PUBLIC COMMENT REPORT

Date range: June 28 – July 20, 2021

From June 28 to July 20 at 8:00 a.m**.**, **56 public comments** were submitted through the online public comment form, email, and at the 6/28 Information Session meeting. 10 out of the 56 comments were made on behalf of a community-based organization. Of the 56 public comments received, the following topics were mentioned:

Public comments:
Verbal public comment at 9:30:00
Verbal public comment at 12:40:00
Verbal public comment at 18:10:00
Verbal public comment at 21:27:00
Verbal public comment at 21:27:00
Verbal public comment at 39:10:00
Verbal public comment at 6:43:00
Verbal public comment at 15:54:00
Verbal public comment at 24:10:00
Verbal public comment at 27:44:00
Verbal public comment at 33:20:00
Verbal public comment at 36:30:00
Verbal public comment at 42:15:10
I am 100% for moving away from the City's commission form of government. It doesn't work. Portland purports to be progressive, but honestly, we haven't done anything new or interesting in terms of government for a long time. We coast on the great framework (small block sizes and a geography of fabulous neighborhood commercial districts) granted us through the turn-of-the-century growth of the city, and the interesting planning work completed in the 70s (urban growth boundaries, light rail, etc). It's time for change so we can actually react to the climate crisis that will be impacting all cities the world over, which means aggressively removing the automobile from cities. Portland's government is practically doing the opposite.
It's time for Portland to abandon the commissioner system of government. A city the size of Portland needs a city manager and more than five people representing its citizens. The current system is unfair and ineffective.
Pleade establish a strong government that wd desperately need. We have weak, inexperienced commissioners & mayor. Go to nextdoor.com & see all the crime & lack of protection for honest , law abiding citizens. Find & put these dishonest persons in jail. We can't even leave a chair on our porches or park a car on streets without theft. We need laws & officials with strength to deter these criminals.

I moved to Portland about 18 months ago. I've always been very active in whatever community I live in, so I started exploring ways that I could be involved. The more I learned about how Portland is run, the more appalled I became. What I see as a newcomer is an exceedingly fractured city with policymakers intent on protecting their little fiefdoms with no apparent collaboration or strategic planning or shared vision to guide decision making and budget planning. The wheel gets recreated every couple of years, there's no follow-through on projects. And even major initiatives that have been around for decades (i.e, homelessness; i.e., outdated computer systems) just get kicked down the road without getting resolved because there's no accountability to constituents. There appear to be so many different agencies/departments/whatevers that all tackle a little tiny piece of something, but nothing ever gets resolved. Oh everyone's busy, everyone's working on stuff ... nothing gets resolved. I haven't seen any numbers, but I would bet it's a much more expensive type of government too because every time new commissioners come on and take over agencies that they know nothing about, projects get thrown away and new projects get started ... and again, nothing gets done and money gets spent unwisely.

Charter appears to be mainly legalese. What is missing is what the people of Portland want the City government to do or be. Where is the spirit of Portland? Need more testimony from the citizens of Portland. What is wrong and what should change. I am in favor of a strong mayor with a city manger. Print what you hear from the citizens. Do the charter commission have any findings? Let us know what the findings are.

I don't understand how a "progressive city" still has a Commissioner government. We need a city manager with more expertise in administration and also an overall view of all the departments and how they work together. City Departments should not become the personal fiefdoms of politicians. I have encountered ignorant statements coming out of Commissioner's mouths about technical and factual issues relating to their department. It is embarrassing. Sometimes they just don't know what they are talking about. And when they get shuffled around every few years, who can expect them to? Also we have a Council elected at large, so many of them live on the West Side of the river, in fact most of them have in the past. This is not representative government. We need to ensure that all parts of the City are equally represented. Get rid of the at-large nature of these politicians.

Portlanders know that governments make better decisions when as many people as possible participate in the process, and when more people have access to our elected leaders. Our City Council has for far too long represented too few people and excluded too many. It does not reflect our community across race, income or geography. And it hasn’t delivered the equitable outcomes that Portlanders want for our future together here at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers.

Problem: government that represents the few
City Club of Portland members have spent the past three years closely examining Portland’s current form of government, and our two reports deliver one clear conclusion: our form of government is outdated, inequitable and in need of significant reform.

Under Portland’s at-large, commission form of government, the City Council has historically provided less access and unequal delivery of services to people across the city, including women, people of color, ethnic minorities, young people and renters.

Without significant reform to our form of government-- including more commissioners, geographic representation and a fairer form of voting--our city government will continue failing to reflect the

communities in our city, excluding the priorities of far too many.

