

**CHARTER COMMISSION  
PUBLIC COMMENT REPORT**

Date range: September 21, 2021 – October 26, 2021

From September 21 to October 26, 2021, at 8:00 a.m., **114 public comments** were submitted through the online public comment form, via email, and at the 9/23 Information Session meeting. **3** out of the **114** comments were made on behalf of a community-based organization. Comments received (attachments below)

**Public comments:**

I am writing today as a 12 year resident of the City of Portland. I implore you to please fix our antiquated form of City Government which has been abandoned by nearly every other city in the United States.

Please increase the number of commissioners significantly and return to district positions rather than "at large" positions. Please require a city manager to run the city government rather than individual commissioners overseeing individual bureaus for which they may or may not have any knowledge.

When the charter commission met 10-12 years ago they heard moments from all the existing city commissioners. The meetings were about 1 hr. long with Q & A. They were video taped and they should be in the archives with the City Auditor. I would recommend viewing those tapes as they gave some valuable insights into the work of a city commissioner, the council, and managing the city bureaus among much more information.

I am not a dedicated policy nerd or that interested in politics in general. So in the past I have heard calls to change the city's commission system of government and thought "change would probably make it worse."

I no longer believe this. In truth, I have a hard time believing this is possible.

--no mayor should be elected to office with less than 50% of the vote. Ranked choice voting, endless run-off elections, IDK. There are wonks that I'm sure have good solutions to make sure this happens.

--the process of bureaus being shuffled, split, dealt, and redealt among commissioners by the mayor leads to confusion, disorganization, and a sense--as with the police under our current mayor--that the elected people supposedly in charge have no idea what's going on much less know what to do to fix problems.

--the city auditor needs a budget that does not require the approval of those whose election's finances she is supposedly overseeing.

--the city auditor needs to be limited in the number of terms she can serve.

--the city auditor should be required by law to uphold the laws she is supposed to enforce or lose her position.

--the city needs to regularly (at least quarterly) and transparently (publish salaries, cost of benefits, overtime, everything!) on ALL aspects of the city's budget. Huge lakes, if not oceans, of money have gone toward homelessness and yet the number of homeless people living in tents on the side of the street continues to increase. Untold amounts of money are spent on sweeping these people from one place to another--causing great harm. Money is budgeted to reduce gun violence, but takes over three months to disburse? Nonsense.

The cities division of neighborhoods to this or that power company, this or that cable company, has created captive markets of high prices for minimal or terrible service.

We need more citywide public services--restrooms, trash cans, parks, street trees, benches, swimming pools, community gardens, sidewalks, safe places to cross the street, clearly marked and protected bike paths, hell, put some pay phones back up. Can't hurt.

Get rid of the current neighborhood association system--it has never been supported or audited and is totally corrupt. It also doesn't make sense of terms of the size and population of current neighborhood designations or how development is carried out. Create a new system that allows all residents to participate and weigh in on projects that affect their neighborhoods and that actually empowers them to engage in work that makes their neighborhood better. City government roles and responsibilities--due in no small part of the bureau shuffle--are opaque. I personally know certain white people who know certain other white people who work for the city who can make a few phone calls and get something done--but if you're not part of this in-crowd, forget it or look forward to weeks of work to make it happen.

Portland city government needs to work in the BEST interests of ALL the people of Portland--no matter their income,

race, primary language, or citizenship status. Please do the best work you can to rewrite the city charter to make this happen.

Thank you.

Portland's city council races have become more equitable and accessible by virtue of our broadly popular finance reforms. Approval voting can make our elections even more meaningful and inclusive by encouraging diverse candidates to run. Modernizing our voting method can mitigate the unintended consequences of campaign finance reform without tampering with the availability of funding for underrepresented voices in policymaking.

Portland's publicly financed Open and Accountable Elections make candidacy for city office accessible to a much larger number of Portlanders. This program is amazing for promoting greater equity and representation. The financial barriers to entry for running a campaign are greatly reduced, meaning one doesn't personally need deep pockets or connections with deep pockets to run for office. But this accessibility can actually backfire under our current "choose one" voting method. More candidates means more vote splitting among similar candidates. Vote splitting favors those with the largest, most devoted faction instead of candidates with broad appeal and a popular platform.

Approval Voting would eliminate this impediment. Approval Voting is a voting method that simply allows voters to vote for as many candidates as they "approve" of for a given seat. Whomever gets the most approvals wins. For example, if your priority issue is housing for all, you can vote for all three of the candidates who support this among a pack of, say, eight candidates. This is simple on an Approval ballot. Just fill in three circles instead of one. With our current "choose one" voting, you and your like-minded peers would end up each voting for only one of the three comparable candidates, diluting the unifying power of your common values.

While other methods help prevent some voting pathologies, we need to focus on adopting methods that are best suited to the context of our city and its election practices. Ranked Choice Voting, for example, helps eliminate "spoiler" candidates, but it does not help against vote splitting and doesn't even allow voters to rank their preferred candidate first without potentially helping the candidate they like least. Most notably, the greater the number of candidates, the more RCV breaks down. It is not a good fit for our city where we've specifically adopted policies that enable greater numbers of candidates to run for a seat. Approval Voting, which has been favorably adopted in St. Louis, Missouri and Fargo, North Dakota, gets us the other half of what's needed for truly open and accountable elections. It will allow more diverse, broadly appealing candidates not only to run for a city office, but enable them to win.

Written testimony - See attached below

I am a big proponent of district representation for the Portland City Council. Having lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for most of my adult life, I've experienced both San Francisco and Berkeley changing their Board of Supervisors and City Council elections from at-large members to district representatives.

In Berkeley, where I lived, that change was the single biggest improvement in city government that I can remember. The best illustration of this improvement came when we had to attempt to get a burned-out streetlight repaired or a major pothole filled. Under the old system, calls to various city agencies would usually get a bureaucratic runaround. After district elections, I just contacted our representative, who happened to live a few blocks away, and the repairs would be done in a matter of days.

In San Francisco, where I worked and owned a business, my recollection is that the at-large elected Board of Supervisors consisted mainly of the wealthy, well-connected, business and real estate development interests. They thought nothing of bulldozing entire communities and neighborhoods to make way for their grandiose projects. It was no coincidence that these neighborhoods were often minority communities. The residents of those communities were powerless to stop many of these developments, and struggled to have their voices heard. When the city changed to district elections, it at least gave a voice to these neighborhoods to counteract the influence of the powerful "downtown" interests.

<https://vimeo.com/613867017/d36520933a>

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Greetings Charter Commission Members,

I am happy that you are seriously considering the City Club proposals to change the current commission form of government for the City of Portland and also to potentially change how voting for City Council members occurs.

I have close to 40 years of government experience (now retired) including time spent at the City of Portland. No large city in the US governs like Portland or as chaotically. Most problems Portland is facing right now can largely be attributed to Portland's archaic and inefficient commission form of government, believe me. For discussion on this matter in detail, please refer to an article I wrote for the Southeast Examiner in March of 2019: <https://www.southeastexaminer.com/2019/03/rethinking-commission-form-of-governance/>. Please also look at the City Club documents in question.

Elected politicians who have no expertise in managing large size and specialized city bureaus should not be put in charge of those bureaus. What ends up happening is inconsistent management, politically appointed managers who follow their own agendas instead of overseeing for the public good, and Commissioners who spend more time focusing on their bureaus than in working as a team with other Commissioners to solve citywide problems. The Mayor's inability to deal with police issues is a perfect example of this situation and the fiasco with the Office of Civic Life this past year is another.

Please continue to look towards changing Portland's commission form of government into one with a City Manager to oversee day to day administration while City Council members focus on budget, policies, and issues of citywide significance (like other cities do).

Thanks for your consideration.

I was on the City Club call the other day about the City Charter review. I was pleased to see another small business owner on the call and I appreciated your comments and your work on the commission in general.

I think we may have crossed paths before. I ran a solar contracting company for 17 years- Imagine Energy- and I think I may have worked with Interworks on a project during that time. I have always been impressed by the work your company does in the area of sustainability.

I now run The Society Hotel (locations in Old Town and the Gorge), but I'm also on the board of the Old Town Community Association.

My business is hospitality, which has been in crisis in the last 18 months. I haven't had the choice to work remotely during the pandemic, so I've seen the impact of our city's decisions, or lack thereof, directly outside my windows in Old Town over the last 18 months.

I feel very strongly that we must make significant changes to our city governance structure, to allow for more representative and empowered leadership. Right now, our leadership fears our citizens, and make decisions, even if they know better, that they perceive is desired by the voters (or out of fear of mob justice coming to their homes).

I appreciate the 1-pager produced by City Club and agree with almost all of their recommendations.

I am concerned, however, about some of the language I heard in the meeting on Monday- that perhaps the commission will not meet the deadline to submit their recommendations to City Council by next fall. I understand that there is a fear of missing voices that need to be heard- that is valid. If there is more outreach to do, please do it while you have time. But this does not excuse inaction to change this city. This is our chance to make a difference and we must act!

Thank you for your work and for hearing my concerns. Portlanders want change and you all have been appointed to the task- please help us.

Written testimony – See attached below

Thank You for allowing me to comment on the subject of our current and future form of city government. First off I have lived in Portland or surrounding areas all of my life. I was born at a hospital at SE 69th & Belmont in 1953 and currently live on Mt. Tabor. Needless to say this city has gone through enormous changes and has seen tremendous growth, some good and not so good. Our current form of government has been working, more or less, in a reasonable fashion but over the years however it has become a slow and or inefficient body when time to respond and is mostly a contentious food fight when we need strong leadership. Many want to blame the mayor or try to recall but most of the blame should go to the unwilling to compromise council members who were or in one case are still in office. We need a strong mayor who has veto power to enact policies that have citizen support regardless of what individual council members and their agendas try to dictate. Whether it is the current or future mayor we need to elect someone who can work with and respectfully address the concerns of citizens at large as well as the council members. Ultimately the mayor needs to be able to make a decision and be held accountable for it. What we have now doesn't work for anyone, homelessness, public safety, lost business big and small, trash and vandalism, neighborhood livability etc. are at critical stage and little is being agreed to and done that has had a positive impact to get it under control. Enough already! Time to switch gears ASAP!

Isn't it obvious!?! The methodology of governing via a City Commission does not work! Nothing is getting done while the city is deterioration at a rate we never imagined possible. We know the current course will not improve with the current method of governance. The people are BEGGING for change. The question is do those with the power to change have the courage to do so!?

In good times, Portland's government is a silly farce. In today's state of crisis, the commission is a lead anchor. Our city needs to take decisive action to combat crime and homelessness, but the councillors are a herd of cats - all of them must be on-board for difficult decisions, but none of them is properly held to account because almost none of the city constituents understands that we have officials beyond the mayor. So the mayor fights off recalls while the councillors perform for Twitter. We must free the city from the council or it will sink us all.

Re: the meeting on Sept 23, it seems like the subcommittees work together well - great! Re: form of government, I and my friends are focussed on public safety and functionality of government, because we need our garbage picked up, streets cleaned, etc and also our emergency calls answered. As part of your research, why not make a list of all the services people count on and think how this is best accomplished. It's a lot, so we need a professional city manager to oversee all of this. Thank you for what you are doing!

I hope your proposal includes a recommendation to increase the council size, to make the council more representative and engaged. On Sept 23 Michael Latner made good points about how more people will increase representation of minority groups.

I firmly believe we need to change our type of commission style government.

Portland is the only one of the nation's 30 largest cities to employ a Commission form of government, in which a group of elected commissioners is responsible for both policy making and, individually, for administering the city's departments. Although it's often said that public policy-making and administration cannot be separated, forcefully combining the two as Portland does is asking too much of our elected officials. Portland has become too large, too diverse, and too complex for the Commission form of government our city employs. Adopt a Council-Manager model. Let our elected commissioners represent and fashion their constituent's

preferences into coherent policy, and let a professional city manager oversee administration. Create a council of equals by eliminating the position of mayor.

Please vote to change from a City Commission form of government. We are in a hideous mess and need standardized, strong responses to the issues the city faces

strong mayor form, I like Ted Wheeler

The founding fathers of Portland or capitalist not socialist. They believed in a small limited government, low taxes, and the teachings from the Bible about environmentalism and caring for the animals were more of their driving force than political agendas. Failed socialist policies in South America and people fleeing from socialist dictators there and in California are the reason for the current economic boom. Following the same regulatory policies of controlling the markets his white has led to the problems here. Everything that you spoke about in your article are all connected. There's hardly any competition in the housing development industry because the government is controlling the business licensing and fees that are astronomically high and sometimes you have to have multiple business licenses to enter any business. That stops entrepreneurship and that has huge cultural implications. The city controlling building permits and controlling the supply and demand of homes being built is evil and inhumane and it's causing the Home Bless crisis and it's killing the middle class. The border open is causing millions of people to flood the United States and is driving down wages to the 1970s levels while the government is controlling the housing market to artificially inflate home prices so they can get more out of taxation off of the sales of \$800,000 houses that are only worth 200,000 and off of yearly property taxes off homes that are worth one or \$200,000 and they're artificially inflated to \$500,000. When people can't afford to pay their mortgages or find a suitable housing at a decent price millions are suffering financially and when they lose their homes the government is right there to see those homes and sell them to rich billionaire Oligarchs for pennies on the dollar. It's a scam. When people can't afford to live they become homeless and desperate. Desperate people commit crimes to survive. People who are suffering also tend to turn towards drugs and alcohol to relieve the pain and suffering that the government has caused

You don't have to re-look at what form of government you have you need to return to the form of government that worked it's called freedom and capitalism. Socialism is when the government controls everyone and everything in society and it's changing the culture. When people can't have their own bedroom for their daughter and son and they have to have the entire family live in one house to pay the bills incest, rape, and domestic violence goes up also. My opinion is that Socialism has never worked no matter what kind of hyphens that you put in front of it. Socialism stops creativity and ingenuity, it stops the entrepreneurs and it kills the middle class as you are currently doing intentionally most people suspect. I don't find anywhere in the constitution of the United States and it says a business license is even constitutional but businesses went along with it as a way of recording information but the three branches of government worked just fine if the lawn Forssman agencies would do their job and the judicial branch would do its job you don't need the Regulatory or as I mention controlling agencies because they're just like every other part of the government. They are corrupt, unorganized, and inefficient because the government was never meant to be a management company. It's supposed to be small and out of peoples way. An example is that if there was a law that says it's illegal to dump anything toxic in the water you don't need a corrupt EPA allowing certain corporations to dump certain amounts of toxic chemicals into the water as long as they're paying off politicians through lobbying in other forms of bribery

Corruption is the number one problem until you admit it you can't clean it up in the bigger the government gets the harder it is to see and find the corruption which is exactly what the socialist want

As our city grows, we need to create a better way to manage all of our city services so that we can better take care of our people. I've only been a Portland resident for 2 years, but I love this place and it's clear that we have more people and more needs than can currently be managed by our current form of government. In fact, the current form of government is failing us maybe even more than some of the individuals who we elected. It's a both-and problem.

