makes them feel heard by the city government, the primary response that was shared was a city government that understands how different communities experience certain issues in unique and complex ways. Equally important, participants stressed that not only is creating an accessible outlet for input crucial but implementing community ideas and feedback into final decisions is also necessary. There were times that participants felt the City gathered community input when decisions had already been made and were only doing so to check off a box, rather than co-deciding on a solution or issue with the community.

  ○ Participants suggested that decision-making processes should take into account transportation, language, and scheduling barriers. These processes should also be transparent about how community input will be used and follow through to ensure the community is informed about the outcome and implementation thereafter.

Collective Key Themes of City Council Elections

An overwhelming majority of participants across all organizations shared that **accessibility was the main barrier to participating in City Council elections.** Participants identified a range of accessibility barriers including voting education, voter registration, citizenship status, the process of voting, language, and location that made voting difficult or discouraging.

● A clear area that participants identified as a barrier to participating in voting was a **lack of voting education**. Many communities did not have a foundational understanding of why voting is important or how voting can connect to the wellbeing of their communities. This directly tied to a lack of information about the City government in which participants also shared that they were not aware of who the agents were that could make their voice heard, who elected leaders are, or what they are responsible for.

● Another area that participants identified as a barrier to participating in voting was **voter registration**. Many communities did not have the information about how to register to vote or understand why they should. Additionally, the requirements to be able to register to vote including citizenship status, proof of government-issued identification, and age were all named as barriers to registration. The lack of home addresses for unhoused community members is also a barrier that can prevent folks from receiving a ballot or being able to register to vote.

● **Citizenship status** was a barrier that was heard across several organizations, in which participants shared they were unable to vote. Many participants felt that any resident of Portland should have the ability to vote regardless of citizenship status since they are impacted by all the decisions of elected leaders and the City.

- **The process of voting** was a barrier that a majority of participants highlighted. This included the timing of elections, how the process works in general, and the difficulty of processing the information on Voters' pamphlets or lacking additional outlets for more information about ballot measures and candidates.
- The barrier of **language** for community members who don't speak English or prefer another language was a significant barrier that many participants shared impacts their ability to vote. These participants collectively agreed that more information is needed in their language presented in a culturally appropriate manner to make voters feel comfortable processing the information and understanding what they are voting for. The ballot, voters pamphlet, and advertising about the elections should all be available in multiple languages.
- The **location** of ballot drop boxes was identified as a barrier, especially for communities that live in East/Southeast Portland, and those who are disabled, elderly, or working class. Participants noted that most ballot drop boxes are placed towards the inner city and there must be more drop box sites in outer regions.

Another key theme that participants expressed across the organizations was a **disconnect between the community and candidates**. One of the main reasons participants felt they did not have sufficient information about candidates was due to the lack of direct outreach or engagement with candidates. Participants collectively stressed that to make voting decisions they need to feel like they know the candidate as a person, and truly understand what issues they will or won't be a champion for. There was a desire to connect with candidates in personal and meaningful ways that facilitate open dialogue. More opportunities for community discussions, smaller and more intimate forums, visits to small businesses or community spaces, were all named as examples of the type of interaction participants wish they had with candidates.

A form of disconnect that some participants also expressed was feeling that **candidates don't know the lived experiences or issues that communities face, and/or feeling that none of the candidates reflect their values or interests.** Participants shared that voting doesn't feel encouraging or impactful when you don't feel moved by any of the candidates or feel that they don't represent the issues that you care about most. Groups who discussed voting methods highlighted that our current "pick only one candidate" voting method feels limiting, and that having the option to vote for more candidates would create more choices and opportunities. These groups also highlighted that ranked-choice voting would allow people's preferences to be captured and would make their vote feel more heard. Along with ranked-choice voting, proportional representation was also uplifted as a system that could help to achieve the representation of minority communities throughout the city.

The final theme that was noted across several of the organizations is that communities have a **preference for some form of geographic or localized representation.** Many participants felt that local elected leaders would understand their needs more if they lived in the same area, since they would be a part of that local community. Additionally, participants resonated with the idea that geographic representation could increase accountability since those elected leaders

would be more invested in their specific areas and would be able to champion infrastructure and other needed policies. The root issues that stem from this theme are 1) elected leaders don't understand the experiences of certain communities or neighborhoods 2) the City is not investing equitably across areas of the city 3) there is a lack of accountability that community members feel toward their elected leaders.