Solution: building a new form of government, from the people and for our future
City Club's first report on Portland's form of government, issued in 2018, sparked a community-wide conversation about a new government for today's Portland. The City Club's second report, released in 2020, expands the conversation from how to structure our government to how we participate fully in our elections. Together, the two reports outline a process and clear direction for changing Portland's form of government, with leadership from the people focused on a more hopeful and equitable future.

The reports recommend:

1. That the City of Portland Charter Commission should support Black, Indigenous and other people of color to lead the work of evaluating options for changing Portland's form of government, including how voters participate, how community members run for office, and how the City manages the delivery of services equitably through bureaus. This work should focus on equitable outcomes in representation, participation, and delivery of services in communities.
2. Hiring a non-political appointee as city manager to lead the equitable and professional administration of bureaus and delivery of services.
3. Increasing the size of City Council to put Portland more in line with cities of similar size.
Electing City Council members in district-based elections, preferably with multiple members in each district.
4. Adopting a voting method that eliminates the need for a primary. City commissioners that represent geographic districts across the city, rather than "at-large" commissioners who represent the entire city.
5. The most important recommendation from both reports is this: Portland's city government in need of significant reform that will bring more participation and more representation to Portlanders who have been left out of decision-making for far too long.

Our two report can be found on our website: https://www.pdxcityclub.org/new-government/

I want to see a change in the way Portland city government is structured. What are the choices, which cities have "successful" forms of governance, and how can citizens learn and truly understand about options? I do think an educational campaign has to be an early step.

Please, please, PLEASE do something to improve PDX efficacy. We desperately, need leadership with the power to make sweeping changes to pull us out of the gutter. Those of us lucky enough to have spent our lifetime here are deeply disillusioned, saddened, and disappointed by the current status quo. The root cause? Ask "why is PDX in such a mess" FIVE times and drill down. Seems clear and simply a lack courageous, effective management.

Please update the City Charter to hire a City Manager. The City Manager can oversee the financials while the Commissioners can focus on policy development that addresses citizens issues and improves the quality of life for Portland residents.

I hope the Charter Commission will take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage the city's high school population in learning about our city's government and participating in making the choices to change it.

Why not urge the Portland Public School to have a civics curriculum of one or two weeks next fall focused on the choices you are having to make: abandonment of the current system, why and what

should replace it?, what is fair representation?, how to draw boundaries? what are basic civic responsibilities? etc. Engaging high school students will amplify the necessary conversation about Portland's future by taking these questions home to parents and neighbors and leaving us with a more extended, inclusive and informed citizenry.The local press should also be deeply engaged in reporting these efforts and highlighting differing points of view in this critical civic debate.
There is no perfect form of government. Every one of the models has its own weaknesses and limitations. Though some may say that the Commission form needs to go, every one of the alternatives comes with their own problems. Consequently, it's essential for any proposal for a new form of government, or even for retaining the one we have, to clearly explain what civic, institutional, and other purposes are being served, specifically, by that proposed form. To simply say that a new form will not have the weaknesses of the Commission form is not nearly enough. Make the choice intentional, and be transparent about why it's better and, just as important, what problems the proposal will bring with it. If the Charter Commission brings forward a proposal for a new form of government and can't or won't articulate the pro's and con's of that proposal, then it's simply not a serious proposal. I have, in the past, been a strong supporter of the Commission form of government for three main reasons. First, as a staff member at Southeast Uplift, I found that is was easy and transparent to get our issues addressed in City Hall. We weren't trapped by an office of "community relations" reporting to a City Manager and created to keep citizens away from service providers. Instead, we could go directly to the commissioner-in-charge and because that commissioner needed our support both for their own election and for their projects, they couldn't just wear us out. Second, as an assistant to City Commissioner Mike Lindberg I learned that the Commission form was essentially a conservative form of government, but that things could move quickly with the support of two other offices. We were able to accomplish a lot because the politics were relatively simple and transparent. Finally, as the Land Use Supervisor for Metro, where I interacted closely with all of the local governments in the region, I learned that it was easier to cope with weak elected officials than with weak staff members around whom the structure of government revolved. A mediocre city manager was a drag on the jurisdiction and on the entire region. Exemplary public managers were hard to find. In addition, much of myb work at Metro and at PSU later had to do with understanding what we'd accomplished here with regional growth management and planning, and how it compared to other cities and metropolitan areas. Frankly, you'd be hard pressed to find a single city that accomplished as much in the 20th century, or transformed itself as much, as Portland, despite, or maybe because of, the Commission form. Consequently, I helped to defeat previous proposals to replace the Commission form. Today, I realize that circumstances have changed, and that it's healthy for a city like ours to consciously review its assumptions about how it governs itself on a somewhat regular basis. After 100 years, maybe it's time for a change. However, if you are going to propose a change, please propose it with regard to the things that the City is or should be trying to achieve, a means to important and clear ends, rather than as simply a knee-jerk reaction to the Commission form which, I assert, has served us relatively well to this point. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.
I would urge the commission to strongly consider APPROVAL or STAR voting over RCV (ranked choice) when investigating and recommending potential improvements to the voting system. While RCV is better than our current system, it is not the most representative voting method available to us and if we’re going to try something new we should choose to try one of the objectively better methods.
When is the next Charter Review meeting and how can I tune in ?