As Portland grows and evolves, our city government also needs to evolve into a structure that works better for us.

Thank you.

This 25-resident of Portland, and homeowner, begs this panel to recommend a city manager type of governance. The current commission style has nearly ruined Portland.

Thank you.

Portland's Commission form of government is broken. It may not be the cause of many of the problems the city is facing but it is standing solidly in the way of solutions. Portland has one of the largest budgets and highest tax rates of any city it's size, yet the quality of services delivered hardly reflects this. Services are highly politicized and there is a huge amount of duplicated effort. The city badly needs professional management of its bureaus and at least some component of geographic representation so that Portlanders have someone to speak on their behalf. We all deserve better.

I strongly agree with the Oregonian statement, Portland "is failing miserably at the basics." And that was said three years ago. If anything, the failings have only increased. The city needs to change its form of government to one that includes a professional city manager. I strongly support the effort to make changes to Portland's current form of city government

Called Police non emergency Sat and was on hold for a whopping 1 hour 27 min before I gave up! So are we just supposed to not report crimes anymore? That's what will happen right? This is unacceptable.

How are we not in a state of emergency!

TO ALL OF YOU

Lived in North Portland since 2007 and I have never heard constant speeding like this on our neighborhood streets. It's is scary and loud! All hours. There is a smashed totaled car on N Portsmouth from it. Which has been there forever btw. All day and night theses assholes race through our streets and there is not a damn thing we can do about it!

It's out of control because there is NO police presence and these assholes know it.

HOW LONG DO WE HAVE TO LIVE LIKE THIS? We don't have till 2022 to hope the Charter has the balls to get rid of the Commission system.

You guys must live in a gated or special neighborhood not living through it. Nothing else can explain your utter lack of urgency to stop this madness. I'm not even in the worst streets in NoPo! Get the National Guards into our neighborhoods if you can't do your jobs!

Clean up that permanent homeless camp YOU allowed at Penninsula Park near Fred Meyers. Have you even seen it? It's unbelievable. Mad Max and the Thunderdome is a five star resort compared to that shit pile. You call that being humane to the homeless? LMAO. BS. There is now a 1/2 mile stolen bike operation. They probably have a business sign up by now!

Pissed off Democrat

City of Portland Charter Commission,

I would like to submit my testimony to the city charter commission for form of government. As a resident of East Portland, I do not feel that the current city government is representing my interests. I feel like I am living in an occupied country, governed by people who say they want equity but do just about the opposite when it comes to my neighborhood. I've been following Portland politics pretty closely for about 15 or 20 years and I have seen how dysfunctional the Portland commission method of governance is. We need a city government that is representative of all the constituents and that is responsive, yet not subject to the whims of this commissioner or the next. Consider, if you will, that three-quarters of the current population lives east of the Willamette River, while most of the historic city commissioners have come from the west side.

I have read the City Club reports and I strongly favor a city council of at least 12 members who are elected from 4 or 5 districts. Each district should elect 3 councilors from its residents using a ranking method of voting (single elections with all councilors elected in the same major election) as described in the City Club reports. Based upon the population by race map as presented in the report, and also using population by neighborhood coalitions map available on the Portland website, I have come up with a 4-district map to present to you for consideration, which I

believe strongly represents our city. Of course, the underlying maps were based upon the 2010 census and may need to be altered somewhat to more evenly balance the population distribution in each district. However, I do not favor gerrymandering as I believe that the geographical entities of the city of Portland each have a distinct character of their own which should be preserved. I also do not think that the boundaries of the district should be based upon the current NW, SW, N, NE and SE address system that we have in Portland, as these divisions do not define districts with cohesion or equal population distribution.

I also favor the city council/manager system as described in the report. I would somewhat favor a mayor chosen by the council rather than in an at-large election, as the at-large system strongly favors moneyed interests. However the mayoral election occurs, I think the city manager should be a position controlled by the council. The council should also have legislative and executive powers, but not administrative ones. We have seen all too clearly how most city councilors are not adept administrators, and this would enable Portland to recruit competent and talented administrators from the national workforce.

Commissioners, I know that you have been considering a lot of different options and are carefully doing your research to recommend the best government you can. I would like to commend you for these efforts and show support for a system that I believe can produce the most fair and equitable results.

TO ALL OF YOU

Your illegal racing new law is a JOKE and right now they are giving you the middle finger and laughing at you. Those 8 arrested people will likely get a slap on the wrist and by now they've started a funding site to bail anyone out because let's face it.....these idiots are smarter and more tech savvy then our government. You guys are snails!

It's 12 am and I am not asleep because since 9m all I can hear is revved engines and I am miles away!

When 1:00 am hits I get to look forward to hearing these assholes speed all through the neighborhood returning home. And pray they don't side wipe our vehicles on our narrow streets or worse kill someone.

NoPo

I would like to co-present some specific proposals from the Portland Metro People's Coalition Charter Reform working group

Just before 9pm you start hearing all the illegals racers speeding to get to Marine Drive through all the neighborhood streets. You wonder if tonight will be the night they sideswipe your car in the narrow streets.

For 15 years I've been able to read my books with a nice soft breeze through an open window on a beautiful September evening. Not anymore! I get to keep my window closed and put on background music to drown out the engine revving, screeching doughnuts and rocket speeds with idiot mufflers.

I hope this is not the start of yet another annoying evening listen to the failure of our government.

CHARTER - SAVE PDX! 🙏

1. I believe we would benefit from an experienced city manager
2. I believe we would benefit from commissioners residing in the neighborhoods they represent
3. Alternately, an even better idea than #2 is to have commissioners have EXPERIENCE with regards to the bureaus they will be overseeing
4. That being said, bureaus should not be allowed to be randomly shifted to different commissioners; any changes should coincide with elections so the incoming commissioner would have the right qualifications to run the new bureaus under their leadership

Hi. I live in Beaverton but am a student at PSU. I cannot attend in-person classes at PSU because I am too afraid to go into Portland. First, it was the rioting which carried on with impunity and now there is gun violence, theft, and other crimes that occur every day. The Portland Police Bureau seems to be unwilling to hire enough police to protect us and the police that Portland has retrained have been discouraged from doing their jobs properly. Why does the PPB have

so much power? I distrust their motives and intentions and think they should be investigated by a higher governmental entity. It is not fair to the citizens of the Greater Portland Metro area to have to live in fear of crime to the extent that they are afraid to go into Portland and now, many other cities in the surrounding areas. Big and small businesses are suffering from this lawlessness as well. People need to feel safe and they need to earn incomes and the current regime seems to be more concerned about their ideological agenda than about the reality of Portland's serious and out-of-control crime problem

Seems like engagement is the key when it comes to governmental effectiveness, accountability, and equity. The charter commission meeting on Sept 23 was interesting, also it was pretty much the opposite of engaging. Why don't you ask local community groups - churches, parents clubs etc - to take a poll of what they want the city to do? Not generally but specifically. The people who answer may be a completely different group than the ones who write in to the charter commission. All the best to you guys, Marian

Hello,

I am a resident of the 82nd Ave neighborhood, and have lived here for over 10 years.

I feel like my community is perpetually ignored by the current Portland elections process.

Our commissioners don't often reflect us and historically have felt like they represent the West Hills more than our neighborhood or east county. It has felt like commissioners can ignore us and still be re-elected. During campaigns, candidates rarely come out this way to meet with constituents, favoring West side locations more. I routinely hear from my neighbors that they feel they would only be taken seriously if their address had a NW instead of a NE in front of it.

I also believe the current mayoral election process leaves no accountability and does not represent Portlanders. Ted Wheeler violated our campaign finance laws without repercussion. Why does the city auditor not have more independence and power?

The current mayor was elected with 60% of the city opposed to him. It was clear in this last election that our system does not support the independent voices needed for a more representative system. If NYC can have ranked-choice voting, shouldn't Portland be able to try the same?

I am grateful that the current commissioners have a lot more diversity than in the past. But it feels like getting here was an uphill battle that could be lost at any time. I really hope this process helps ensure we keep moving forward with a local government that reflects the voices of more Portlanders, instead of the powerful or privileged.

I want to express my support for moving AWAY from the commission style of city government. Portland is the only major city to still have this outdated style of government, and it's been a major source of problems for us. I've lived in Portland for over 20 years and I've never seen the city as bad as it is now. The commission system lets leaders finger-point instead of taking action to fix our problems.

When the Commission will be taking public comment regarding the form of government and the election process. Is there a site that has this information?

I would like to discuss the possibility of piloting a referendum system at the the local level. Where would I go to follow up on this over the next 10 years?

Unless Portland has a dynamic forceful mayor our system of governance falls apart. We are the only city of comparable size with this outmoded system. Change is needed

Need to change the system. Either a strong Mayor, or City Manager is needed. Reduce the political power of the Commissioners. It makes the City a Committee, incapable of difficult decisions

I was pleased to read of your efforts, in this morning's Oregonian, to put a PDX Charter Reform Initiative on the Ballot. It is desperately needed. I would love to be more involved. A quick Google search for the Ulysses PAC came up empty, not being like Ulysses, skilled in all ways of searching...

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>> Please direct me to who I may get in touch with and where to direct my donation.

>>

>> I look forward to helping this initiative wend its way to the ballot and on to victory.

>>

>> Michael Gibbons

As a Portland resident I am supportive of a fundamental change to our city government form and elections.

1) We should have a form of government which mirrors other similarly situated cities.

2) We should consider the implementation of ranked choice voting.

Both of these will create more appropriate representation of local issues.

I believe we need an experienced city manager and commissioners who live in the neighborhoods they represent. Commissioners should have experience regarding the bureaus they oversee.

Dear Portland Charter Commission,

We thank you for your interest in voting reform. Your support means a lot to us. Given your interest, we would like to familiarize you with a voting method that we would like to see gain more traction, STAR.

Let's start with the basics. STAR stands for Score Then Automatic Runoff. This system would allow each voter to score each candidate on a scale of 0 to 5. 0 represents the lowest amount of support and 5 the highest. Then, all the scores are tallied up, and the two candidates with the highest total scores advance straight to an automatic runoff. Only one round of voting is required, with ballots being counted in two rounds. This makes it simpler and less expensive to implement than some of the other alternative voting methods, such as Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). STAR has a lot of benefits that do not exist in other voting methods.

First, it would allow voters to give their full range of support for each candidate, instead of throwing their entire vote behind one candidate. Scorers can score as many, or as few, candidates as they like. They can even give the same score to more than one candidate. So, if there's a race in which there are two or more highly qualified candidates, one can give them both a score of 5. This increases the chances that at least one of the voter's favored candidates will win. Conversely, if there are no desirable choices, scorers can avoid voting for the "lesser-of-evils" and give each frontrunner a low score, such as 1 or 0. This way, voters can still show preference while avoiding voting for their worst-case-scenario candidate. Contrast this with RCV, where voters cannot repeat scores without their ballot being disqualified.

This freedom in scoring allows voters to be more honest with their vote. Instead of picking the candidate that they feel has the best chance of winning, but may not be their favorite, voters can simply score each candidate based on how much they like them. This prevents strategic voting that is common in many widely-used voting systems.

Another problem STAR avoids is the "spoiler effect." This happens when two or more candidates run in the same party. An example of this was when Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders both ran as Democrats in the 2016 primaries. Each vote for one of these candidates weakened both of their chances of winning, forcing Bernie to drop out of the race. However, with STAR, more than one candidate can run in the same party without their chances of winning being diminished. Each candidate's success depends on their final tally of scores.

On a related note, STAR could eliminate the primaries, ending the two-party gridlock that disenfranchises many voters. This means that each voter can score all candidates, regardless of party affiliation of either the voter or candidate.

Thus, candidates from third parties can compete on a more level playing field and have a better chance of winning. STAR would make voters feel like they have a true choice, not like they are just throwing away their votes.

STAR Voting has a number of clear advantages over other voting systems. To boot, STAR Voting is a born and bred Oregonian grassroots initiative. Adopting STAR on any level in the Oregon legislature would put Oregon on the map. We encourage you to learn more about this method so that Oregon has the chance to become a national leader in voting reform.

Thank you again,

The City of Portland is so broken that, in its current form, does not and cannot serve the citizens effectively or efficiently. I am beyond frustrated with the lack of effective governance by all councilors who talk a good game but have terrible execution in the most basic forms of governance and oversight. For example, driving Portland's streets is like living in the Wild West. Running red lights, cutting across solid lines, running stop signs, speeding and so many other infractions that go unnoticed by the city. It's as if the police and PBOT have given up. Barrels to slow traffic? C'mon. Get some real enforcement. And the homeless. No further comments are necessary. Our city is ruined and dedicated, honest, city-loving citizens like me are just biding our time to leave until our kids graduate. Our city has lost its soul, its shadow and its beauty.

Please make sure we have the opportunity to vote on a new form of city government - one with a city manager and NO MORE at large councilpersons. This is urgently needed. Thank you,

Written testimony – See attached below

Portland should have a professional city manager, not an elected position. There should be an extensive professional search to select that person. The City council should each represent a specific area of the city and be elected by voters in that area and be responsible to them. Each city department should be headed by a professional in that field, not a city council person. If desired there can be a token mayoral person who is elected, but does only ceremonial type things.

The City Portland is long overdue for a structural overhaul. At the minimum the city needs a Manager and City Commissioners need to have dedicated districts. It is beyond frustrating to see new commissioners voted in, be placed in charge of huge bureaus in subjects they have no background in and flail around trying to create procedure and policy. Having commissioners who are not beholden to specific parts of town continues the system of decision making and power being held by a small, wealthy minority that overwhelmingly live in west Portland and have more resources to exert influences in citywide elections. I happen to live in a neighborhood that mostly benefits from this system but as anyone with eyes can see the outer east side of town and parts of north Portland have been largely left out of the picture for a long time. These areas bear the brunt of the homeless epidemic and are basically under resourced in every way. As the City grows and faces bigger City problems we must first address these underlying structural failures and resulting inequities.

It is essential that Portland move away from the commission form of government and either hire a city manager or elect a mayor. This person would be in charge of all the bureaus, drafting and managing a city strategic plan, and managing the city budget. The city council would represent different areas of the city and make policy and authorize major contracts. The council members would not manage any bureaus of personnel beyond their own staff. The current form of government is unworkable and costly. At present, bureau managers are hired and fired on a whim which creates uncertainty and confusion in the bureaus. Commissioners change bureau assignments frequently, adding to the chaos. This is an unworkable system for a city of this size and complexity.