Conclusions

The discourse around how Portlanders interact with the Portland city government and City Council elections must continue to center and uplift the experiences and perspectives of historically disenfranchised communities. At a high level, this workshop report demonstrates the enthusiasm and desire to engage in ongoing civic and community engagement efforts that many marginalized communities expressed. There was a real call from participants for the City to create accessible and transparent decision-making processes that value the knowledge that communities bring and that provide pathways for these decisions to be made together.

The Charter Review process not only marks an opportunity to make recommendations to the City Charter supported by community ideas but also exemplifies the importance of continuing robust and vibrant community engagement with those who are left out of City Hall decision-making. The community must continue to be engaged within this process, and also be engaged on a longer-term scale. Community members expressed a desire to feel integrated with the City's decision-making processes and hoped-for future opportunities to participate in honest dialogue about their experiences. Equally as important, frustration and a sense of burnout were also shared, alongside the desire to engage. This is why it is critical that conversations about what meaningful participation with the City and elected leaders look like continue beyond this process alone, and incorporate genuine community input throughout the Charter Review process.

To conclude this report, we would like to reiterate that communities are not monolithic, and this analysis is limited and not representative of entire communities. Instead, we hope the findings from this discussion have helped to illuminate some of the diverse and complex ways that Portlanders have interacted with City government and City Council elections on a structural level. Ongoing educational outreach, communication, and the creation of community spaces are needed to continue to engage Portland's marginalized communities about their lived realities and ideas for change. We thank each participant for their incredible participation in sharing their lived experiences, perspectives, and ideas. We look forward to our next steps supporting deeper input from these communities through policy education and community-based analysis to help guide the work of the Charter Commission.

Appendix

A.   Charter Workshop Community Discussion

Question 1

➔ **ASK: What has been your experience with our city government, including bureaus and offices, and has the city been responsive to your needs?**

IF PARTICIPANTS ARE STRUGGLING TO RESPOND ASK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

SAY: Let's think about this question in another way.

❖ **ASK: Do you know how to reach out to our city government when you need help? If not, what makes it difficult?**
  ➢ **Example:** No, I don't know how to reach out to our city government because I'm not sure what bureaus and offices are individually responsible for.

❖ **ASK: How can our city government better respond to your needs?**
  ➢ **Example:** Our city government can better respond to my needs by providing culturally responsive services and connecting me to someone who speaks my language when I need help.

❖ **ASK: What would make you feel more comfortable reaching out to our city government for help?**
  ➢ **Example:** I would feel more comfortable reaching out to our city government if there were more opportunities to get to know what elected leaders do and get to know them on an individual level.

Question 2

➔ **ASK: What makes you and your community feel helped or heard by our city government?**

IF PARTICIPANTS ARE STRUGGLING TO RESPOND ASK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

SAY: Let's think about this question in another way.

- ❖ **ASK: How would you like our city government to interact with you and your community?**
    - ➢ **Example:** I would like if our city government provided more accessible information about the services

- ❖ **ASK: What values are important for our city government to have?**
    - ➢ **Example:** It's important for our city government to be transparent about the policies they create and how they will impact disenfranchised groups.

Question 3

- ➔ **ASK: What barriers do you or your friends, family, or community experience voting in our City Council elections?**

IF PARTICIPANTS ARE STRUGGLING TO RESPOND ASK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

SAY: Let's think about this question in another way.

- ❖ **ASK: What makes voting feel discouraging or difficult?**
    - ➢ **Example:** Voting feels discouraging because I don't see a diverse range of political representation or values reflected by the candidates running for office.
    - ➢ **Example:** Voting feels difficult when there is no trust that the candidates elected will be accountable to the people.
    - ➢ **Example:** Voting feels discouraging because I can't vote, or I have friends and family who cannot vote.

- ❖ **ASK: What difficulties do you face when making voting decisions?**
    - ➢ **Example:** I feel like I need to think about how the majority of Portlanders are voting and who is most likely to win, rather than my favorite candidate.
    - ➢ **Example:** I feel like my community needs more resources about participating in democracy and understanding why our votes matter.

Question 4

- ➔ **ASK: What would make voting easier to participate in?**

IF PARTICIPANTS ARE STRUGGLING TO RESPOND ASK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

SAY: Let's think about this question in another way.