Portland is growing so large, and so fast, that it's really important that we change our form of government. City managers aren't perfect, but it sure is a better way to run an organization! Almost every other large city in the country has adopted the city-manager structure. Do it!
Hello - My name is xxxx and I am a lifelong Portlander. I think the commissioner form of government used in the city of Portland is an absolute disaster. The more I have learned about it through my 42 years of living here the more I have realized how broken and ineffective this form of city government is, especially today. I support: 1. More diverse geographical representation from all members of the City Council. 2. Require that City Council candidates have competence and/or relevant experience managing the city bureaus they represent. 3. The appointment of a City Manger. A person who specializes in running cities with Council approval. 4. Basically all the other city government things that major cities do that work, but we don't do for some reason. Thank you to the Commission and everything you do for this great city.
For the past eight years, I have served as a volunteer member of the Livability and Safety Committee of the Pearl District Neighborhood Association (PDNA), and two years as a member of PDNA's governing board. Our committee's focus has been and continues to be on litter and trash collection, graffiti removal, noise control, air quality, public safety, homeless encampments, and related issues. This involvement has provided an insider's view into how effectively the various City of Portland bureaus respond to our committee's activities and how well the bureaus interact with one another to support our committee initiatives. My own focus has been on launching and managing the Pearl District Cigarette Butt Disposal and Recycling Program, the only one of its kind in Portland to my knowledge. Having lived in London, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and San Diego before moving to Portland in 2009, I can say without exaggeration that the City of Portland government is the most unresponsive, bureaucratic, incompetent, ineffective, and "silo-driven" municipal government I have witnessed in my entire life. For example, getting City approval to install cigarette butt receptacles on Pearl District sidewalks required that I work with no fewer than six bureaus (Parks and Rec, PBOT, BDS, Fire and Rescue, ONI/OCCI, Planning and Sustainability, n one of which was interested or willing to coordinate my efforts with other bureaus, despite the profound value of our program to the quality of the environment in our region. Our committee's other initiatives revealed similar unresponsiveness or "that's not our bureau's responsibility" attitudes by City staff. The fundamental problem is the lack of coordination of the various bureaus by a chief administrative officer as you find in city governments in San Diego and San Francisco, for example. The other major issue is the lack of representation of community concerns because our Commissioners are elected on a citywide basis. And to make matters worse, the combination of legislative and administrative responsibilities in the job description of Commissioners is totally ludicrous for a major city such as Portland. I strongly support proposals to enlarge the City Council to approximately 12 members, each elected by district, with their role limited to legislating; the Mayor should be elected on a citywide basis, and the Mayor should be allowed to appoint, with Council approval, a well paid CAO to run the city government. Portland cannot afford to continue any longer under the current absurd structure.
I believe that our current form of city government is not working. The commissioners appear to not fully understand the areas they oversee. The mayor has no power to get anything done. Being a Portland native I can honestly say that I believe our once beautiful city has never looked worse. The Mayor should have the power to get things done by committee. Get rid of the Commissioners. Our current system is broken and backward. It is time for a change.
I believe that we need to change our current structure of government. I believe the Mayor should function as a strong executive and the council form of government should be retired

Hello there, I appreciate that small changes are more likely but maybe proposing something big like this will help create more perspective on what's proposed? "Since July 2016, some of the city's most vexing problems have been dealt with calmly – even enjoyably — by a changing, randomly-selected 'citizens assembly' made up of approximately 60 ordinary city dwellers, who are brought together and given the authority to take action." https://www.resilience.org/stories/2017-11-22/solutions-how-the-poles-are-making-democracy-work-again-in-gdansk/

And another precedent, a citizens' council (complementary to the city council), "Belgium is doing some of the most innovative work in a small section of Belgium, the German-speaking Community, or East Belgium, where they've created a permanent citizens' assembly, which includes a citizens' council, drawn randomly from the citizens' assembly, which sets the agenda." https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/05/jane-mansbridge-offers-a-solution-to-mending-a-riven-democracy/

The citizens' council is ideal for helping with select issues where movement through traditional channels have become deadlocked and those that involve complex trade-offs. "Parliament will be bound to organizing two hearings with the assembly's participants and then to respond to their recommendations." https://www.politico.eu/article/belgium-democratic-experiment-citizens-assembly/

And, notably, with the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review, the state is already recognized internationally as one of the first to institutionalize these processes. As you probably already know, Portland-based nonprofit was founded to support these processes: https://healthydemocracy.org/

And with Yale political scientist Hélène Landemore's new book and wide media coverage, the interview with Ezra Klein here is quite good (https://www.helenelandemore.com/), any work in Portland toward a more open democracy would help all efforts everywhere toward a more just society.