I am in full support of a city manager form of governance. I also fully support expanding the number of city councilors and having them represent geographical areas of the city. The ongoing crisis of homelessness and violence are better addressed by these changes.

How long do we have to suffer your incompetence as a city leaders Jo Ann Hardesty and others? I have never regretted votes more than I do now. Mapps is the only vote I do not regret. Ted....you are too damn soft and that is your weakness. You want to make everyone happy so get nothing done.

Allowing our city to fall into ruin is not the solution to reform the Police. I can not believe the inability to effectively manage change or institute viable ideas to reform the Police without destroying this city.

You say you care about black and brown people yet almost every night we get to hear them killing each other because YOU have left a huge opening for them to have free reign to do so.

It's a joke to call yourselves progressive thinkers. The solutions for everything are uniquely inhumane. Gangs allowed to kill each other and innocents now is your solution? Homeless living on top of garbage dumps in worse than third world conditions?

The Commissioner system must go and If the Charter does not put it up for a vote they failed Portland. If the people

do not vote it out it will be because they were not educated on why they should.

Do not call yourselves progressive thinkers. This is not what that looks like. This is just a shit show of incompetence and inability to be critical thinkers with viable solutions.

Yvonne

No longer a Democrat. It's time for a third party. Extreme left and right voices are nothing but a distraction of the biased ignorant who only know how to spread hate and fear. Allowing them to consume our politics and policies will not move a progressive agenda forward.

Written testimony – See attached below

This past April, I forwarded you some thoughts (attached) about the Portland Charter Revision effort based on my experience interacting with the City of Dallas since I moved there in 2009. Although I am not currently a resident of Portland, I have been exploring a move and have made several visits to look at condos downtown. Timing TBD. I have now watched the videos of the Sept and Oct “Form of Government Workgroup” meetings and thought I would forward some additional thoughts based on my Dallas experience. I was particularly impressed by the overlays proposed; particularly policy, politics and people. I may not fully appreciate the envisioned intent of these overlays but as I thought about all of this in the context of Dallas, a number of observations developed that might, in some small way, help your Commission members consider the pros and cons of numerous constructs for Portland. It should be obvious, that your exercise should be more than just defining a “static” set of boxes on a chart. In reality, its much more how the roles(s) are animated by the realities of policy, politics and people in Portland.

The comments are divided into four parts:

1. Dallas Context
2. Charter Commissions Form of Government Overlays
3. Structure
4. Processes

I would be remiss if I did not commend your team and the Charter Commission members. I have been impressed by the structure/approach being pursued. Unlike Dallas' effort 10 years ago, your effort seems divorced from politics and political influence. That speaks volumes why I find Portland such a compelling place to consider living. Happy to answer any questions if that makes sense.

I would like east portland to have representation. Ie councilors elected in districts. Also, I dont care for mayor choosing who gets what bureaus

I have lived in Portland for over 10 years. I love the walkability, the numerous parks, the beautiful sights and the people. I am happy to pay the ever increasing real estate tax--there are services that need to be funded. I was amazed about the lack of sales tax in the state, but know that that is why taxes are high, school quality is not that great, etc. What truly amazed me was the form of government we have here. There is little accountability, gridlock on decision-making and a lack of ability to get things done. The position of Mayor is weak, the counsel members seem to be handed out departments in a haphazard way. If we are going to keep the mayor as a weak figurehead, we need a city manager, who will be responsible for seeing that the city functions. We need bureau chiefs who are responsible for getting the job done. Council members can't do it. That is clear.

Written testimony – See Attached below

I think councilor elections should be held only on presidential elections. And that more than one councilor should be chosen from each district, with an election style that favors moderate candidates rather than extremists. I like the description for ranked voting systems, as I think it would do the trick.

I am a supporter of district-based elections in some capacity. Portlanders today feel a lack of local representation from the current system of at-large coucil memebtrs. The only local form of government is the highly flawed neighborhood association system. By offering district based representation, people in St Johns, or East Portland, or Southwest Portland can have their unique community needs heard. It will also open up the possibility of running for office to local community leaders who wouldn't be competitive or have the resources to run a city wide platform. As you consider district based elections, please consider what the right scale and geographies are. In particular, the

Central City should be considered its own district. That zone is unique among the city, and is currently excluded from most current forms of district boundary definitions.

Because you allowed illegal racing to go on for so long we now have a huge issue with illegal modified cars racing around our neighborhood streets day and night. We have laws against these nuisance mufflers but guess what.....we have no one to enforce the laws! How will this issue get fixed?

I'm sure in some of your more fancy neighborhoods you don't live with the constant loud race car noise we do here in NoPo. Not just on illegal race day! All day and night.

So what are you going to do about this mess you created when you allowed illegal racing to go on years? Enforce the damn current muffler law! Put a message out that you will. Allow us to be able to report people and cops to actually act on it and fine people.

Who is to blame for this utter INCOMPETENCE? 100 people manage to organize under the radar to destroy the city and then after doing so not a single arrest is made on site! What the serious fuck game are you guys playing with our lives and livelihoods?

How is it even possible not a single arrest is made? A loud speaker was used to disperse the crowd? LMAO.

These are not activist, these are terrorist and you need to start treating them as such.

Pissed off Democrat  
STOP DESTROYING PDX!

I am emailing the Commission to urge the Commission to bring to the voters an opportunity to re-consider our form of municipal government. I am in favor of a city manager-council form of government. It's unfair to expect politicians to know how to manage large bureaus. These officials are elected for their ideas, not managerial abilities. Our current form is not effective nor efficient at implementing policies and programs. Thank you

I'm an avid follower of the Charter Commission's work and I'm very appreciative of the time and effort you and the commissioners are putting toward this important mission. I served on a very similar commission in Baltimore some years ago. Anyway, I intended to sign up to testify at the full commission hearing on the 28th, but I'm informed by the website that slots for such testimony are full. Having attended the most recent full commission hearing September 23rd, I am aware that a number of people who signed up did not actually show up to provide testimony and that you had a surplus of time available. So with this note, I hope you could include me as first on a "wait list" for testimony at the meeting.

To a broader point however, as I understand the current work of the subcommittees, it seems that the subcommittees are preparing to report areas of consensus on a few important concepts to the full commission. While I am in complete agreement with those areas of consensus, and while I understand that this consensus is conceptual and preliminary at this point, I am concerned that this is occurring prior to any significant opportunity for input from the public. The "listening sessions" are not scheduled for weeks and will occur after the next round of subcommittee meetings where I'd expect more movement to more areas of consensus. The fact that the Commission appears to be reaching conclusions before holding any unrestricted public hearing seems problematic. I know that you all have received hundreds of written comments, but in the commission and subcommittee meetings, I've seen no evidence that Commissioners are engaging with that commentary in any significant way.

Anyway, assuming I will be unable to testify live, I intend to submit set of written comments through the regular written public comment channel. They'll be directed at questions and concerns raised by commissioners in the most recent round of subcommittee meetings and relevant to their current round of research and consideration. I will also submit comments relevant to your scheduled Sightline Institute presentation. Something for everyone to look forward to, I'm sure.

Thanks again for all your work,

<p>On Wednesday PB Oregon co-hosted and Gresham City Councilor Eddy Morales moderated a conversation with Boston City Councilor Lydia Edwards and Armani White with the Center for Economic Democracy on Participatory Budgeting and Charter Reform. I wanted to make sure the Charter Commission received the link to the recording of the event. You can watch it at: <a href="https://youtu.be/ha9R5reeOFg">https://youtu.be/ha9R5reeOFg</a>. The conversation was rich and interesting. It covered the history of participatory budgeting (PB) in Boston, the proposed PB charter mandate and how it came together in Question 1 (<a href="https://yeson1boston.com">https://yeson1boston.com</a>) which Boston voters will decide November 2. There was also some discussion of the shortcomings of their strong mayor system which would change if Question 1 passes. We also got a picture the how Boston's district structure functions and could function different in the future around budget issues in the future.</p>
<p>1. Please, please, please get rid of the “Weak Mayor” form of city government we have. When I moved here three years ago, I wondered why the city commissioners were all acting like they were mayor. Then I learned about the “Weak Mayor” system. There is a great saying: If you put a functional person in a dysfunctional system, the dysfunctional system will crush the functional person every time.</p> <p>2. Please make the commissioners responsive to us by making each one represent a portion of us – like our other elected representatives. I would love to have a commissioner who was “my” commissioner.</p>
<p>I moved here 26 years ago from Tucson, AZ. There we had districts with representatives that we could go to with our issues. I have been frustrated with the fact that the east side of Portland has had so little representation in city government. I live in NE and I am a Democrat, but I have been shocked at the way more conservative eastside has been ignored. I want representation on the city government and I want professionals to run the bureaus -- not inexperienced politicians.</p>
<p>Our current form of city government is broken and needs to be fixed. I feel having a larger council, with members voted on by districts in the city, is the best way to ensure that everyone’s voices are heard. As it is currently setup the power is far too concentrated. While this may have been ok in the past, Portland’s continued growth demands we take the steps to change and adapt. Having a larger council will help move our city to a more inclusive form of government.</p>
<p>Charter change</p>
<p>Portland is in an emergency situation and has been for some time. It is clear that our current form of city government is ineffectual and unresponsive to the critical situation we face in regards to homelessness, inadequate police protection and law enforcement, gun violence, and inhabitable conditions throughout our city, particularly noteworthy in East County.</p> <p>As a 40 year resident of Portland, I urge your support for Charter Review and ultimate change in our current form of city government. We need a more area representative government responsive to our citizens.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Writing to voice my support for changing Portland's form of government. Our current system is outdated and ineffectual for a city and budget of this size. We need an expanded council, with representatives elected from the neighborhoods they reside in. A mayor with actual power and a city manager to oversee the various bureaus.</p>
<p>I have read your four consensus conclusions and think they would be acceptable to a majority of Portlanders. However, if they go to the ballot in their present form, elected officials and administrative will make mincemeat of them in implementation. You MUST address and develop proposals on the tough questions. Strong mayor or city manager? Increase Council size by how much? Create districts based on what? Retain any at large positions? Define specific authority and responsibility for Mayor, City Manager, Council members, bureau directors.</p> <p>You’ve picked the low hanging fruit. Now you need to pick up the pace and do the hard work. Also, I think questions about the Police Bureau should not be part of this process; too divisive and a problem irrespective of form of government. Thank you for listening.</p>
<p>I am in favor of a manager run form of city government. Our current form doesn't work!</p>
<p>Our current form of city government is such that our city councillors don't represent anyone in particular. If charter reform will provide for councillors who represent certain areas of the city, then I'm all for it. I'm interested in having a representative who will advocate for my neighborhood, to proactively pave roads, and remove permanently the squalor camps of addicts who prey on people in my part of the city.</p>

I believe it is time to change the City's form of government. Too many times today our City officials are elected based on a narrow set of political ideals rather than on their qualifications and experience in managing the complex set of organizations that make up the City of Portland. Ultimately, responsibility for proper operation of the City should lie with elected officials but a layer of qualified managers is needed to assure proper functioning. The mayor, rather than another City Council member, should have more influence over the Council's activities and outcomes. Perhaps the role of mayor should include the permanent role of City Council Chair and yield veto power. The City Council, by its vote, should be able to appoint and/or remove a CAO or City Manager but bureau directors and chiefs should be appointed or removed by the CAO. The City Council could recommend appointments or removals of bureau chiefs but not be able to execute them. This structure maintains a line of authority but protects the active managers of the City's bureaus from political manipulation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this topic.

Thank goodness Portland's antiquated non-functional system of government is under review. We need a streamlined system with clear and simplified lines of responsibilities. Council members need to be elected by district rather than at large. That would give neighborhoods a stronger voice in the council. The city manager system is in force all over the country. It's teim Portland caught up to other cities.

My name is Garrett Brown and I live in the Woodstock neighborhood of Portland, Oregon.

I have three concerns today:

1. I believe that at-large elections for City Council (aside from Mayor) prevents Portland from having a government that serves them. At times, Council members have all come from one area of Portland, and very few (if any) have lived east of 82nd. If I have a neighborhood issue (say, traffic, or potholes, or something municipal) I have no idea who to go to to inquire about changes. Having council members representing regions will provide more specific representation to Portland, and will make sure council members benefit all regions of Portland, not just those that economically benefit certain individuals. Expanding the council to a minimum of representatives from each "quadrant" (S, SW, NW, N, NE, SE) would be so much more beneficial. The Oregon Legislature gives more representation to the people of Portland than they have on their own council.

2. Ranked choice voting would provide an opportunity for a wider range of candidates to compete for public office. In 2020, Ted Wheeler was reelected with less than 50% of votes in a run-off election. Ranked choice voting allows there to be a candidate that the majority of voters agree on, and allows citizens to feel like their support of smaller candidates has an impact. Ranked choice voting will see larger engagement from voters, as well as more satisfaction with candidates.

3. I vote for a mayor to do the job of being mayor, or a councilor to be councilor: not to be a police commissioner. It makes no sense that the mayor hands out offices to each councilor, and that the mayor has final say over who gets which office. As we have seen recently, what happens when the Mayor is also your Police Commissioner? If the commissioner can't (or won't) reform law enforcement, the mayor needs to hold them accountable. If they are the same person, and there is no process to separate the two, where is the accountability? While this is most egregious with Ted Wheeler acting as Mayor and Police Commissioner, it makes overall sense for any council member and being the head of any department.

These are just simple steps that can be taken to change how the city functions and serves it's people. If we really want to be the "City that Works" we need tangible changes.

Please allow the city residents to vote on changing the current form of government.

We want ranked choice voting, because it advances the goals of democracy.

I would like Portland to use ranked choice voting for city elections.

Proportional voting! Or at least something akin to ranked choice.

We also need significant more people on the city council with candidates being required to live in the district they represent. Not "own a home" there. Live there. Portland is growing and 5 people can't represent everyone.