- ❖ **ASK: Would you prefer that elected leaders represent the people from the area of the city they live in, or that they represent all Portlanders across the city?**
  - ➢ **Example:** I would prefer elected leaders to represent me based on where I live in the city because geographic representation is important to me.
  - ➢ **Example:** I would prefer elected leaders to represent me citywide because I may not share values with the people running for office in my district.

- ❖ **ASK: What would help you get your vote in on time?**
  - ➢ **Example:** If ballot drop-off boxes were located close to my neighborhood, and I didn't have to commute to a drop-off site in another part of town.
  - ➢ **Example:** If candidates made a greater effort to let communities like mine know what issues they care about and engaged with me.

- ❖ **ASK: Sometimes voters feel that more than one candidate would be a good elected leader. Would it be easier to decide who to vote for if you could rank all of the candidates you support, in order of preference?**
  - ➢ **Example:** Being able to rank candidates in order of preference, would make me feel like I can be honest about who I want to win and who represents me the best.

[ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO ASK IF NEEDED]

- ❖ **ASK: Do you think voting for local leaders is important? Why or why not?**
  - ➢ **Example:** Voting for local leaders is important because communities can come together to elect the candidate that prioritizes the issues they care about. More participation can help more voices determine the outcomes of local issues.

- ❖ **ASK: How can voting help to shape the future of our communities?**
  - ➢ **Example:** Voting can help to shape the future of our communities by ensuring that our elected leaders will deliver the resources our communities need, like pandemic relief, rent assistance, and much more.

- ❖ **ASK: What does participating in our local democracy mean to you?**
  - ➢ **Example:** Participating in local democracy to me means volunteering with community groups and organizations to learn about what's happening across our city and identify the needs of my community.

B.   APANO Workshop Survey Questions

1. What has been your experience with our city government, including bureaus and offices, and has the city been responsive to your needs?
2. What makes you and your community feel helped or heard by our city government?
3. What barriers do you or your friends, family, or community experience voting in our City Council elections?
4. What would make voting easier to participate in?

C.   Charter Workshop Curriculum

Format:
- Virtual event
- 15-20 participants total
- 4-5 organizational staff to host the workshop total
    - **1 presenter**
        - 1 presenter will be responsible for presenting the PPT presentation of the workshop.
    - **3 facilitators**
        - 3 facilitators will be responsible for facilitating the community discussion activity in breakout rooms with 5-7 participants.
    - **1 tech support**

- 1 tech support to help participants and set up the breakout rooms.
- ***Adding an extra person for this role is optional.*** If you only have 4 staff available, you can assign one of the facilitators the tech support responsibility.
- Tech support should create breakout rooms as soon as all participants join the event, for quick transition later on.

Workshop Goals:
- To provide community members with the foundation to understand how the Charter Review process works
- To lay out the ways our current city government and voting system are inequitable to communities of color
- To explore alternative forms of government and voting systems that can help communities of color build political power
- To guide community members in a discussion of their lived experiences interacting with our current city government and voting system

Content	Format	Time Allotted
Introductions	Presentation (Slides 1-5)	12 minutes
Charter Review 101 and City Government	Presentation (Slides 6-18)	23 minutes
Community Discussion on City Government	Zoom Breakout rooms	30 minutes
BREAK		5 minutes
Voting Systems	Presentation (Slides 20-28)	15 minutes
Community Discussion on Voting	Zoom Breakout rooms	30 minutes
Take Action in Charter Review	Presentation (Slides 29-30)	5 minutes

Charter Review 101 Presentation Guide

MUSIC ENCOURAGED WHILE PARTICIPANTS JOIN

==**Slide 1: Introduction [7 minutes]**==

WAIT 4-5 MINUTES FOR PARTICIPANTS TO JOIN THE EVENT

SAY: Hi everyone, thank you so much for joining us today for our Charter Review 101 workshop! We are so excited to see you all.

SAY: Please share your **name, pronouns, and something you are excited to learn about today** in the chat.

[INTRODUCE YOURSELF]: My name is _____, I use _____ pronouns, and my role with_____ is _____.