Thank you for considering this! Any ideas, thoughts, considerations as to how the Charter Commission could inspire a public conversation about the potential for a citizens' council?

Please add me to your news and announcements email list so I can follow your progress. Thank you.

Please change Portland's City Commissioner form of government to a typical Council-Manager form of government. Also, I agree with the establishment of Safe Rest Villages. I hope that an adequate number of Safe Rest Villages will ultimately allow Portland to safely and legally prohibit camping on city streets.

I concur most hardily with Candice Avalos's article in the Sunday, 6/27/21. The only other person I've heard mention the council-manager form of government is Mingus Mapps. Isn't it time we move out of the middle ages and have a more accountable form of city government???

Good day! I support a revision to the city charter that (1) creates a "strong mayor" system, and (2) eliminates the "commission" form of government. Giving elected officials day-to-day, operational control of city bureaus has not served the city well (I could cite myriad examples, but Chloe Eudaly's mismanagement of the Office of Civic Life is a recent egregious one). We need professionals, who spend their lives learning about policing, emergency mgt, civic engagement, parks, etc to run those programs. The politicians we elect should craft overall policy, not run programs. Also I would like for

the city to adopt zones for each representative to be elected from, not have all-city elections that skew participation toward certain neighborhoods. Let's make Portland normal again! Thanks.
Recently read in the Oregonian that you are looking for input on revisions to the City Charter. Like many have recognized the current form of the City Of Portland Government does not work. We have too many do good politicians that don't know how to manage let alone anything about the departments they are responsible for. Also Portland is probably the last of the Cities this size that does not have a City Manager. Our current lack of support for the police, lack of true plans for the homeless situation, lack of total planning concerning roads, bridges and other infrastructure is a recipe for cost overuns and higher taxation. It is time to bring a professional City Manager in to run this City and let the politicians give direction based upon what the residents desire (not necessarily the squeaky wheel ones which are the most vocal) and let an actual knowledgeable manager make this City more efficient. The City slogan "a City that works" is currently a joke.
Thank you for your work on the Charter Review Commission. I hope that you are looking at other comparable cities and how their city governments work to gain insights into how our city should work. I think the current Portland city government system is broken and is not adequately addressing the needs of the city. I think the following changes need to be made to the city charter: 1. Expand the number of city council members. I think 9 would be a good number. But you could create a system such as adding a new council member for every 100,000 living in the city of Portland. 2. Change the form of government so that there is a city manager and the city council sets policy that skilled managers implement. The mayor should have some additional powers, but not how it is "managed" today. City council members should not have administrative duties over specific bureaus (silos). Today's form of government does not allow coordination across the city as it should. 3. Elect the mayor on a city-wide basis. Elect the city council members by districts. These districts should have approximately the same number of city residents and should geopgraphically make sense to the average person navigating through the city. Districts should be drawn by a non-partisan committee respresentative of the diversity of the residents of the city. District lines should be redrawn every 10 years, based on census data. 4. Retain the current method of electing the mayor and city council by majority vote. The top two voter getters in the primary would move on to the general election, unless a primary candidate gets 50% plus 1 of the vote. Ranked choice or star voting is too complicated for most people to understand and seems to lead to chaos (as seen in NY City). The mayor and city council should remain non-partisan. 5. The current relationship of the polcie and city council is all wrong. There is no accountability for the police. The police union and outside arbitrators currently undermine all attempts at control and accoutnability. The city council should be controlling the police, setting policy, and enforcing accountability. The city should have a hands-on approach that makes the police do the work of the city. Right now the police are their own paramilitary organization that does what they want to do without reguard to the wishes of the residents and elected officials. There are dedicated police men and women who are honestly trying to serve and protect, but they are hampered by the current structure of policing. We need to foster an attitude of all of us working together to better our city, not the current "them vs us" attitude that is prevelent in both the police department and the city at large. We need to go back to a community-based polcing model.
As the Charter Commission goes about its important work, I hope you might consider two interrelated points: 1. The Commission form of government was abandoned in most U.S. cities long ago because it fosters

political interference and incompetence in the actual administration of government. Elected politicians may be qualified to make policy through legislation; most of these politicians, though, are entirely unqualified to administer complex, multi-billion dollar enterprises.