I read ranked choice/proportional voting is being considered as a change. I fully support ranked choice voting! Please make this change!
I support proportional voting
Separate the office of the mayor from the role of the police commissioner, and make the police commissioner accountable to public oversight.
Portland is the City that DOES NOT work. We need a professional city manager who reports to a council whose members live in and represent the areas that would elect them.
The existing form of city government is antiquated and inefficient. We are in the age of acceleration and this form of government is not relevant anymore. It is keeping Portland behind while other cities are surpassing us in every aspect. You can't run a company with 5 CEO's. why do we think that a city can be run by 5 mayors. This is the worst type of leadership with no one truly accountable. it is slow, inefficient, expensive, irrelevant, and DOES NOT WORK anymore. Change the form of the government and so that things get done. This form of the government is the core problem of what is happening in Portland.
I support a council consisting of 12 members who each represent a geographic district. There should be no primaries. Each district election is decided by ranked choice voting. Terms should be four years. I dont have an opinion on whether terms should coincide with Presidential elections. Residents who are registered to vote with an address in the district are able to vote. Only the Mayor should be an "at large" election. I support public funding of campaigns and I support restricting contributions to elections.
I support a council consisting of 12 members who each represent a geographical district. There should be no "at large" members. The city should be managed by a City Manager who has hiring authority for the Departments/Bureaus. The City Manager should be hired/fired by the Mayor. The Mayor should develop the draft budget. The Council should develop policy, establish regulations, have final approval on the budget.
Bicycles, Segueways (sp?), rollerblades, skateboards, scooters etc. do NOT belong on pedestrian sidewalks whatsoever. They belong on the street or in their own separate lanes. Please ban and enforce the ban of these vehicles from sidewalks.
Could you include in the City Charter a requirement that commissioners report on their activities related to city business every week? Only Mingus Mapps does that now. Commissioners should be prepared to report out to the public as long as they are drawing a salary etc.
Hello. I live in Portland my whole life. I live on 87th and division. I noticed there was some construction being done on my road. Today the construction worker told me that I could no longer park in front of my house. As the city has plans to extend the bike lane. It was fine before. There is no safe place for me and my family to park our vehicles. The project manager told me to park in the side street. It's dark and very unsafe in the side streets. Now I have to resort to parking across the street at excellent crusine and jaywalk back to my condo. I have a 3 year old and a dog. Please understand. We depend on the parking spot in front of our house. Everytime I park in the side streets, my car window get broken into they take nothing and ransacked my property. Since I'm so far from my car, I don't notice until its too late. I can't afford to live like this. Please help. I'm a concerned community member. Where I live there are buisness that depend on the parking spots in front of our house. If the city takes that, where will we park?
I neglected to ask if you were considering rank choice voting in your list of reforms. It seems to me it would help with your single election goal. I strongly urge you to avoid elected prosecutors or judges. After observing large and small jurisdictions for 49 years in Phoenix and its metropolitan area, election of either prosecutors or judges creates ethical problems and cynicism about the neutrality of their offices.
Form of government: Mayor should NOT be a member of city council. Mayor may veto city council. CAO officials to be elected by residents in their area. Removed by other members of City Council. Bureau Directors appointed by City Council, and prepare respective budgets. Policy developed by City Council, approved/ vetoed by Mayor. Districts drawn by Census information to ensure equal representation on Council. 15 Districts, 4 yr terms in parallel w/ Mayor elections
I am in favor of having commissioners represent a specific part of the city, and increasing the number of commissioners. That number should be an odd number so that tie votes are avoided. I am also in favor of hiring a city manger, since commissioners have very little expertise in management. Commissioners must live in the part of the city they represent and the mayor should be an "at large" position.

I saw in your October newsletter that the form of government subcommittee came to a preliminary agreement on several reforms. I just wanted to advocate for an additional reform, and that is for councilor districts. I think that it is important that councilors be accountable to specific constituencies as opposed to the whole city all at once, as this keeps them closer to the people they serve and limits the influence of money in politics. I do not think that at-large councilors are able to serve Portlanders effectively and are prone to capture by the biggest and most powerful interest groups

I would like us to increase the size of our City Council and clearly (re)define the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor and City Council. All offices should be elected by the people.

I am fully in favor of district-based city council. For all of Portland's talk about equity, it's baffling that our government has no structure for ensuring geographically diverse representation. I am in favor of a relatively large council, and one that moves on from the commissioner system to eliminate bureau-based provincialism.

Chairs and members of the Commission,

I submitted a public comment previously about my experience on a commission similar to yours in Baltimore some years ago. I have been following your commission and the subcommittee work closely, and I appreciate the time and energy and seriousness you have devoted to the effort. Now, as the subcommittees begin to report out recommendations based on their research and deliberation, I feel compelled to write again about the lessons learned in Baltimore and how Portland needs to understand those lessons now. Particularly, as I understand you have Sightline Institute and Minneapolis presenting to the full commission at the next meeting.

I believe that at this point in your research and deliberation process, you are on the right path. But your next round of subcommittee decisions will probably be the most important. And most important of all may be the issue of single-member or multi-member districts. Baltimore's experience is crystal clear: multi-member districts were a direct cause of dysfunction and citizen frustration, and the single-member districts that Baltimore implemented in a citizen initiative are a dramatic improvement.

1. Single-member districts offer clean, direct, understandable lines of accountability.

Relevant to the "north stars" that the subcommittees have developed for their evaluation, single-member districts, especially when coupled with an increased number of council members, are a clear improvement when it comes to access, accountability, efficiency, responsiveness, clarity of function, and representation. This is fundamentally because of the simplicity of the relationship between the voter and their representative: there is one person who is responsible for the interests, and accountable to constituents, of one district. A councilperson cannot hide from their direct responsibilities of representation and constituent service. The smaller the district (the more the councilmembers), the more power accrues to individual voters and neighborhoods. A citizens can easily identify and rely on "my councilmember."

2. Baltimore's switch to single-member districts resulted in a younger, more diverse, more active, and more representative council.

In Baltimore, prior to 2003, Baltimore had six three-member districts. But the three members ran as a ticket, voted similarly, and if they weren't long-time incumbents, they were hand-selected by the long-time incumbents. The three members either kept a unified front or passed the buck between each other when it came to accountability for legislation and constituent service. After 2003, Baltimore had 14 single-member districts and the situation improved remarkably. Individual councilmembers became much more accountable overnight. Longtime incumbents who no longer could hide from accountability retired or were defeated at the polls. The Council got younger, more diverse, more active, more independent, more creative, and more productive legislatively. Oversight of the Mayor and city programs became more aggressive because individual legislators needed to answer to constituents directly.

3. Portland's failed City Council is essentially one multi-member district.

Many of the failures of Baltimore's multi-member districts are evident in Portland. This is unsurprising when the current Portland City Council can be understood as one singular worst-case multi-member district. With all councilmembers purporting to represent all citizens, the accountability to individual citizens is as dilute as possible.

Neighborhood-level influence is practically impossible.

4. The demonstrable downsides of multi-member districts far outweigh any theoretical upsides of a proportional representation system.

I understand that Sightline Institute is a strong proponent of proportional representation schemes, and although I'm agnostic on the proportionality concept, I'm extremely skeptical that it can work in Portland without a politically impossible increase in the number of councilmembers.

The main reason a proportional representation theory is proposed is so that underrepresented portions of the electorate will be able to elect a councilperson without requiring an impossible geographic gerrymander. This is implemented by multi-member districts and ranked choice voting. But to be truly effective, this will require either districts that are too few and too large, or it will require a three- or four-fold increase in the number of city council members. A Portland electorate that's otherwise ready for reform may be easily turned off if it's told that it either it doesn't get sufficient district representation, or it needs to elect (and pay for) 15 or 20 or 30 councilmembers for it to work as advertised.

Proportional representation in Portland simply means that the complicated gerrymandering of districts to achieve an outcome is replaced by the even more complicated gerrymandering of election rules to achieve an outcome. (Or both?) But the outcomes are not guaranteed, and in fact, there is strong potential that outcomes may be just the opposite of those desired. For one thing, proportional representation in a multi member district means, by design, that while it's theoretically possible that more citizens MAY be represented by their first choice, EVERY citizen will be represented by someone who is NOT their first choice.

While I understand the non-partisan nature of the Commission's work, it's important to understand the potential for partisan outcomes. For example, one of the largest "underrepresented" but well-organized segment of the Portland electorate would be Republican party voters. In a complicated proportional representation system that rewards game theory over traditional majorities, the partisan campaign apparatus (in both parties) is likely to be a big winner.

Again, in summary, as the subcommittees narrow in on their research and recommendations, I cannot emphasize enough that single-member districts are far more preferable than multi-member districts for the "north stars" set forth by the Commission. Because so many benefits will flow from this simple and fundamental reform, and because it is a concept that will be easily understood by ballot-question voters, it is important to get this early decision right.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment,

We need a new form of government for the City of Portland. The current system is not effective for real leadership in a challenging time for the city. In Multnomah County, the property taxes have been going up around 6% per year, and still, there are piles of garbage, needles and human waste that neighbors feel compelled to clean up just to stay safe. The homeless situation is tragic, and just seems to escalate every year. I find the commissioner system of government inadequate to take necessary action to restore our city to the beautiful, safe place it was just a handful of years ago. There are many other pressing problems that I'm sure you are aware of. Please listen to the citizens and institute a new system that allows for strong leadership.

I strongly urge the Charter Commission to recommend that Portland change its form of government to a strong mayor, professional city manager, commissioners elected by geographic district type of governance that all U.S. cities now use (in one variation or another). Portland's current form of government is better suited to a smaller, late nineteenth or early twentieth century place.

I so appreciate your serious research into forms of government. Whatever form you decide we should consider, I strongly believe we need to make our mayor and council positions partisan, as they are in many other cities. We could hear robust debates with contrasting policy ideas, and voters would finally have a real choice between different viewpoints.

<p>I am a resident of Holladay Park Plaza, a large and active senior retirement community in Portland. We would like to invite one of the Charter Commissioners to speak to our community about the Commission's purpose and schedule of activities, and how we might become actively involved in the process.</p>
<p>Because of Covid restrictions we are holding such presentations via Zoon, although we are hopeful that after the first of the year we may be able to resume large, in-person meetings in our auditorium holding up to 100 people. The time we have in mind for this is 7:15 PM, Thursday ,January 27th.</p>
<p>This form of government is irrelevant and archaic. The world has changed but not the city of Portland government. Things are taking too long to get done and the city is left behind other cities of its size. We need a smaller and more efficient government. There is no need for expensive and useless commissioners. They are costing taxpayers money, slowing things down and have made the whole system bureaucratic. Just elect one mayor or city manager and let that person be responsible and accountable. Let's take our city back. This system of government is doomed.</p>
<p>Portland is too large to operate efficiently with its current "weak mayor" form of city government and at-large-elected city council of only 4 members (not including the mayor). Let's follow our sister cities Seattle, WA, Denver, CO, and San Francisco, CA, and adopt a "strong mayor" government, which separates executive from legislative functions, and increase the number of council members to be elected by district.</p>
<p>In past years, it seems that the city council has chosen to ignore the findings and/or recommendations of the city's elected auditor. The new charter should include a statutory requirement that the council respond formally to auditor's reports. A time frame would be sensible, as well.</p>
<p>Portland's current form of government does not meet the city's needs. Commissioners with little technical or management expertise are responsible for the city's departments. I propose that the city have a mayor and commissioners who are responsible for overall direction of the city's operations. Each department should be managed by a hired professional with expertise in the department's operations.</p>
<p>Portland Citizens are denied a significant voice in city matter simply because 5 councilors do not have the capacity time or interest to serve the constituency. Why? Its simple. 5 city councilors working 8 hours a day, 365 days a year have less that 2 minutes per citizen. To be truly a repretative democracy Portland needs far more representation. Representatives that are accessible, reflect the communities in which they live and have small enough constituencies that citizens concerns are heard and acted upon. How about 35 elected representatives? Elected Reps that work for the people, have truly local neighborhood offices and don't have 'try' to run city bureaus for which they typically have no expertise. We need a City manager to professionally run bureaus with experts on those disciplines, not politicians whose interest predominantly lie elsewhere. Isn't it time that an antiquated system of City Councilors is replaced by a representative government?</p>
<p>I certainly hope you guys don't think this Focused Intervention Team is the answer to our gun violence problems?</p> <p>You guys must think we are all stupid?</p> <p>If any of you think we should not get rid of the commissioner system you are either ignorant or selfish.</p> <p>To the Charter.... Do your job because no one else is. Reform this government and be bold. Anything less will ruin this city. Are we going to be the progressive example of future cities or continue to be the embarrassment?</p>
<p>Is there any opportunity for the public to engage during this upcoming subcommittee meeting? Or will the public be listen-only during these meetings?</p>
<p><a href="https://www.portland.gov/omf/charter-review-commission/events/2021/11/4/city-council-elections-subcommittee">https://www.portland.gov/omf/charter-review-commission/events/2021/11/4/city-council-elections-subcommittee</a></p>
<p>Form of Government needs to be changed from current commission style with at-large commissioners to a city-council voted on by district, with a separately voted upon mayor who leads the council and breaks ties and offers vetoes. The mayor and council should then appoint a city manager to oversee and/or appoint separate executive managers of the city's various bureaus. Elections should be tied to standard 4 year period. Council member number should be 12, two from each sextant of the city. Voting only available to citizens within the city limits who are US citizens with ID. Winner take all elections - single round. No run-offs, no primaries. Campaigning restricted to one month prior to election. No public fund matching.</p>

Really good opinion letter to Oregonlive on October 24, by Commissioners Reddy, Ye and Avalos! Thank you. I agree with everything and also want to see a city manager, for professionalism and accountability.

Read the article in this Sunday's Oregonian and was pleased with the direction you are taking. Accountability is a big deal so changing to a more accountable form of city government is the right way to go.

Thank you for your work and for considering my testimony.

My name is Brooke Kavanagh. I've lived in Portland for 26 years and in Oregon my whole life. A few years ago, I connected with the local movement for climate justice and began to follow what was going on with the City's climate work. The climate justice movement has helped me understand that when we follow the lead of frontline communities we will get what we need: justice-based solutions. A great example of this is the Portland Clean Energy Fund, which was brought to the City by the community. Unfortunately, too often I see the environmental and climate work that the city "leads" –including its Climate Emergency Declaration-- does not center frontline communities and does not lead to much needed justice-based action. This must change.

I'm writing today to urge this Charter Commission to address environmental justice and action on the climate crisis as a central and pressing issue in the Charter Review process.

- Phase I: As your commission works towards reforms to City Council elections and our current form of government in Phase I, you have an opportunity to address many of the structural barriers to environmental justice and meaningful climate action facing advocates and communities today, reforming our government towards a more equitable, collaborative, strategic, and community-driven city, and one that is better equipped to tackle the climate crisis and the many other overlapping challenges we face.
- Phase II: I also strongly encourage you to uplift environmental and climate justice in the selection of your subcommittees for Phase II of the Charter Review Process. This is a once-in-a-decade chance to comprehensively address the most pressing issues facing our City at the place where they intersect: our collective rights to live, work and play in environments that are safe, healthy, and support us to thrive, and to participate as equal partners in decisions that impact these rights.