IF YOU HAVE INTERPRETATION AVAILABLE MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

==**Slide 2: Getting Familiar with Zoom [1 minute]**==

SAY: Let's go over how to use Zoom:

1. We encourage you to turn on your video so that we can all be present with one another. Please keep your audio muted while someone is presenting. Your audio and video buttons are in the lower-left corner.
2. We encourage you to use the chat and ask any questions you have. The chat box is in the bottom center.
3. Feel free to use the react feature to raise your hand or use other emoticons. The reaction button is on the bottom right.
4. If you're having any issues using Zoom please send a private message to **@tech-support [or insert staff name]** in the chat.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

==**Slide 3: Land Acknowledgement [2 minutes]**==

SAY: Before we get started, let's acknowledge the land we are on.

[Insert your organization's land acknowledgment here or read example below]

SAY: Today, I would like to acknowledge the people whose land we are gathered on. Present-day Portland is located on the traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other tribes who made their homes along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. Let us also acknowledge the robust Native community made up of tribal diversity that originates from around the country, and whose journeys have brought them to Portland byways of forced displacement or seeking opportunities.

<p align="center">**TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE**</p>

Slide 4: Group Agreements [1 minute]

SAY: As we share space, let's be mindful of our group agreements so we can create a welcoming environment.

- **Come from a place of curiosity** - We're going learn new things, so embrace saying "I don't know that" and ask questions
- **No one knows everything, but together we know a lot** - We value everyone's perspective
- **Take space, make space** - Please be mindful of how much you speak and create space for others to share
- **Stories stay, but the lessons can be shared** - Please keep this a confidential space when personal stories are shared
- **Take care of yourself** - be attentive to your needs, do what's necessary to feel comfortable

<p align="center">**TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE**</p>

Slide 5: Workshop Goals [1 minute]

SAY: Today we're doing a workshop about how our city government and voting system do or don't work for our communities and families.

The goals for our workshop are:

- To make sure we all understand how the Charter Review process works
- To reflect on our experiences with our current city government and voting
- To learn how our current city government and voting system are inequitable to communities of color and what the alternatives are

Slide 6: What is a city government? [4 minutes]

SAY: Let's start with the basics of a city government. A city government is a group of people that sets rules for the city and supports the communities of the city. Our Portland city government can do a lot for us, from providing services that support our communities to listening to our concerns to make the city better.

ASK: Can you think of some services our city provides? I'll start with one to give you an idea: our city funds our fire department that keeps us safe. What are some other examples? Raise your hand or drop it in the chat!

LET 2-4 PEOPLE SHARE OR READ SOME OF THE EXAMPLES IN THE CHAT

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 7: Portland City Services [1 minute]

Presenter note: If you need more information about the types of services Portland provides, **click here**.

SAY: Great job everyone! Some of the services our city provides are:

- Our fire department and police
- Parks and natural spaces
- Programs to get communities involved in our city government
- Disaster preparation for climate crises and other emergencies
- Housing and responses to homelessness
- Roads and sidewalks
- Funding for arts, culture, community-based organizations
- Support for small businesses
- And much more!

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 8: What is a city elected leader? [1 minute]

SAY: In a city government, residents of the city vote to elect city leaders to represent them. Elected leaders are responsible for connecting with communities to listen to their needs and interests and passing laws that make the city better.

SAY: Communities look to their elected leaders to take action on the issues that are important to them. From affordable housing, public safety, to climate action. I think we can all agree, it's important that our leaders represent the diverse voices of the people they serve.

SAY: But, we know this is not always the case. During our time today, we want you to think of the ways our city government does **or does not** serve you and how you would like to be served by our elected leaders.

<div align="center">**TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE**</div>

Slide 9: The Portland Charter Guides our City [1 minute]

SAY: Today we're talking about our experiences with our city government and voting. But first, let's talk about how this connects to our **City Charter**.

SAY: Our City Charter is a guiding document that establishes the government system and structure of the city.

SAY: Our City Charter allows Portland to decide:
- How our city government is set up
- How we vote for city leaders
- The roles of our elected leaders and what they are responsible for doing
- How city services work
- And how our public dollars are spent

<div align="center">**TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE**</div>

Slide 10: The Portland Charter Commission [1 minute]

SAY: So if something isn't working for our communities, how can we make **changes** to our City Charter?

SAY: Every ten years, our City Council appoints 20 Portlanders to a group called the Charter Commission. Here are the Portlanders who make up the Charter Commission. Charter Commissioners went through an application process, in which City Council

looked for Portlanders with diverse backgrounds who have experience championing community needs.