2. Any concerns or objections to a Council-Manager form of government can be overcome by requiring that the future Portland City Manager be a member of the International City-County Managers Association (ICMA); that the manager be credentialed through ICMA's certification program; and that this future manager have a track record of success in the Council-Manager form of government in a city comparable to Portland.

A professional city manager working under the broad, general direction of a city council focused exclusively on policy will address (if not solve) many of the persistent problems that plague this city.

I fully support a complete change in the form of our city government. It is time to discard the system we have. Please keep me informed and put me on all lists involved with affecting a change.

On street renaming:

I hope that the Charter Review Committee can clarify which streets named for persons could potentially be renamed, and which names should endure. If a street has a person's name and the street has had that name for a long time, it's old, but does it have historical significance that would preclude its renaming? Probably close to 100% of those streets were named for white people in a segregated time in Oregon history. They don't all have historical significance

In the Cesar Chavez street-renaming debacle a decade ago, the choice of the three streets selected (Interstate, 4th Ave. and 39th Ave.) was driven in part by the City Charter's prohibition on renaming a street where the name has "historic" value.

The result of the highly-flawed process was to rename 39th, a street that then and now has no Mexican/Chicano/Hispanic/Latinx businesses or other presence anywhere along its length, which explains the fact that there has been no Cesar Chavez event of any kind on the street in the history of the street. If you want to enjoy some Mexican food on Cesar Chavez Blvd in Portland, you have to bring it with you.

The fact was that the Chavez community wasn't on any of these three streets. Not a single member of the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce had an address on 39th Avenue, and none stood up in support.

No one considered the obvious choice of N-NE Killingsworth. It was named for a person and it was old, but the person for whom it was named lacked historical significance.

Despite its dozens of Mexican/Chicano/Hispanic/Latin businesses that could have received a direct benefit from renaming Killingsworth for Chavez, the street was not considered. It would link the neighborhoods near its west end, anchored by PCC Cascade, with those at its east end, where Hacienda CDC's operations and housing complexes are the anchor. It would create a great street for parades and celebrations populated by a motivated community, and this is needed especially now – in Covid times - as the City works to create jobs and jump start economic recovery. Renaming Killingsworth for Cesar Chavez wasn't considered and the default was a numbered street and a missed opportunity.

Would the City Charter Review Committee consider it now?
Let our city grow up. The commissioner form of government no longer works for Portland.
If you finally make a recommendation that the form of government needs to be changed to city manager council, please consider hiring an advertising /public affairs firm to Help sell this to the public. You will need a complete organization getting this by tHe voter just like trying to pass a bond issue or get a candidate running for office. No point in going thru this exercise if you are not seriously trying to Change things.
Portland should move to a larger council, with members elected geographically, with either a strong mayor and/or a city manager. We've spent too many years proving the current system is a failure.
Unfortunately I can not make the July 22 meeting. But I would urge the Charter Commission to really change the Council form of Government that Portland currently has. I really believe that ALL districts within Portland need to have representation on City Council as each district has differing needs and concerns. And I really believe we need to have a City Manager who can oversee the bureaus in a manner that is fair and managed professionally. The current form of government here in Portland is not adequate for our city that continues to grow and evolve. Thank you for your time and energy and most of all, your dedication, in helping Portland move forward and grow!
See letter attached--Proportional Representation Oregon
We need to move forward as a city. Ending our at large council member system is long over due. It was set up as a racist restrictive way to silence the voices of minorities, and continues to do so here. It also works against neighborhood input and good city management. So often city residents such as myself (I live in SE Portland) shake our heads and wonder why things are so poorly managed. We see the cars parked blocking fire hydrants, cross walks, and driveways and when we call the police we are told that parking enforcement ends at 5 pm. These are just the sort of things that would never happen in a properly managed city. A city manager form of government, much like the Portland City Club has suggested, makes the most sense for a city like Portland. We cannot be the last city to keep this racist anti-democratic, anti-neighborhood system of government that most of the USA has abandoned - even in Gainesville where they created it to silence the voices of African Americans and the poor.
Hi Friends at the Charter Commission, thank you for serving our City. I've been a Portland resident since 1989. This is no longer the "City the Works". We need consistent, professional management of the City staff and Bureaus. Please consider any form of governance that de-politicizes the functioning of City service delivery to Portland citizens. Thank you.
Dear members of the charter commission: the current system does not work. I am a longtime Portland Metro resident and Oregon native. We are considering moving our family to a suburb because Portland is starting to truly feel unsafe and out of line with our personal value system. The things we have always loved about Portland seem to have gotten a little lost in the shuffle as the community navigates a global pandemic, increased and unmitigated violence and crime, and a homelessness crisis. These are difficult and multifaceted challenges. The current structure adds another roadblock to enabling elected and career officials to do anything to meaningfully address these challenges. I support a new structure consistent with other major city structures that have proven their effectiveness over time (opposed to reinventing the wheel with an untested structure, please don’t do that). At the end of the day, those of us in the “silent majority” just want to live in a safe, friendly city where all citizens (of all colors and ethnicities) can take our children to the park or go out to dinner without fear of exposure to bullets, needles, mentally ill people in crisis, mountains of trash or people actually defecating in public. I believe a new city governance structure can help us get on a productive path forward to make Portland the beautiful city it once was.