Why it's critical for this Charter Commission to address environmental and climate justice now:

1) This is a climate emergency and we are out of time:

o Every year the reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are more frightening. This year it predicts that our current course of emissions will result in reaching tipping points much sooner than previously predicted, including at least 2 degrees Celsius of warming by 2050. We cannot afford to wait for these reports to get even worse before we finally act like this is a global life-threatening emergency.

o We're experiencing the accelerating climate crisis in Portland, and we're not prepared to keep everyone safe.

-This year we saw the deadly consequences: Sixty Portlanders and 500 people across the Northwest died during a single heat wave this June as we reached record-breaking temperatures of 116 degrees, with the majority of deaths clustered in lower income, more racially diverse neighborhoods. These consequences are not distributed equally, but fall most heavily on the communities that are burdened by disinvestment, unsafe or unstable housing, pollution, and many other forms of environmental racism and injustice.

-Last year, the thick wildfire smoke exposed Portland residents to air too hazardous to breathe. We were told to stay inside, but so many residents were not protected from this air because of unsealed homes, because they are living outside, or because they were forced to be outside because they had to work.

o This is the last opportunity for a city charter review until 2031. We don't have 10 years to make critical structural changes to ensure climate and environmental justice.

2) We need to use a framework of environmental justice to address the many overlapping challenges facing Portland

o Environmental justice (here, in the words of Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice) is the principle that all people and communities have the right to equal environmental protection, and to the right to live, work and play in communities that are safe, healthy and free of life-threatening conditions. Environmental justice is possible when all communities have access to information and decision-making that enable them to take action and create positive change for themselves.

- o This Commission is tackling its work at a time that our city and our world faces many crises: public health in a global pandemic, an accelerating climate crisis, housing and houselessness, racial injustice, labor, infrastructure, and more.
- o We can't treat these issues as isolated and disconnected from each other - each one impacts the others and each one is an environmental justice issue impacting Portlanders' ability to survive and thrive in the places we live, work, and play.
- o Environmental justice is the most effective framework for the Charter Commission to address the most pressing issues facing our City at their intersections, leaving no one behind and ensuring the most impacted communities are at the center of our solutions.

3) The barriers to climate action and environmental justice we're encountering are baked into our city's structure. We must remove those barriers and bake in the solutions.

§ Solution: The people closest to the problem will be best equipped to lead on the solution Barrier: our political systems have traditionally been set up to do the opposite, limiting community access to and participation in the spaces and processes that create policy.

§ Solution: Nature and natural systems are part of our critical infrastructure; rivers, forests, green spaces, and other natural infrastructure deliver broad and diverse benefits and protections to Portlanders, Barrier: our governance of these systems does not represent or respond to this diversity of benefits.

§ Solution: Climate and environmental problems can be addressed effectively by a City government that makes collaboration and integration across departmental boundaries the norm, and that engages the most impacted and knowledgeable communities as essential partners in developing solutions. Barrier: Our current governance structure and culture discourages these essential practices.

This is the time to rebuild the city's foundational structure so that it truly reflects the needs, the health, the wellbeing, and future of the people. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony, and for your ongoing work towards building a more equitable and functional city.

Dear City Charter Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Jennifer Cho Kain, and I have been a resident of the city for the past 13 years. During the time I have lived here, I have noticed the marked change in climate, and what used to be a long rainy season as the norm has shifted to dryer and hotter months and even drought conditions across the state which has caused wildfire seasons and ensuing diminished air quality that I have not experienced anywhere.

The climate crisis is already here, and Portland already faces deadly consequences. 60 Portlanders and 500 people across the Northwest died during a single heat wave this June as we reached record-breaking temperatures of 116 degrees, with the majority of deaths clustered in lower income, more racially diverse neighborhoods. These deadly consequences are not distributed equally, but fall most heavily on the communities that are burdened by disinvestment, unsafe or unstable housing, pollution, and many other forms of environmental racism and injustice.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its 6th update released in August of this year predicts that our current course of emissions will result in reaching tipping points much sooner than previously predicted, including at least 2 degrees Celsius of warming by 2050. This far exceeds the goals of the Paris Agreement to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and crosses a threshold where rising sea levels, extreme weather, and global temperature changes are already underway and will likely create "domino effects" that impact human health, access to water, food systems, and our ecological stability more quickly and less predictably.

To address many overlapping challenges facing Portland, we need to use a framework of environmental justice. Environmental justice (through the words of Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice) is the principle that all people and communities have the right to equal environmental protection, and to the right to live, work and play in communities that are safe, healthy and free of life-threatening conditions. Environmental justice is only possible when

all communities have access to information and decision-making that enable them to take action and create positive change for themselves.

This is the decade in which we must take action as a City. The next Charter review will not take place until 2031. The best available scientific evidence and our desire to keep our neighbors here in Portland alive and well lead us to the same conclusion: we need to act now.

I'm writing to ask that you address environmental justice and act on the climate crisis as a central and pressing issue in the Charter Review process. As you work towards reforms to City Council elections and our current form of government in Phase I, you have an opportunity to address many of the structural barriers to environmental justice and meaningful climate action policies facing advocates and communities today. We need a reforming of our government structures towards a more equitable, collaborative, strategic, and community-driven city, and one that is better equipped to tackle the climate crisis and the many other overlapping challenges we face. I also strongly encourage you to uplift environmental and climate justice in the selection of your subcommittees for Phase II of the Charter Review Process to give these issues the deep and thoughtful consideration they deserve and subsequent impactful and effective policies that we need to address these complex issues.

Climate and environmental problems can't be addressed effectively by just one bureau, program, or commissioner. To rise to these challenges, we need a City government that makes collaboration and integration across departmental boundaries the norm, and that engages the most impacted and knowledgeable communities as essential partners in developing solutions. Our current governance structure and culture discourages these essential practices.

This is a once-in-a-decade chance to comprehensively address the most pressing issues facing our City at the place where they intersect: our collective rights to live, work and play in environments that are safe, healthy, and support us to thrive, and to participate as equal partners in decisions that impact these rights. The people closest to the problem will be best equipped to lead on the solution, and our political systems have traditionally been set up to do the opposite, limiting community access to and participation in the spaces and processes that create policy. Considering proposals that expand participatory democracy is key to engage citizens more actively in the policies that affect them.

Furthermore, we must regard nature not as an inert commodity to be extracted for profit, but as critical infrastructure; rivers, forests, green spaces, and other natural infrastructure that deliver broad and diverse benefits and protections to Portlanders, and to have our governance protect, instead of extract and exploit these resources to our collective detriment.

Finally, I wanted to call attention to the fact that the climate crisis, like the pandemic have unequal impacts. Listening to the podcast How to Save a Planet hosted by Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, Marine Biologist and Climate scientist described the unequal gender impact of climate change. As in the pandemic which had unequal impact and burdens on women due to needing to provide childcare, economic responsibilities and caregiving of the elderly, climate change also puts women at the greatest risk for their lives and livelihoods in the protection of their families. We must, at the policy level, address this unequal impact by not just communicating effectively to women and families but through partnerships with businesses to provide supportive services to women caring for children and elderly family members, providing flexible working conditions and livable wage jobs focused on an economy that does not depend on fossil fuels. Green jobs are not just putting up solar panels, as expressed by journalist & activist Naomi Klein, but also include caregiving professions that have been woefully underpaid until now, and jobs largely occupied by women. A just transition looks at such factors such as historical and economic disenfranchisement and exclusion as experienced by Black, Indigenous and people of color and women in the long history of Oregon. We have an opportunity to right these wrongs and turn a new page on our collective history for our survival, and if possible, our collective thriving during these challenging times.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and for your ongoing work towards building a more equitable and functional city.

To our failed government "leaders"

What kind of message do you think it's sending when half of the shootings this year remain unsolved? Not likely to get caught. So why not?

WAKE THE HELL UP! We are all living in fear. This is a state of emergency. We can't wait around for this failed government to put a bandaid on this like you guys do with everything else! Bring the damn police back. Come up with a damn plan next time BEFORE you try to reform Police!

Seriously....do y'all all roll out of a clown car together each day you show up for work? Are we living in some dystopian circus hell scape. Leaders loosing control is not a good sign at all!

Insanity - doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. As in this commissioner system of government that is clearly ineffective in a real crisis. Let's face it, it was being held together with duct tape!



## League of Women Voters of Portland

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To:    Portland Charter Commission, City Council Elections Subcommittee

From: League of Women Voters of Portland  
Debbie Kaye, President  
Audrey Zunkel-deCoursey, Board member

Re:    Suggestions for charter revisions concerning city elections

Members of the Elections Subcommittee:

Thank you for volunteering to do the important work of examining our charter and proposing amendments to improve our form of government and elections.

The League of Women Voters is a 101-year old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. As such, the Portland League has been closely following the work of the Charter Review Commission and appreciates the opportunity to engage Portlanders in this important civic process.

In late 2019, the League of Women Voters of Portland released an in-depth study report about Portland's government, which we invite you to [read in full online here](#) (paper copies available by request). We also recommend a study about Election Methods done by the League of Women Voters of Oregon, our statewide organization ([full report online here](#), [executive summary here](#)).

Based on our research and collective discernment, we developed a 2020 position statement that summarizes the reforms we advocate for:

*The League of Women Voters of Portland believes that a thriving, livable city requires a city government that meets these criteria: accountability, responsiveness, equity, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and nonpartisanship.*

*Our members believe that to more fully meet these criteria, Portland needs to improve its government structure. The highest priorities for change are to improve citizen representation by increasing the number of commissioners, to institute a city manager, and to establish the City Council as a legislative or policy-setting body.*

We are addressing the latter two of these suggestions - about instituting a city manager and establishing the City Council as a legislative body - in a separate letter directly to the Form of Government subcommittee.

The League of Women Voters of Portland:  
*To promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government.*

## ***COUNCIL SIZE***

We urge the Charter Commissioners to explore: **Increasing the number of city councilors to 10-12, plus the mayor.**

Here's why this is important:

- Increasing the number of commissioners might result in better representation. When Portland adopted the five-member commission system in 1913, there was one commissioner for approximately every 42,000 residents. With the city's population at 645,000 and growing, we now have only one commissioner for every 130,000 residents. As populations grow, cities tend to expand the size of their councils to provide a more sensible ratio of elected officials to total population.
- We are simultaneously advocating for changes to the form of government, specifically to suggest less administrative roles for City Commissioners. While the dual legislative and executive roles the council currently holds might be unwieldy with a larger council, more councilors would actually be better able to handle a more purely legislative function because they would bring more perspectives to bear. Details of our suggestions about this topic are in a letter to the Form of Government subcommittee.

How this change will benefit marginalized Portlanders:

- A larger council would work well with other election reforms including proportional representation methods. Combined, a larger council plus proportional representation would give marginalized Portlanders more voice on council. New election methods have the potential to increase voter engagement and bring more voices to City Hall.
- Running for a winner-take-all City Council seat and representing the entire city is an expensive and time-consuming undertaking for prospective commissioners. It frequently requires a healthy network of volunteers and a robust donor base. This fact and other compounding factors have led to a city council that has consisted overwhelmingly of white male homeowners from certain affluent neighborhoods of the city. Women, people of color, renters, and those living in less wealthy parts of town have been historically underrepresented in City Hall.
- We note that the recent campaign financing reforms already undertaken are an important step toward making elections more inclusive and equitable.

How this change aligns with the Commission's "North Stars:"

- A larger City Council could allow more **participation** from diverse members of the community, allowing more voters to have a say in who is elected to city council.
- A larger City Council could be more **accessible**, because there would be more Commissioners to hear Portlanders' concerns.
- A larger City Council could better **reflect** the communities it represents, by giving space to have a more diverse Council than five people can represent.

Examples of other similar cities with larger councils:

- Seattle (737,015 residents, per 2020 census) has a 9-member Council elected by district, plus the mayor.
- Salt Lake City (199,723) has a 7-member Council elected by district, plus the mayor.
- Pittsburgh (302,971) has a 9-member Council elected by district, plus the mayor.
- Albuquerque (564,559) has a 9-member Council elected by district, plus the mayor.
- Oakland (440,646) has an 8-member Council (7 elected by district, 1 at large), plus the mayor and a city administrator.
- Denver (715,522) has a 13-member Council (11 elected by district, 2 at large), plus the mayor.
- Minneapolis (429,954) has a 13-member Council elected by ward, plus the mayor.

The ten municipalities closest in population to Portland all have larger city councils, with a minimum of six, and a maximum of 40, members.

Specifically, we would suggest expanding the City Council to 10-12 members plus the mayor.

- The most typical pattern among other cities of similar size range is about two representatives per 100,000 residents, resulting in a 12-member Council for Portland.
- The City Club of Portland concluded after their study that the number of commissioners should be increased to at least 8, plus the mayor, for a total of at least 9 City Council members.

Expanding the City Council would have additional benefits:

- Multi-member districts would be possible, if the Commission develops a plan to create districts.
- Proportional representation would be possible in citywide races or in district races with multi-member districts.

## ***COUNCIL CONSTITUENCY***

This larger Council could be elected in proportional citywide races, in multi-winner proportional districts, or in single-winner districts. You also have the option of creating a combination of City Council seats held by single-winner districts and some winner-take-all citywide seats, as other cities our size have done. Each of these options has benefits and challenges.

*Benefits of district races:*

- Offices chosen by district elections could increase voter access to their Commissioners. Underrepresented constituencies might feel they are better represented and have better access to leaders under this approach. Former City Commissioner Fritz has said that she liked representing the entire city, but she acknowledged that election by district might reduce the cost of campaigning and make the process more accessible.
- Having some or all of the commissioners elected by district (or required to reside in a defined district and be elected at-large) would follow models already used to elect the Portland school boards, Metro Councilors, and Multnomah County Commissioners.

*Benefits of citywide races:*

- Citywide offices are simpler to maintain than setting up new districts, which would require work and expenses to set initial boundaries, as well as redistricting work every decade.
- Being elected citywide might make it easier for councilors to have a city-wide or long-term perspective, compared to districts which may encourage councilors to focus only on the short-term needs of their particular corner of the city.

**We urge the commission to explore either proportional representation methods (citywide or in multi-winner districts) or districts.** Proportional representation election systems are one innovative election method that has been discussed. This method would be an option to consider with an expanded City Council, whether the commissioners are elected by district or citywide.