SAY: The Charter Commission is responsible for reviewing our City Charter to **recommend** changes. This process is called the **charter review process**, and it's happening **right now**.

<p style="text-align:center;">**TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE**</p>

Slide 11: Why should you get involved in the Charter Review process? [1 minute]

SAY: So why should you get involved in the Charter Review process?

SAY: The decisions made by our city government impact **every** Portlander. But systemic racism has meant that communities like ours have been **excluded** from these decision-making processes.

SAY: City decisions have led to many structural problems like—
- Communities of color being pushed out of their historical neighborhoods
- Dangerous roads with no sidewalks and poor access to transit
- A public safety system marked by over-policing and profiling
- And a political system that reduces the influence of communities of color

SAY: No matter where we live or what our color is, most of us believe that for democracy to work for all of us, it **must include us all.** Participating in the Charter Review process is an opportunity to make **your** voice heard about how our city government and democracy can better respond to your needs.

<p style="text-align:center;">**TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE**</p>

Slide 12: Charter Review Phase one [1 minute 30 seconds]

SAY: So, how can you get involved to make your voice heard?

SAY: The Charter Commission is approaching their work in two phases. **Phase one** is happening right now and is focused on your experiences with our **city government and voting system**. We are working with the City of Portland to host small group discussions with communities of color.

SAY: Using community input, the Charter Commission will draft charter proposals in February 2022 recommending changes to our charter. Then they will host a series of public hearings to receive feedback from Portlanders to revise their proposals.

SAY: Lastly, the Charter Commission will decide which proposals they approve and send them to the **November 2022 ballot** for **Portland voters** to vote on.

SAY: You can get involved by sharing your perspectives with the Charter Commission about what our city should look like. Anyone can add their voice to this process, regardless of age, citizenship status, race, etc. Once the proposals are sent to the November 2022 ballot, **then Portland voters** will have the power to decide on the proposed changes.

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==**Slide 13: Charter Review Phase two [30 seconds]**==

SAY: The Charter Commission is also looking to hear what other issues they should explore. After our workshop, we'll send out a survey where you can let us know your ideas; from climate action to community safety, you can think of what's important to you.

SAY: Phase two will go through the same steps: community input, a draft of charter proposals, public hearings to revise the proposals, and sending the proposals to the ballot in December 2022 for Portlanders to vote on in a future ballot.

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==**Slide 14: Questions on Charter Review so far? [3 minutes]**==

SAY: Let's stop here and take a moment for questions about the charter review process so far.

Presenter note: If you want to get more familiar with common questions, **click here**.

<p style="text-align:center;color:red;">**PAUSE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS**</p>

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==**Slide 15: Commission form of government [2 minutes]**==

SAY: So, what type of city government does Portland have? Portland has a **Commission government** in which there are six elected leaders.

SAY: The Mayor and four City Commissioners make up our City Council. The other elected leader is the auditor, who is independent of City Council.

SAY: I know we've been talking about Charter Commissioners, but they are different from our City Commissioners who are elected leaders.

SAY: Portland's elected leaders **share powers**. Our City Council is responsible for passing laws and approving how our public dollars are spent in the city budget.

SAY: The Mayor and City Commissioners have huge administrative roles: they run the city's bureaus and offices, and help carry out the laws. The biggest difference of power between the Mayor and the City Commissioners is that the **Mayor decides** which bureaus each Commissioner will run, and can also assign bureaus to themself. Mayor Ted Wheeler assigned himself the Portland Police Bureau and assigned Commissioner Mingus Mapps to the Bureau of Environmental Services.

SAY: Lastly, the Auditor promotes an open and accountable government by reviewing city bureaus, overseeing elections, and providing Portlanders with access to public records.

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Slide 16: Commission form of government establishes inequities [2 minutes]

SAY: Now you may be wondering, **why** is the Charter Commission considering changes to our current form of government? One main reason is that the Commission government establishes inequities and doesn't work for communities of color.

SAY: I think we can all agree, the leaders elected to our City Council should represent our communities and the issues we care about— but this is not always the case. Since 1913, only **five people of color** have served on the City Council thus far.

SAY: Dick Bogle, pictured on the left, served two terms through 1992, and it was not until **26 years later** that the next Commissioner of color, Jo Ann Hardesty, pictured on the right, was elected.