When will the workgroups be formed and approved? Once formed, will workgroup information and meeting times and topics of discussion be posted in advance on the website?

I am a City of Portland employee but am writing this evening as a private citizen. My comments do not represent any position of my employer.

I am writing to urge the charter commission to change Portland's form a government to council-manager with districted council members.

When one bureau tears up a road for a construction project, only to have another bureau tear up the same place a year or two later for a different project, we are failing as a city.

When bureaus' misaligned goals and priorities cause unnecessary cost overruns, delays and power struggles, we are failing as a city.

When the people of Portland have a nagging feeling that things in their government just aren't working right, they're not wrong. We are failing as a city.

I actually signed up for verbal public testimony for the July 22nd meeting, but it's unclear what time of the day this meeting is; So, unless this meeting is before about 11AM, I will not be able to attend. And the fact that I don't know what time this meeting actually occurs happens to be a good transition for my public comment:

Basically, my concern is similar to many of the concerns of the people in this commission, based on the personal profiles on the charter review commissioners page; That is, I am concerned about accessibility and representation. And pardon my ignorance, since I don't know if these concerns belong here; But being that the charter is a document that guides the city's governance I think this is an appropriate place for my comments. Anyways, here are some bulleted things that I've noticed on my end, as someone living in this city, and then I'd like to give a thought and a recommendation.

- From my perspective, there is not a clear idea of what the city is accomplishing or plans to accomplish in the future
  - The news section, hidden within a collapsible menu on the main website, is okay if you can find it, but it is not a good way to stay current
- Most opportunities for public comment, that I have encountered, are not accessible for working class people for a variety of reasons
  - Often meetings are held in the middle of a work day
  - Generally, you have to attend an entire meeting in order to not miss your chance for comment, this is often a commitment of an hour or more
  - People with more money have more time and this creates a positive feedback loop
- It is not clear how decisions made in the name of the people are justified, other than the weak notion that choosing one out of two or three people to hold a position of power somehow means they'll represent our interests (or at least the interests of those who voted for them)

In my opinion, I feel that our representative democracy feels more like a technocracy; On the greater scale a plutocracy. I think this is a major issue on two fronts: One, that while a technocrat may be correct in their line of thinking, if their job is to represent a population of people, all their decisions should be reflective of that, rather than assuming what is "good" for the public. And two, the lack of clearly disseminated information and ownership in the political process contributes to distrustful and/or apathetic attitudes in the population.

My main point is that I think there should be a much greater focus on facilitating participation of all

the people in Portland. And I do recognize that some people are trying hard to represent those who lack representation, but I think a more direct representation would be much better. My recommendation for how to increase participation in the political process is to be more inclusive and facilitating. In my personal research for how to create a better democracy, a concept that I found fascinating was that in Ancient Athens government officials were selected by lot. This concept of replacing elections entirely would be considered radical today, but what is being implemented in a number of places around the globe are "citizen's assemblies". In a citizen's assembly, a randomly selected, stratified sample population, representative of the larger population, is gathered to learn about the issue(s) at hand, deliberate in small and plenary groups, and decide on a way forward. There are many resources available for how to run a citizen's assembly; The best resource I've found is online at https://www.sortitionfoundation.org/ which even has an open-source software to accurately select a group of people that accurately reflects the larger population. I think it's worth considering. Thanks for reading.
It's time to change our form of governance. The commission system is extremely inefficient given that the commissioners are expected to provide management services well beyond their abilities. Also the commission system is starkly unrepresentative of the population it serves given the total lack of a requirement that a commissioner live in an area of the city that they represent.
We need more oversight on development in the City. I have watched over the past several years Portland leadership grow a city that can no longer support its citizens, who are leaving in droves. The people of Portland are part of the allure of Portland, not big box businesses and hotels. The citizens should have more say in what the future looks like for Portland. Including trying to draw smaller and local businesses back to downtown with an eye at major urban renewal. Stop stop stop coming after property owners taxes. Make the developers pay for the builds that we approve and be a hell of a lot more discriminating. The PDC should have never made exceptions for their own rules about how many houses/condos to a lot and made sure that the housing met the same strict criteria as the people trying to make a buck being a second home on their lot. The taxes get jacked up for that and now the City is asking that we house a houseless person in the space. Like we can afford that! The houseless need access to water, toilets or we are going to have a return of middle ages diseases like other urban cities are experiencing. We became discovered and exploited by the Portlandia craze. Its beyond time to reclaim the heart and soul of this city and its the citizens that make Portland vibrant for all socioeconomic groups, not just the people moving here pricing out people who have lived here and loved our City all their lives. Portland's vision wasn't just on the money in the not too distant past. I don't think its too late to get back what everyone is yearning to see again.
Thank you for serving on the city’s charter review board. I am writing in support of the concept of a total rewrite of the city’s political structure. A professional city manager combined with geographic representation of commissioners and non-political department heads would seem to be “no-brainers” and align Portland with other cities of our size. Please know many Portlanders are fed up with our unresponsive city government and are eager for drastic change. Don’t hesitate to help us deliver that change
See letter attached- Willamette Indivisible