***ELECTION METHODS***

**We urge the commission to consider election methods like ranked choice voting that can lead to a proportionally representative council.**

The League of Women Voters of Portland recognizes that election methods affect how voters participate in our democracy, who can run for office, and who can get elected. Therefore, the League supports innovative election methods that enhance democracy. We support election methods that encourage voter participation, are easy to use, are trustworthy, promote competitive elections, and prevent political manipulation. Many of those methods are detailed in our state League's study of Election Methods. The League of Women Voters supports election systems that elect policy-making bodies—legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards—that proportionally reflect the people they represent. Our state League supports enabling legislation to allow local jurisdictions to explore alternative election methods, noting that funding for startup and voter education should be available if they adopt a new election method.

For example, we support ranked-choice voting to increase voter choice and lead to more positive campaigning. It can be used in single-member districts as well as in multi-member districts to achieve proportional representation.

Proportional methods would align well with the Commission's "North Stars:"

- Proportional voting systems create more **reflective** representation. Under the current winner-take-all at-large system, the biggest block of voters can elect all the council members while voters in the minority are left with no commissioners they prefer. Proportional methods give every group of voters fair representation.
- Proportional systems can improve **accessibility**. The threshold to win one seat is lower in proportional elections than in the city's current winner-take-all at-large elections. Each city commissioner now has to win around 100,000 votes; in a nine-member proportional council, the threshold to win would be more like 20,000.
- Proportional systems allow more voters to **participate and be heard**. In Portland, only around half of voters are able to elect someone they support in City Hall. According to data analyzed by the Sightline Institute, in US cities that use proportional voting, between [70-90% of voters see someone they voted for](#) representing them in the halls of power.

Combining proportional methods with our other recommendations:

- Offices held citywide would be well-suited to proportional voting. A City Council expanded to 10-12 members would mean five or six councilors could be elected into office at each election. The mayor would be elected in a separate winner-take-all race.
- Proportional voting would also be possible with commissioners elected by districts. For example, for a 13-member Council, Portland could have four districts with three commissioners each, plus the mayor elected citywide. (It requires at least three seats per district for proportional representation.)

## **CONCLUSION**

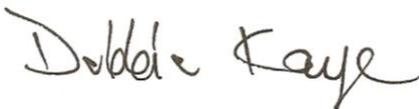
Election reforms are important to our organization on many levels. The League of Women Voters of the United States [supports voting methods](#) that maximize effective votes and minimize wasted votes, and that elect councils that proportionally reflect the people they represent. The League of Women Voters of Oregon [supports](#) reforms that promote voter participation and engagement and competitive elections, and discourage gerrymandering and negative campaigning, among other pro-democracy goals. As part of both the national and state Leagues, the League of Women Voters of Portland supports their goals for election reforms. We [endorse](#) accountability, responsiveness, equity, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and nonpartisanship.

[Our 2019 report](#) concluded with these words:

When the next Charter Review Commission considers how the City Charter might be amended, their recommendations and the voters' decisions will be based on the criteria they prioritize for judging the potential improvements or trade-offs for each proposal. The League of Women Voters of Portland City Government Study Committee hopes this report will help guide the public, as we choose among the options that will shape Portland's future government.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to public service.

Sincerely,



Debbie Kaye,  
LWVPDX President



Audrey Zunkel-deCoursey,  
LWVPDX Board Member

# Some Reflections on a new City Charter for the City of Portland based on experience with the City of Dallas

Defining a new “form of government” is more than the creation of a new organization chart. By itself, such a chart would be static and not reflect how people, politics and process animate the functioning of government to address envisioned critical policy areas, values, etc.

The thoughts that follow are based on 14 years of observing and interacting with the City of Dallas; Mayor, Council members and staff. All with the objective of trying to get the City to effectively focus on areas I felt were critical to the future of Dallas; e.g., poverty, racial equity, housing, mobility, etc. and important enablers such as data, process, intergovernmental strategy and credible philanthropic engagement.

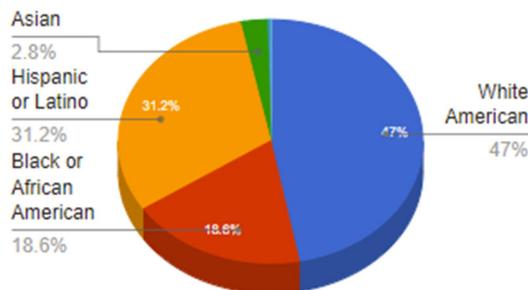
## **PART 1 - Dallas Context**

The history and demographics of Dallas have played an oversized role on the functioning, and frankly lack of effectiveness, of City Hall.

1. Council-Manager form of government – however, in operation, it is more a “weak” Council–“strong” Manager.
2. The Council is comprised of 15 members, 14 elected by district plus the Mayor.
3. Dallas has a long racial history (reference *The Accommodation* by Jim Schutze which has just been republished). The southern half of the city is largely poor/minority and northern half largely wealthier/white. The balance on Council has morphed back and forth over time. The development/business community remains powerful through contributions to south Dallas church’s and candidates. Progressives have had a hard time gaining and retaining traction and influence.
4. The Mayor is a member of equals on the Council. He/she has no veto; however, they can influence behavior of various combinations of Council members through two powers:
  - a. The Mayor can create/change “at will” the scope and composition of Council committees through which legislation and projects emerge (e.g., Public Safety, Infrastructure, Quality of Life, Government Performance and Financial Management, Housing/Homelessness, etc.)
  - b. The Mayor and City Manager are the only two officials who can add items to the Council agenda; although there is a procedural exception.
5. The City Manager, in the highly politically charged nature of Dallas, are cognizant of the need to navigate alliances to retain favor and their position with a majority of Council members. When the progressives have had more influence, the City Manager and staff have operated in a more thoughtful/well intentioned manner. When the progressives are out of favor then things run more amok through influence that permeates City Hall.
6. During the last Charter Commission (10 years ago), there was a move for a Strong Mayor form of government but that was killed because, many believe, it would have diluted the power/influence of the “southern sector” Council members and communities that want to maintain their power. 2020 Census results are as follows:

P0010001	1,304,379		Total:
P0010002	1,092,905	83.8%	Population of one race:
P0010003	470,819	36.1%	White alone
P0010004	303,577	23.3%	Black or African American alone
P0010005	15,376	1.2%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone
P0010006	48,588	3.7%	Asian alone
P0010007	687	0.1%	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone
P0010008	253,858	19.5%	Some Other Race alone
P0010009	211,474	16.2%	Population of two or more races:
P0020001	1,304,379		Total:
P0020002	551,174	42.3%	Hispanic or Latino
P0020003	753,205	57.7%	Not Hispanic or Latino:

Dallas Population by Race



7. While development (and property tax revenue) has grown significantly (however, region is growing far faster than the city), the city ranks near the bottom on racial and economic inequity/inclusion and its level of childhood poverty is in the top three of major cities. Time will tell if the city will ever get serious about equity across all policy areas. They started about a year or two ago but substantive financial investment, a reasonable yardstick of commitment, hasn't yet materialized.
8. Capital investment (bonds) is generally distributed 1/14<sup>th</sup> per district stifling addressing city-wide issues; e.g., affordable housing, equity of infrastructure/services, etc. NIMBYism runs supreme in the affluent areas so affordable housing/workforce housing is relegated to areas of greater concentration of poverty.
9. Corruption has been a historical issue for the city with the vast majority of cases brought by the US Attorney are related to affordable housing in the southern portion of the city. **Attachment A** is a brief representative list of examples. The City has been the subject of numerous HUD Inspector General Reports, Letter of Non-Compliance, Affordable housing discrimination suits and a Voluntary Compliance Agreement over the years as well as clawbacks/fines to the City for improper programming, project/developer selection and not holding CHDOs appropriately accountable for their commitments. Key point is that progressing any of these questionable projects required coordination/support of processing by various city departments, boards, and the Council and applicable committee(s). History can judge whether adequate transparency and ethical judgement/behavior occurred.

## **PART 2 - Charter Commission Form of Government Overlays**

I suggest it's critical to test whatever form(s) of government you explore based on the suggested overlays (particularly policy, politics and people) as well as process (which I added) to ensure what's recommended/approved works as envisioned.

1. **Policy** – Does the Charter make provisions for the topical areas of public services and values/vision for the future that need to be enabled by policy, legislation and services? Are the organs of government, how they operate and operational processes conducive to the envisioned services, values and future? A good checklist might be *The Portland Plan*.
2. **Politics** – Do the envisioned organs of government and how they operate ensure all constituencies and views are heard and decisions made in a transparent, equitable, objective, and ethical manner based on the City's goals and vision? Cities do not operate in a vacuum and council districts are not islands unto themselves. It's important to have an appropriate balance of "district" focus and "city-wide" focus (including the city's role within the region).
3. **People** – Does the charter help ensure the city can attract and retain "top talent" in elected and staff positions and ensure they operate in a transparent, equitable, objective, and ethical manner. The speed and effectiveness of any organization is largely dependent upon such talent that can listen, plan, motivate and execute well. Therefore, the best Council and executive leadership (e.g., down to bureau heads and their directs) is critical.
4. **Process** – Test the form(s) you consider and ensure they are resilient to your objectives; particularly, how well do they address the **politics** and **people** overlay. One thought is to identify a number of political, financial, social, etc. challenges in the past and reflect on how well each form of government would address those challenges. Based on my Dallas experience, I would also suggest exploring how each form would address/recover from the actions of "bad actors (e.g., people with their personal priorities/motivations – whether Council, staff, external actors influencing city hall).

I certainly do not mean to imply that Portland suffers from many of the negative motivations that Dallas suffers (Part 1). I believe Portland's political culture and values are much more progressive than Dallas'. I highlight the above to help animate the kinds of critical thinking that the Commission could apply to those forms/structures of government it wants to explore.

### PART 3 – Structure

I thought I would use the Form of Government Study Questions to frame some additional comments. As you consider your questions, hopefully you will see value in using the Dallas experience to test the role/impact of the overlays with the structural elements of the forms of government you consider:

#### 1. Legislative/Council

- a. Important that Council not just promulgates the laws, codes and regulations but also articulates and commits to VALUES, POLICIES, and PRIORITIES that the executive/administrative parts of the City are to implement/adhere.
- b. While it is important to have local representatives (e.g., council districts), my experience is that some Council members should be elected at large to ensure a balance with a “city wide” perspective. Houston is an example (11 district + 5 at large). In Dallas, only the Mayor is elected at large so the 14 council members focus on their own districts and rarely ever support addressing meaningful housing, equity, etc. programs and investments. I believe a healthy tug between local and city-wide is important.
- c. Full-time/Part-time – Today, the Mayor and Commissioners are, as I understand it, full time positions with commensurate compensation. In most cities, Dallas included, the Mayor and Council members are part-time positions and paid less than a full-time salary (Dallas it’s \$60,000). There are a number of challenges with part-time Council roles:
  - i. Will the salary attract quality candidates; here I am referred to well intentioned, ethical, etc. This is problematic in Dallas.
  - ii. Without a full time, compensated role, many Council members will have other obligations which naturally curtails time to devote to city business, constituent services, etc.
  - iii. In Dallas, there are Council briefings (2-5 hrs) every other week with 50-300 pages of briefing material. Alternating weeks are Agenda meetings which can run 4-8 hours with 500-1200 (avg) pages of proposed ordinances/resolutions and supporting material. Each Council member is also a member of 3-5 committees (see **Attachment B** for list), some as chair/vice-chair. Each committee meets 1-2 times a month for 1-2 hours with their briefing material which run 100-300 pages on average.
  - iv. The burdens to reviews agendas of items coming before Council, budget review, policy/strategy setting etc. become significantly harder (notwithstanding constituent service/interaction) if Council are not full time positions; resulting in a larger dependency on city staff.
  - v. Each council members gets two staff members which are generally scheduling and constituent service. The Council and staff members do not have subject matter experts accountable them – rather, they are dependent upon staff reporting to the City Manager which historically have their agenda. Some Council members find themselves seeking outside residents to review and provide objective commentary on some matters. Here’s were I spend a lot of time on a few subject areas.
- d. Council Committees – unlike Portland with a small, full time Council of five members with assigned subject responsibilities performing executive/administrative roles for assigned departments and legislative role when acting a whole, most other larger also operate with subject oriented committees (e.g., public safety, transportation, etc) where staff and committee members shape strategies, policies, legislative, etc. for subsequent review and later approval by the full council. Who appoints members to committees, which committees will there be, and how well and objectively they are supported by staff are critical because most things have to go through committees to get to Council for approval.
- e. What’s important is that Council members have access to the necessary time, expertise and independent advice from staff, whether part of the City Manager/Administrator or some form of Council Legislative Advisory Service which only the vary largest cities (e.g., NYC and LA).

## 2. Mayor

- a. Except for the City of New York, I am unaware of a large city where the Mayor is not a member of the Council and does not vote with the Council.
- b. A Mayoral Veto is an interesting question. The need has a lot to do with Portland's political history and culture (collaboration, etc?) and personal leadership style of Mayors. A bad Mayor with a veto can have downsides. However, accountability appears to be a major issue for the Commission. A veto gives the Mayor more negotiating power with the rest of the Council. In Dallas there are so many factions, it difficult to get sustained, workable majorities focused on the important things – thus the importance of a strong Mayor with a veto power. However, prior attempts to create a Strong Mayor form of government, like Houston's, have failed because the Council members in the southern half of the city have blocked change because it reduces their (and their community's) power.

## 3. City Auditor

- a. Dallas' Auditor is appointed by and reports to the City Council; however, I believe there is merit in Portland's approach of an elected Auditor accountable to the people. In Dallas, the Council (simple majority) appoints the Auditor and must approve the Auditor's "audit program" which can be problematic and therefore potentially managed.
- b. Not sure what Portland's experience is with ethical lapses of Council and staff, but Dallas' ethics policy and staff's administrative mechanisms have apparently enabled numerous corruption cases brought by the US Attorney over the years. Issues continue. Independence can help but also a mandate in the Charter for appropriate ethics provisions and a continuous audit program of strategic operational processes (e.g., contracting).

## 4. City Manager/City Administrative Officer

- a. City Managers, under a Council-Manager form of government serve at the pleasure of the City Council. Removal varies based on charter and contract. However, once appointed, removal is more difficult as the required majority must be obtained assuming valid rationale.
- b. Dallas' City Managers have traditionally been relatively independent as they are not accountable to any one individual (e.g., Mayor) and so long as they can maintain the required majority its near impossible to remove given all staff are accountable to the City Manager; appointed and removed by the City Manager "at will" without Council consent. Net, accountability of Dallas' City Manager is completely diffused which I believe is to the city's detriment.
- c. So, while the Dallas City Manager serves the Council (at will within agreed contract), I characterize Dallas' form of government as weak Council-strong Manager.