SAY: It's clear the Commission government doesn't create many pathways for people of color to have a seat on City Council, and it reduces the chances of our communities to elect the candidates we want as our leaders.

SAY: This matters because the leaders we choose determine which issues get championed. A great example is Commissioner Nick Fish, who was a driving force behind the 2016 Portland Housing Bond to fund affordable housing. Our leaders should **and can** respond to our communities' needs.

SAY: The Commission government has also created huge workloads for City Commissioners, causing them to spend more time running bureaus **instead** of connecting with the people they serve. The Charter Review process can help make changes so that our city truly works for **all of us.**

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==Slide 17: Types (forms) of government [2 minutes]==

SAY: So what other types of government could Portland consider?

SAY: Starting on the left, we have Portland's **current** government, the Commission government. Here the Mayor and City Commissioners **share** powers and run our city bureaus. Portland is the **only** large city in the entire United States **and** Oregon that uses the Commission government.

SAY: The Commission government is outdated and does not support our community needs. So what are the alternatives? The two other types of government are a mayor-council and council-manager government.

SAY: Let's start with mayor-council governments which have a Mayor and a City Council. If the Mayor has a lot of power, like appointing department heads or **overriding** the decisions of the City Council, this is a **strong mayor-council government** since the Mayor's powers are strong. **Beaverton** was the only city in Oregon with a strong mayor-council government, but they switched to a council-manager government after making changes to their City Charter in 2020.

SAY: If the Mayor has no special powers outside of the City Council and instead they both share equal power, this is a **weak mayor-council government.** Small cities in Oregon with less than 2,500 residents tend to have a weak mayor-council government, like the small City of Amity.

SAY: The last type of government is a **council-manager government** which has a City Council, City Manager, and Mayor. Here the City Council passes laws and appoints a City Manager to run the city bureaus and departments. The Mayor is a regular member of City Council with no special powers. Most cities with more than 2,500 residents in Oregon have a council-manager government including Gresham, Salem, and Bend.

SAY: Some examples of cities that are similar in population size to Portland are:
- Seattle, WA and Denver, CO which have a strong mayor-council government
- Las Vegas, NV and El Paso, TX which have a council-manager government

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Slide 18: Pros and Cons of different City Governments [1 minute]

SAY: Let's go through some of the pros and cons of the different types of government that Portland could consider switching to.

SAY: Starting on the left, the main pro of a **strong mayor-council government** is that the Mayor can provide strong political leadership to address local issues. But the con is there's a risk of too much power in the hands of one person who may not collaborate well with the City Council.

SAY: The main pro of a **weak mayor-council government** is that there are shared powers and no one has a bulk of power. But the con is that larger cities need more support running bureaus to be able to focus on passing policy.

SAY: The main pro of a **council-manager government** is that City Council can focus on policy and long-term issues, while the City Manager runs bureaus. But the con is there's a risk of the City Manager not responding to the people since they're not elected directly by voters.

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Slide 19: Community Discussion Part one [2 minutes]

SAY: That brings us to our next activity. As we think about what type of city government we should have, it's important to reflect on our past experiences to discuss the **values** that are important to us. We're going to break out into smaller groups for our conversations, so please join your breakout room!

Community Discussion Part One: City Government

[Attached separately]

Resume Presentation

[Welcome folks back into the main group]

[1 minute]

SAY: Hi everyone, we hope you had great conversations. Can I get an emoticon reaction of how your conversations went?

PAUSE 30 SECONDS FOR PARTICIPANTS TO CLICK ON EMOTICON

SAY: So exciting! I hope you got to share your insight about our city government. We will have another discussion about voting later. **But before we continue, we are going to take a 5-minute break. So, please come back at [insert time].**

PAUSE TO TAKE 5 MINUTE BREAK

AFTER BREAK SHARE SCREEN FOR PRESENTATION

Slide 20: Portland City Council Elections [2 minutes]

SAY: In this next half of our time, we're going to learn about how voting works in Portland. Our elections are shaped by the constituency of candidates, the voting system, and the timing of elections.

SAY: The word constituency refers to the people in an area a leader represents. In Portland, the Mayor and the four City Commissioners are elected **at-large** and represent the city **as a whole**.

SAY: The Mayor runs in a separate race from the City Commissioners. The open seats for City Commissioner are marked Position 1 through 4, and each candidate decides which position to run for. Then voters choose **only one candidate** for **each position**.