Proportional Representation Oregon
P R O

July 9, 2021

Dear Charter Commission Members:

Thank you for your thoughtful and inclusive approach to consulting with the community and making recommendations for updating the Portland City Charter. We are an organization made up of representatives from local democracy-focused organizations. As such, we have a keen interest in the study areas you have identified. We know you are receiving lots of feedback on the first key area, form of government, so we would like to make some specific recommendations around the second area, city council elections.

In short: We recommend multi-winner districts with a proportional voting method.

The benefits of this system would be myriad:

Better Representation

Under the current system, Portland voters who are in the minority — whether by race, ethnicity, location, homeownership status, ideology, or anything else — are excluded or underrepresented. Single-winner districts would remedy only the geographical underrepresentation, but could still leave key groups of Portlanders without a voice. Multi-winner districts with proportional voting would give voters across the city better opportunity to be well-represented on the council. This is well-proven in cities such as Cambridge, which uses a multi-winner race and proportional ranked choice voting to achieve more accurate representation by race and gender, and countries such as New Zealand, which moved from single-winner districts to a proportional system and immediately increased representation for native Maori people and women.

Voter Power

Voters would have more choices on the ballot and more power to elect at least one contender they liked. The current system allows candidates to choose which at-large seat they run for, potentially resulting in voters seeing two candidates they like running in a zero-sum race against each other. The voter has to pick one, and it's possible neither will win. Indeed, up to half of voters might see no one they voted for in City Hall. On the flipside, a slim majority of voters can capture 100 percent of the councilors. In a multi-winner district, using a system like Proportional Ranked Choice Voting, the voter could rank more than one candidate, and the vast majority of voters would elect at least one candidate they approved of, and all groups of voters would have the power to elect a proportional number of councilors (but nor more).

No Gerrymandering

Single-winner districts are vulnerable to gerrymandering. Indeed, they might even require gerrymandering, if the line-drawers are trying to create at least one "minority-majority" district. Multi-winner districts empower voters, not line-drawers. When electing the top 3, or 4, or 6 candidates, you can't mathematically predict the winners by drawing a single neighborhood into or out of the district. And you don't need a minority-majority district to ensure minority representation: if one-third of voters in a district prefer the same candidates, they will be able to elect that candidate to 1 of the 3 seats in a 3-winner district. Same for a 6-winner district: if one-sixth of voters share a favorite candidate, they will elect 1 of the 6 councilors, no matter how the lines are drawn.

Policymaking, not Pork Barrelling

Single-winner districts can lead to pork barrelling, as each councilor sees their job to bring the most benefit to their corner of the city. Multi-winner districts and proportional representation mitigate that incentive structure, because no councilor is the sole representative of a neighborhood. If there is just one city-wide district, all councilors understand they are there on behalf of voters from across the city.

Candidate Pipeline

The current system gives great staying power to incumbents and pits them against new candidates. Multi-winner districts and proportional voting would upend this dynamic, allowing more experienced candidates to mentor like-minded newer candidates and campaign alongside them, knowing that both could win seats. This would open up the pipeline for emerging candidates to run and win.

Campaign Costs

The non-zero-sum dynamic described above would also create the possibility for similar candidates to share campaign costs as they court similar voters. Vancouver, BC uses multi-winner elections, and candidates run in slates. With this system, the candidates on the slate are able to spend less time fundraising, because they are sharing office space, phone-banking, and door-knocking resources. Although multi-winner districts will cover more geographical territory than single-winner districts, candidates won't have to win as many total votes as under the current system. To win an at-large seat in Portland, candidates need around 125,000 votes on average. In an 8-member council with multi-winner districts they'd only need to win around 25,000.