## PART 4 - Processes

While not specific to form of government, following are some critical processes which I suggest should be considered in assessing the roles and responsibilities of components of the city government:

### 1. Budget

- a. The annual budget is one of the most critical processes for a city given it should reflect the priorities, strategies and tradeoffs the Council is making in a time continuum of implementing its strategies and priorities for the City.
- b. While budgets need to reflect current conditions, they should also reflect how that year(s) budget will further (or not) prior commitments (strategic plans, etc.) and clearly articulate priorities, changes thereto and rationale and proposed adjusted timeframes. Otherwise, what accountability to commitments can be expected?
- c. Budget development is extremely difficult with many moving parts till completion. First let me speak to the Dallas process and then suggest some observations:
  - i. Dallas develops a biennial budget although the first year is official.
  - ii. This year was the first year without a Council retreat to discuss priorities. When held, they were discrete priorities without the benefit of all the prior approved strategies. For as long as I can

remember, staff rarely coordinated an effort with the Council and public to understand priorities for/among its various strategic plans (**Attachment C** is a list of recent strategic plans). Net, no accountability or traceability.

- iii. In early June an online survey of resident priorities is performed, and staff meet with Council individually to understand priorities until first week of July. Then nothing public until middle of August when the proposed budget is released. No doubt staff will have one off conversations with Council members (which?). Then there is one month for town halls that Council members hold and a few budget briefings where Council can only offer balanced amendments (cuts here to spend there). Budget is approved late September.
- d. While I am not up on the schedule/process for development of Portland's budget, I suspect the smaller, full-time Council, where bureau heads report to Commissioners provides the Council with greater input and insight to the budget, priorities and tradeoffs. Unclear what opportunities currently exist for public assessment and input on priorities, tradeoffs, etc. – including alignment with strategic plans the city might have developed.
- e. I am not suggesting that the proposed charter should be overly specific but I believe it's important that key objectives are understood and articulated where possible.

## **2. Transparency, Ethics and Open Records**

- a. I am not knowledgeable of any Oregon and Portland laws regarding transparency, ethics and open records but this is an opportunity to incorporate your values on these topics in the proposed Charter.
- b. Transparency is difficult to achieve without:
  - i. Publishing as much as possible online with no burden for access, accessible in the easiest and most intuitive manner possible. Open Data portals are one vehicle as well as a robust website.
  - ii. Since everything can't be published (a very ending list) an open records request process (e.g., Freedom of Information Act) is the next best thing; particularly if the city holds itself to a high bar for what should be easily accessible. The Texas Attorney General has stated on numerous occasions that the City of Dallas appeals resident open records request more than any other local jurisdiction in Texas.
  - iii. Important to appreciate that availability of public records is critical to identifying ethical lapses and fostering ethical behavior. As an example, procurement tends to be an issue for many local governments. Advertising requirements, bid assessment details, resulting contracts, payments, etc. are examples of relevant public records.

## Attachment A – History of Corruption in Dallas

The Dallas Morning News article “**Dallas mayoral candidates want to curb corruption, but is it possible?**” (April 28, 2019) provided a partial chronology of the History of Dallas City Hall corruption.

### History of Dallas City Hall corruption

**Paul Fielding** was the first sitting Dallas council member to be indicted on public corruption charges. He was caught on tape talking to council member Al Lipscomb about forming a "minority front" company that could seek business and payments from corporations and threaten to picket them for being unfair to blacks if they did not succumb. He resigned and pleaded guilty in 1997, spending 41 months in prison.

**Lipscomb**, a civil rights icon, resigned from the Dallas City Council in scandal after a federal jury found him guilty of 65 counts of bribery and conspiracy. He was accused of taking payments from the Yellow Cab Company in exchange for voting in the company's favor. That conviction was overturned after an appellate court ruled the trial should not have been moved to Amarillo, and it was never retried.

A political protégé of Lipscomb, **James Fantroy**, attracted the FBI's attention in 2004 when he attempted to solicit a bribe from developer James R. "Bill" Fisher. But the Dallas City Council member wasn't charged with bribery. Instead, he was convicted in 2008 of embezzling \$21,000 from Paul Quinn College. He was sentenced to 30 days in prison and 180 days of home confinement. Fantroy died in 2008.

In 2009, former Dallas mayor pro tem **Don Hill** was convicted for his role in a racket that involved a low-income housing developer, a city commissioner and other allies. He was sentenced to 18 years for bribery and was to be released in December 2025 due to good conduct. Hill died in May 2017 after complications from prostate cancer.

In March, **Carolyn Davis**, the former council member who represented the South Dallas/Fair Park area, pleaded guilty to taking bribes from a real estate developer, Ruel Hamilton, while she was chairwoman of the council's Housing Committee.

**Dwaine Caraway**, who once served as acting mayor, was sentenced to 56 months in prison this month for his part in a corruption case that took down an agency responsible for the transportation and safety of schoolchildren.

Source: <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/elections/2019/04/28/dallas-mayoral-candidates-want-curb-corruptionpossible>

Since, at least two additional cases of note:

1. Sherman Roberts was accused (Dec 2020) in a federal indictment of scheming with two former Dallas City Council members to get public money for his affordable housing projects in exchange for cash bribes and other promises.
2. Raul Hamilton, a real estate developer was convicted (June 2021) of bribing a Council member for favorable treatment related to affordable housing.

**Attachment B – Committees of the City Council of the City of Dallas**

First two columns are list the departments under each of the City Manager’s direct reports. The last column list the Council committee’s assigned City Manager interface (relationship manager). Each direct, but the City Manager’s Chief of Staff have an assigned Council Committee.

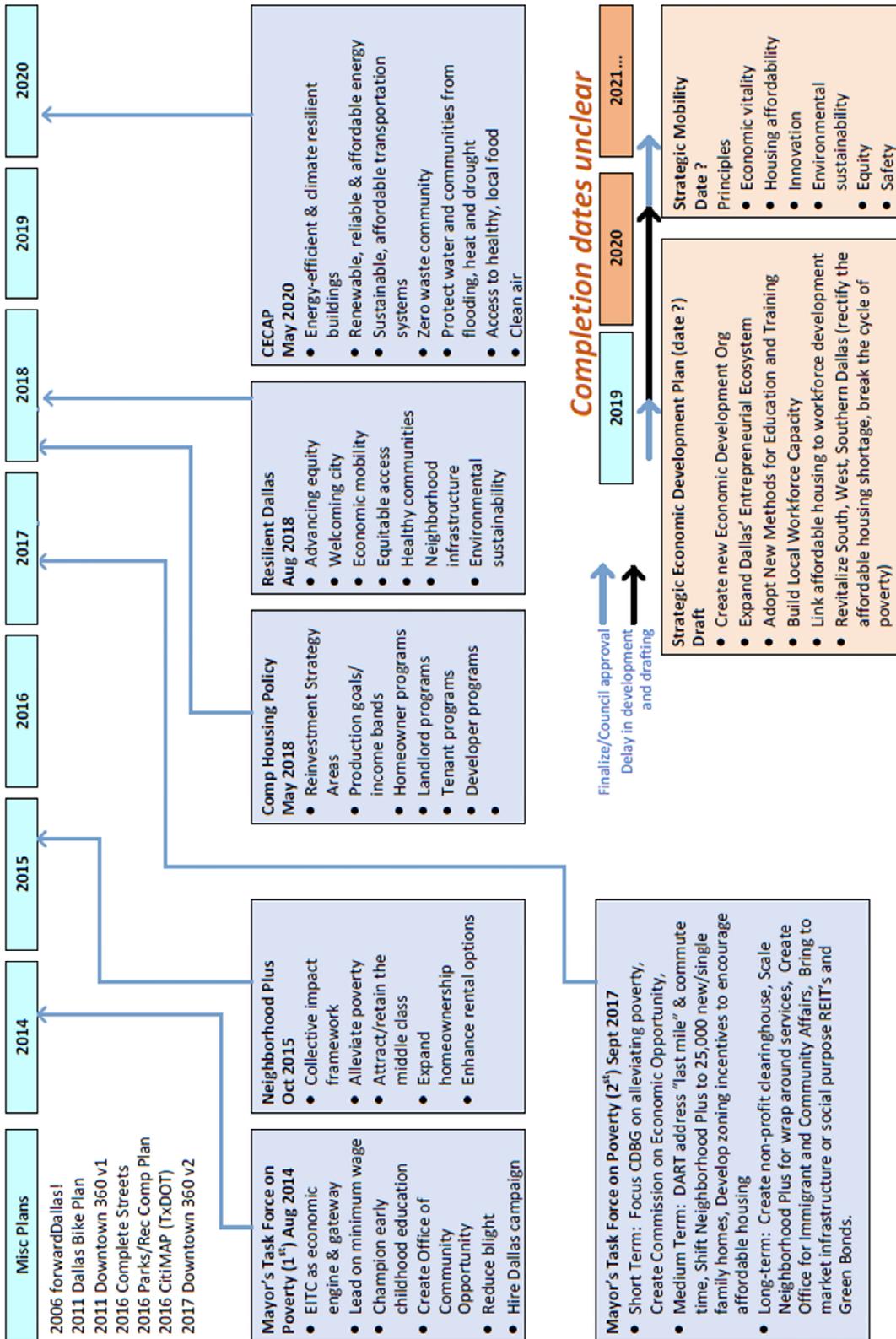
<b>City Manager's Direct Reports</b>	<b>Departments assigned to Direct Reports</b>	<b>Council Committees</b>
Chief of Economic Development & Neighborhood Services	Economic Development	<b>Economic Development</b>
	Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization Planning & Urban Design Development Services	<b>Housing and Homelessness Solutions</b>
Assistant City Manager	Dallas Animal Services	<b>Environment and Sustainability</b>
	Arts & Culture Building Services	<b>Quality of Life, Arts and Culture</b>
Chief Finanical Officer	City Controller's Office Equipment & Fleet Management Information & Technology Services Budget & Management Services Data Analytics & Business Intelligence Procurement Services Risk Management	<b>Government Performance and Financial Management</b>
Assistant City Manager	Dallas Police Dallas Fire-Rescue Court & Detention Services Code Compliance Emergency Management Integrated Public Safety Solutions	<b>Public Safety</b>
Assistant City Manager	Aviation Dallas Water Utilities Public Works Transportation Bond & Construction Management	<b>Transportation and Infrastructure</b>
Chief of Equity and Inclusion	Equity & Inclusion 311 Enviromental Quality & Sustainability	<b>Workforce, Education and Equity</b>
Chief of Staff	Mayor/Council Office Human Resources Communications, Outreach & Marketing Community Care Homeless Solutions Government Affairs Small Business Center	N/A Community Care and Homeless Solutions matters work through the <i>Housing and Homelessness Committee and the rest through the Government Performance &amp; Financial Management Committee</i>

Ad Hoc Committees of the City Council

COVID-19 Recovery and Assistance General investigating and Ethics Judicial Nominations Legislative Affairs
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## Attachment C – Strategic Plans and Studies

The following diagram highlights the most recent strategic plans (and scope). Note: this was developed June 2020 as part of communication to Council about the lack of strategic plan follow through. The two plans in brown have were approved last 2020.



My concern is that plans are developed, then there is no traceability over time of what done, will be done when, or reprioritized due to current issues, changed plans, etc. For example, the 2011 Dallas Bike Plan was essentially not implemented.

**September 23, 2021**

**Testimony on City Charter 17.93.010, Criteria For Renaming a City Street.  
By Sean Aaron Cruz**

Mr. Mayor, Members of the City Council and of the Charter Review Committee:

I'd like to explain why the lack of clarity in this section of the Charter is a significant issue, particularly in any discussion of equity and community and honoring individuals with public monuments, and offer what I think are good solutions to the two main problems I see in the Charter and the practice.

The actual process of renaming the street in the most recent four street renamings (Rosa Parks, Bill Naito, Cesar Chavez, Harvey Milk) have all varied from what is required in the Charter. The lack of clarity contributes to the sense that only numbered streets or those without a person's name can be renamed, and that can lead to the wrong street being renamed, as was the case in renaming 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Cesar Chavez Boulevard.

I hope that the Committee can clarify which streets already 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, and for some their significance is shameful.

Many of those names would not meet the qualifications required in the City charter for street renaming today.

The City has an inconsistent history in the area of street renaming, looking at the two most recent examples: Harvey Milk and Cesar Chavez.

1. I'm in support of the Council's decision to rename a portion of Stark Street in remembrance of Harvey Milk. The call for renaming was organic, came from the community, from the neighborhood itself. It serves an inspirational purpose right where it is and is a direct benefit to businesses and residents in that neighborhood and elsewhere.

However, I do have to point out that the renaming violated the Charter provision which states

**C.** The name of any street shall be the same for its entire length. Renaming only portions of a street shall not be permitted.

And, keeping the name Stark along the rest of its length in memory of a pro-slavery racist who also was a colonel in the militia participating in massacres, village-burnings and forced removal of Indians in the Rogue River Wars of 1853 seems to push the envelope of the Charter provision that requires that a street can only be (renamed) for:

**A.1.** a person who has achieved prominence as a result of his or her **significant, positive contribution** to the United States of America and/or the local community;

So, it would seem that the best solution would have been to rename the entire street for Harvey Milk, but the precedent also suggests that the remaining Stark segments of the street qualify for renaming despite what the Charter reads. Other communities along its length might want to think about that.



2. The second example is the renaming of 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue for Cesar Chavez, and this one is significant both because it was and is the wrong street and for the unintended consequences that ensued.

I am a Chicano. My father was born in Mexico and my brother and I and our cousins were the first generation in my extended family growing up in California not to do farm work for a living. I'm the first in my family to attend and graduate from college and I have been a farmworker justice advocate my entire adult life.

I was serving as Senator Avel Gordly's legislative staff in 2007 when I took the call from the person representing a committee that wanted to rename Interstate Avenue for Cesar Chavez.

Farmworker justice issues were an important part of Senator Gordly's portfolio and personally important to me. Back in 2002, when she offered me the opportunity to serve as her legislative staff in the 2003 session, I only had one question for her:

"Are we going to do anything for farmworkers?"

"Yes, we are," she replied.

"OK, I'm in," I said.

The first two bills she tasked me to draft in 2003 were about farmworker justice. Neither bill got a hearing, but she formed a partnership with Bureau of Labor and Industry Commissioner Dan Gardner to accomplish the goals of one of them, and through their work, Oregon's farm workers won the right to meal and restroom breaks during the work day, effective February 2004..

There was a section in Oregon state law that specifically excluded Oregon's agricultural workers from those rights, and Senator Gordly and Commissioner Gardner got it removed even without a bill. Cesar Chavez would have loved that story.