SAY: So once Portlanders vote, how is the winner decided? In our current voting system, the candidate that receives **the most votes wins**. A candidate might win the majority of votes (over 50%) or they might win even if they get less than 50% of the votes.

SAY: The system is called winner-take-all because it's possible for one group or party to win all of the seats on City Council, even if each of their candidates only won by a few votes. This may seem fair at first glance, but what about the communities who voted for the losing candidates? The thing about winner-take-all is that **the loser gets none** – so those communities, even if they are only slightly smaller in numbers, can end up with **no representation** at all.

SAY: Portland has **both** a primary election in May and a general election in November. Any candidate who wins more than 50% of the vote, wins instantly and gets elected in the May primary. If no candidate wins more than 50%, the two candidates with the most votes, move on to the general election in November.

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Slide 21: Winner-take-all system [2 minutes]

SAY: So how does a winner-take-all system create barriers for communities of color and minority groups?

SAY: In a winner-take-all system, one group of voters can control 100% of the seats, leaving everyone else without representation. In this graphic, you can see the purple group is only a portion of the population, but in a winner-take-all system, they can choose 100% of the seats to City Council.

SAY: Winner-take-all systems don't provide representation to any group of voters making up less than half of the population. The big number of votes needed to win the

election is a barrier to minority candidates. This leaves women, communities of color, young people, renters, and other minority groups underrepresented.

SAY: Winner-take-all systems also discourage voters from expressing their preferences for their favorite candidate. Because the candidate with the most votes wins instantly, minority voters have to be strategic about whom they are voting for.

SAY: Let's say you prefer a candidate who is not in the lead. You have to make a difficult decision: should you "throw away" your vote on your favorite candidate--who is not likely to win--or should you vote for one of the leading candidates to make your voice count?

SAY: Our system **should and can** promote diverse political representation and give Portlanders a **real choice** about whom they want to represent them.

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Slide 22: Proportional representation [2 minutes]

SAY: So if winner-take-all systems underrepresent minority groups, what is the alternative?

SAY: Proportional representation is a voting system that ensures minority groups a measure of representation to their share of the voters. Proportional representation is rooted in the belief that everyone should have the right to fair representation.

SAY: In this graphic, you can see that voters all get representation proportional to their group.

SAY: The type of proportional representation that exists in the U.S. is **proportional ranked choice voting.** Using proportional ranked choice voting, voters have one vote but are able to **rank candidates** in order of preference. Under proportional ranked-choice voting, more than one candidate wins. The top-ranked candidates win the election – so if there are 3 seats on a City Council, the top 3 candidates fill those seats.

SAY: In our current voting system, voters can only choose one candidate for each position to City Council. But in this example ballot here, you can see that **instead,** you would be able to mark your first choice, second choice, and so on. This gives voters more opportunities to voice their preferences.

SAY: So how is the winner decided using proportional ranked choice voting? Let's take a look at this example election. Here there are five candidates and 3 open seats to fill on the City Council.

SAY: A **formula** is used to determine how many votes a candidate needs to win. This formula greatly lowers the number of votes needed to win compared to a winner-take-all system.

SAY: Let's say candidates only need 20% of the vote to win. Candidates who meet this threshold have enough votes to get elected! Here, **Candidate A** meets the threshold and wins a seat to City Council.

SAY: **Candidate A** also has **extra votes** that put her total over the threshold. When a candidate has more than enough votes to win, the extra votes go to the candidates those voters marked as their second choice.

SAY: Let's see what happens when the extra votes are redistributed.

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SAY: The extra votes have now been re-distributed to those voters' second choices. Here Candidate C and Candidate D were the second choices, so they get the extra votes. **Candidate C** now meets the threshold and wins a seat.

SAY: So what happens to the other candidates? If no candidate meets the threshold to win, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes go to their voters' next-choice candidate.

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SAY: **Candidate E** has the fewest votes, so she is eliminated. Her extra votes go to her voters' next-choice candidate, which is Candidate B.

SAY: Candidate B now meets the threshold and gets elected to the last open seat! Using this process, voters get the most out of their ballot because their preferences are truly heard.

SAY: Selecting multiple winners all at once and having the top vote-getters win, means that more voters get a say in who is elected. And more diverse candidates can run for office who feel they have a lot of voters who share their values.