To answer your specific questions, we recommend:

- **Form of voting**: a form that will lead to proportional representation. We are open to any proportional method but specifically, we recommend Proportional Ranked Choice Voting. That is, each voter can rank as many or as few candidates as they want, and the votes are counted in rounds until enough candidates cross the winning vote threshold to fill the available seats.

- **Number**: between 6 and 12 city councilors (in addition to the mayor), though we would prefer on the higher end. This would bring Portland more in-line with other major cities such as Seattle (9), San Francisco (11), Vancouver, BC (10), and Los Angeles (15).

- **Constituency:** elect each councilor city-wide or from one of a few multi-winner districts — we recommend no more than three districts, and no fewer than three councilors per district. A bigger council would make it easier to use districts; for example, 12 councilors could be elected from 3 districts each electing 4 councilors or 9 councilors could be elected from 1 5-councilor district and one 4-councilor district. A smaller council would lead towards a single city-wide district. For example, 6 councilors could be elected in a single race.

- **Sequence**: to maximize voter participation, elect as many councilors as possible on the presidential-year general election ballot. Only hold primaries as necessary to narrow the field; skip the primary if the field is already a manageable size. Primaries are low-turnout races with older, whiter, wealthier voters than the larger voting population. When primaries determine the winner, they take power away from the larger group of voters in the general. Primaries also make the campaign season longer and more expensive.

Therefore, we recommend minimizing the importance of the primary by holding it only if needed to narrow the field. Similarly, voter participation in mid-term years is consistently lower than in presidential years.

- If you recommend a larger number of councilors (such as 12), we recommend that 8 be elected from two 4-winner districts in a presidential year, the remaining 4 from a 4-winner district in the mid-term year, and the primary be used to narrow the field to 10 candidates in each district. If 10 or fewer candidates in a district file, there is no primary.
- If you recommend a small number of councilors (such as 6), we recommend they all be elected city-wide in a presidential year, and the primary be used to narrow the field to 18 candidates. If 18 or fewer candidates file, there is no primary.

Sincerely,
Proportional Representation Oregon Steering Committee:
Kristin Eberhard
Barbara Klein
Norman Turrill
Dan Meek
Rob Harris
Sal Peralta
John Horvick

Updated **Testimony of Willamette Indivisible to Charter Review Commission for Information Session on July 22, 2021**

I am Jan Carpenter, addressing you on behalf of Willamette Indivisible, a small group of political activists working at the federal, state, and local levels to maintain and improve democratic practices.

At earlier meetings, Willamette Indivisible urged you to consider amendment of the city charter to provide for **district representation** on the city council, **redefinition of the roles** of the mayor and city council members, and appointment of a **city manager** to oversee administration of the city bureaus. By giving priority to those three types of charter amendments, you would give voters opportunities to strengthen representation of the full span of the city, improve the effectiveness of the work of the mayor and city council, and enhance the quality and efficiency of services provided by the various city bureaus.

We were pleased to learn earlier this summer that you decided to form two subcommittees---on Form of Government and City Council Elections---closely aligned with the priorities we support. The Commission's framework of questions for those subcommittees seems especially well-attuned to this essential work.

We are puzzled, however, by the delay in appointment of commissioners to those two subcommittees and in initiation of the detailed work on their assignments. *We understand you have been asked to consider many subjects for possible charter amendment. But we continue to believe the Form of Government and City Council Election subject matter should be given priority. That is because they will provide the structure necessary to successful development of other charter amendments.*

Yet the agenda for your July 22 meeting suggests you may, "if ready," take steps in that direction by voting to start "some" subcommittees now. We encourage you to delay no longer in making appointments to the Form of Government and City Council Election subcommittees and in getting them started on the

detailed work so central to strengthening the foundation of our city government.

We ask you to act now because both of those subcommittees will design the city-governance structure on which other charter amendments will depend for their successful implementation. To do so, those subcommittees will undertake tasks sure to be particularly time-consuming, complex, controversial, and otherwise demanding. Each group will need to collect and assess information, engage with interested members of the public, compare and weigh alternative approaches, and wrestle with wide-ranging points of view. They will be expected to do so, according to your time line, by the end of this year to be ready next January and February to draft and explain proposals for charter amendments. Overall, the tasks you have assigned to these two subcommittees will require focused attention between now and the end of the year, just a little more than five months from now. Clearly it is time for you to launch those subcommittees on their critical endeavors.

So we urge you: appoint the subcommittee members today. Name their names and set them on their course.