However, the two-year-long brouhaha in Portland spread to the state capitol and killed off farmworker justice legislation for the next several years after the name was changed in 2009. Senator Gordly had retired and no one wanted to attract that kind of attention.

I asked the renaming committee person why Interstate had been selected and she replied that it was a big street and they liked it.

I said that the Mexican/Chicano/Hispanic/Latinx farmworker Community wasn't on Interstate and that the only place you could find Mexican food on it was Taco Bell, which at the time was being boycotted by the United Farm Workers.

She said that the Committee had already decided to fight for Interstate, which later became a fight to rename 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and finally a fight which 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue lost. Polling along 39<sup>th</sup> showed strong opposition and little support, but the Council told them that this was the way it was going to be.

Unlike the street renaming for Harvey Milk, this renaming did not emerge from the community that lives and works on or adjacent to the street.

The fact was that the Chavez community wasn't on any of the three streets considered.

Not a single member of the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce had an address on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and none stood up in support of the renaming. Today, not a single member of the Hispanic chamber has an address on Cesar Chavez Blvd.

The result of the highly-flawed process was to rename a street that then and now has no Mexican/Chicano/Hispanic/Latinx/farmworker Community businesses or other presence anywhere along its length, which explains the fact that there has been no event of any kind marking Cesar Chavez or the farm workers he fought for on the street in the history of the street.

If you want to enjoy some Mexican food on Cesar Chavez Blvd in Portland, Oregon, you have to bring it with you.

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. I'm sure that few Portlanders have any idea who that person was and I doubt that many would oppose changing the name.

Despite its dozens of Mexican/Chicano/Hispanic/Latinx Community 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 Community Development Corporation's operations and housing complexes are the anchor.

*Las Adelitas, Villa de Clara Vista, Villa de Sueños, Villa de Mariposas, Vista de Rojas* and Hacienda CDC would all have Cesar Chavez Boulevard addresses, and maybe the Interstate Max station would also be renamed as it is at the intersection of Killingsworth and Interstate.

Renaming Killingsworth for Cesar Chavez 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.

I have three suggestions:

1. Insert the words "named or" in this line below, and if a street name does not meet these criteria, it's a potential candidate for renaming.

### **17.93.010 Criteria For Renaming a City Street.**

**A.** Any individual or organization may apply to the City to rename a City street.

City streets may only be [named or] renamed after a prominent person. Such prominent person must be:

**1. a person who has achieved prominence as a result of his or her significant, positive contribution to the United States of America and/or the local community;**

**2. a real person; and**

**2. Survey property owners, residents and the community along both Killingsworth and Cesar Chavez and ask among both groups if Chavez should be renamed 39<sup>th</sup> and if Killingsworth should be renamed for Cesar Chavez. Ask these respective communities what they want.**

**3. Process questions: How long is the waiting list? What names and streets are on it? Can the waiting list be made public?**

**B. Only one street renaming application shall be processed at a time, and only one street name change shall be implemented per year for a major traffic or district collector street. Additional applications shall be placed on a waiting list and processed in order of submission when this criteria can be met.**

I appreciate the opportunity to bring these comments and suggestions to the Charter Commission and City Council.

Sean Aaron Cruz  
10809 NE Fremont Street  
Portland, OR 97220  
[seancruz@comcast.net](mailto:seancruz@comcast.net)

Hello Charter Commission,

I became interested in alternative voting methods because I want us all to be better stewards to the places and communities we care about. Having a voting system that is logistically accessible, socially equitable and easy to understand is the foundation of an engaged community.

There are many alternative voting systems out there, and each have merits, but the system that I advocate for is Approval Voting. In this system, you vote for every candidate you approve of. The candidate with the most votes wins.

I believe it's the best system for Portland because

- I can explain it to my grandma. It is the simplest to understand, thereby enfranchising voters of all levels of political interest.
- It involves minimal change to the ballot, making it cheaper and logistically easier to adopt than other alternative voting methods
- It has proven successful in Fargo, ND and St. Louis, MO.

Despite its simplicity, it still achieves what other more complicated alternative voting methods aim to. Approval Voting

- Enfranchises citizenry with a system that encourages diversity of opinion in candidates and voters alike
- Discourages partisanship and supports collective civic progress by electing consensus candidates.
- Reduces the impact of vote-splitting or tactical voting.

Additionally, approval voting aligns well with the City Club of Portland's work on our commission and voting systems here in Portland in the following ways:

- Communities/voter coalitions that are in the minority can put forward candidates, vote for those candidates and have the support of those candidate recognized publicly. There is no reason not to run or not to support a candidate whose values align with your own.
- Voters can express their honest preference without fearing their vote will subtract from a candidate they think 'has a better chance of winning'.
- There is no reason for candidates to negatively campaign because voters can vote for them and their opponent(s).
- Approval voting works great without a primary.

I am heartened that the City Charter Commission is taking a close look at our voting system here in Portland. I agree wholeheartedly that it needs attention. So many voters are already discouraged, confused and frustrated by their options for civic engagement, I want to strongly encourage the commission to consider the voting system that is the most inclusive - Approval Voting. Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,  
May Reid-Marr

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**Portland Charter Commission  
ICMA Conference, October 4, 2021  
Resources and comments  
Scott Lazenby, PhD, Hatfield School of Government**

Question: In your research, what are some ways in which the structure of government and composition of the city council have helped or hindered marginalized communities from having a voice?

From the code of ethics for city managers:

Tenet 4. Serve the best interests of the people.

**GUIDELINES**

Impacts of Decisions. Members should inform their governing body of the anticipated effects of a decision on people in their jurisdictions, especially if specific groups may be disproportionately harmed or helped.

Inclusion. To ensure that all the people within their jurisdiction have the ability to actively engage with their local government, members should strive to eliminate barriers to public involvement in decisions, programs, and services.

Some research suggests that mayor-council governments are more strongly influenced by politically powerful groups than council-manager governments.

- In land use decisions - Lubell, Mark, Richard C. Feiock, and Edgar E. Ramirez de la Cruz. 2009. *Local Institutions and the Politics of Urban Growth*. American Journal of Political Science 53(3): 649-65
- In economic development - Feiock, Richard C., and Jae-Hoon Kim. 2000. *Form of Government, Administrative Organization, and Local Economic Development Policy*. Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory 11(1): 29-50; also Feiock, Richard C., Moon-Gi Jeong, and Jaehoon Kim. 2003. *Credible Commitment and Council-Manager Government: Implications for Policy Instrument Choices*. Public Administration Review 63(5): 616-25

Some evidence that council-manager governments more actively seek to engage the public. Nelson, Ben, and Curtis Wood. 2010. *Repercussions of Reform: The Effect of Municipal Form of Government on Citizen Participation Strategies*. Journal of Public Administration 3(3): 25

Question: Research has shown that council-manager form of government and district representation on council helps reduce corruption. Why do you think that is?

The council-manager form of government was created both to address widespread corruption in local government, and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government through the emerging field of administrative science.

Adherence to a strict code of ethics remains the **only** criterion for membership in the International City/County Management Association.

Question: Having served as a city manager and also being an academic and theorist engaged with issues of local governance, what do you believe are the most important considerations to help guide these charter recommendations.

- While the form of government is an important decision, it is relatively reversible. In its history, the City of Beaverton has switched back and forth from mayor-council to council-manager form several times, most recently switching back to council-manager in the 2020 general election. Therefore the Charter Commission should feel free to be bold in its recommendations; any change can be considered an experiment in home rule government.
- Does Portland really want to be “the city that works?” Then consider benchmark cities with a council-manager form of government: Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas TX; Phoenix AZ and its major suburbs--Mesa, Glendale, Tempe, and Scottsdale; San Jose and all Silicon Valley cities with the exception of San Francisco, and many other well-run CA cities. (An analysis by *Governing* magazine attributed the stark difference in performance of the City of Phoenix vs. Maricopa County was due to the former’s council-manager form of government).
- Consider also that the vast majority of the 89,000 local governments in the US have an elected governing board with a professional CEO accountable to the board: school boards and superintendents; university boards and presidents; fire district boards and fire chiefs; major service districts such as Clean Water Services with a Chief Executive Officer, etc.
- City council members can be more successful in achieving their vision and goals with an appointed, professional CEO who is accountable for executing their policy direction. Research by local government scholar James Svara found that “council members in council-manager cities rated their effectiveness higher than council members in mayor-council cities with regard to several key functions: establishing a vision for the city, establishing long-term goals, establishing objectives and priorities, reviewing and approving the budget, overseeing program effectiveness, and overseeing administrative performance.” Svara, James H., 2002. *Mayors in the Unity of Powers Context: Effective Leadership in Council-Manager Governments*. In *The Future of Local Government Administration: The Hansell Symposium*, edited by H. George Frederickson and John Nalbandian, 43-57. Washington, DC: International City/County Management Association. As summarized in Carr, Jered B., 2015, *What Have We Learned about the Performance of Council-Manager Government? A Review and Synthesis of the Research*, *Public Administration Review*, volume 75 673-689

### **Observations and recommendations on elections based on forty+ years’ experience in local government in four states.**

#### City Council Elections

Elected offices: Which offices should be elected by the people? *City council members and mayor. We voters are not qualified to recruit and hire professional positions in the time we spend filling out our ballots at the kitchen table. Not auditor, either, if the goal is positive change within the organization;*

*elected if the goal instead is to gain voter approval for the charter. Council appoints city manager, judge(s), and possibly city attorney.*

*Council constituency: What should the constituency of Councilors be? Examples include at-large, district, or a mixture of at-large and district. For a city the size of Portland, six council districts would draw from a pool of just over 100,000 each, which should be sufficient to find someone qualified in each. One option is to follow Hillsboro's example, and require a candidate to reside in a district, but elected at-large as a reminder that the council as a whole represents all residents.*

*Council size: How many City Councilors should we have to fulfill the work of Portland? Seven seems a good number. Allows for six districts. Large enough to get a diversity of views. Much larger makes decision-making more difficult, reduces accountability, and shifts policy-making power to one individual (mayor).*

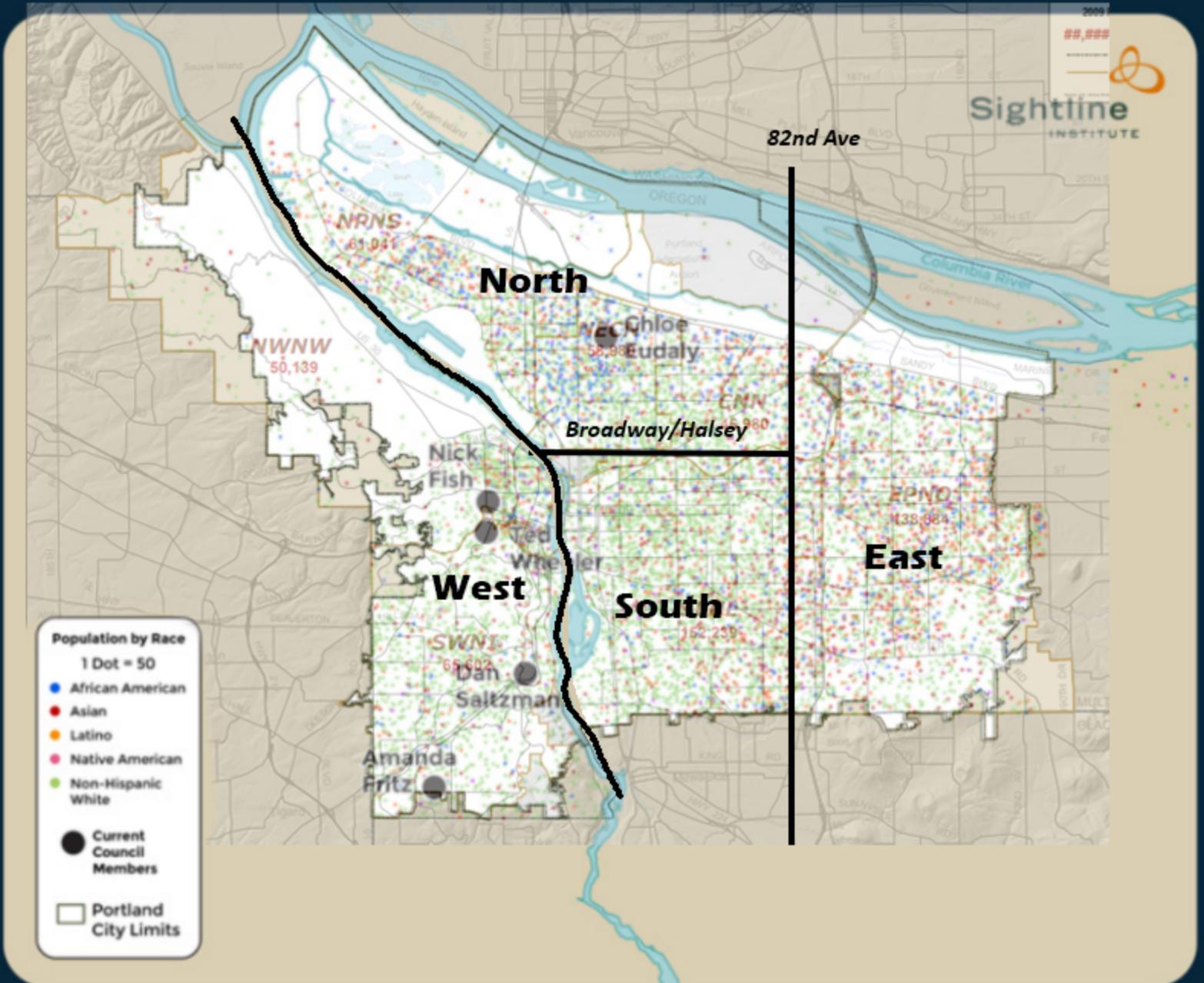
*Form of voting: What form of voting should we use to elect city elected offices? Should our system retain a winner-take-all/loser has none approach? An instant run-off (rank order) ballot would be good. A disadvantage is some people don't bother to rank more than one candidate. Otherwise a primary/general election seems appropriate.*

*Timing of elections: Should we have a two-round system that includes a primary and a general election? Should local elections be aligned with the presidential general election? Yes to both, if an instant runoff ballot is not used. This is the only way to get reasonable turnout. But 4-year terms could be staggered so the general election would align with either the presidential election or the midterm congressional election.*

*Expanding democracy: Who should have the ability to vote on Portland's elected leaders? Who should have the ability to take part in direct democracy ballot measures? People who live in the Portland city limits. Accepting pay for gathering petitions should be illegal.*

*Also: To help pass a charter change measure, it could include term limits. Two 4-year terms for council members, plus another two 4-year terms for mayor.*

# Four out of five current commissioners live west of the river.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, City of Portland, CORE GIS