SAY: The Charter Commission is recommending changes about how we should vote and which system works best for our communities. It's clear that proportional representation, **instead** of winner-take-all systems, gives communities like ours more **power** to choose the candidates we truly want.

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<mark>**Slide 26: Quiz Time! [2 minutes]**</mark>

SAY: Let's do a quick quiz to see who remembers what proportional representation is.

START POLL FOR 1 MINUTE

Poll: What is proportional representation?

- A voting system that only benefits the majority
- A voting system that gives minority groups a measure of representation
- A voting system that has never been used in the U.S.

END POLL

SAY: The correct answer is a voting system that gives **minority groups a measure of representation**. Great job everyone!

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<mark>**Slide 27: Multi-winner districts [1 minute]**</mark>

SAY: So what is another way proportional ranked choice voting can be used?

SAY: Proportional ranked choice voting can also be used with multi-winner districts. A **district** is a group of voters in a geographic area.

SAY: Multi-winner districts mean that voters choose **more than one** candidate from the district to represent them. In our example here, you can see there are three districts and three candidates would win a seat in each district.

SAY: Using proportional ranked choice voting with multi-winner districts is another way that minority groups would have more political power to choose the candidate they truly want.

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Slide 28: Community Discussion Part Two [2 minutes]

SAY: That brings us to our next community discussion where we will talk about our experiences voting. The Charter Commission wants to hear about what would make voting easier and more exciting to participate in.

SAY: Let's take a moment to join the same breakout groups from earlier for more instructions.

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OPEN BREAKOUT ROOMS

Community Discussion Part Two: Voting

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[Attached separately]

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CLOSE BREAKOUT ROOMS AFTER 29 MINUTES

Resume Presentation: Closing Remarks

[Welcome folks back into the main group - 1 minute]

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Slide 29: Take Action in the Charter Review process [2 minutes]

SAY: We hope your conversations today felt energized, and that you're ready to take more action in Charter Review. The perspectives you discussed today will be shared

with the Charter Commission to help them understand how our current system is inequitable.

ASK: So what are some more ways you can get involved in the Charter Review process?

SAY: Talking to your friends, family, and community about the Charter Review is a great way to make sure that more Portlanders know that this important process is happening!

SAY: Submit a public comment to the Charter Commission. You can share your perspectives by submitting a written comment by email, or you can also sign up to give a verbal comment during one of the Charter Commission's meetings. Written comments can be emailed to **charterreview@portlandoregon.gov**.

SAY: Brainstorm ideas for Phase two issues! After this workshop, we will send out a post-workshop survey where you can let us know some of your ideas for Phase two issues, but you can also email the Charter Commission directly.

SAY: In January, we will be hosting a follow up to this workshop where we will brainstorm the policies and changes that work for our communities. So stay tuned for part two!

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Slide 30: Thank you for participating! [2 minutes]

SAY: Thank you all so much again for an exciting workshop. We hope you learned something new today and look forward to connecting with you again. To receive your stipend for participating, please be sure to complete your post-workshop survey. **Once we receive your survey, we will process your stipend/gift card.**

Sources

- Sightline Articles

  - "When elections are decided in the May primary, many Portlanders don't have a voice in city hall"

- ○ "In some cities, most voters put someone they want on City Council—but not Portland"

  - ○ "Portland City government doesn't represent Portland very well"

  - ○ "Voters in Southwest Portland neighborhoods have more influence on City Council elections than those East of 82nd Avenue"

- ● MGGG Redistricting Lab

  - ○ "Analysis of Election Systems for the Portland, OR City Council"

  - ○ "Ranked Choice Voting and Minority Representation"

- ● City Club Research

  - ○ "Rethinking 100 Years of the Commission System"

  - ○ "New Government for Today's Portland: Rethinking How We Vote"

- ● Additional Sources

  - ○ "The Future is Proportional"

  - ○ "More Equitable Democracy: Electoral Methods and Form of Government in Portland"

  - ○ Oregon Blue Book Website: About City Government

  - ○ Texas State Historical Association: Commission Government

  - ○ Fair Vote, Ranked Choice Voting Website

  - ○ Politics in the Animal Kingdom Video Series

  - ○ Represent Women Website: Multi-Winner Districts

  - ○ National League of Cities Website

- ○ Ballotpedia Website