

Coalition of Communities of Color and Partner Organizations Workshop Two Report



**Prepared for
Portland Charter Commission
February 2022**

Table of Contents

1. Project Background.....	3-5
a. About the Charter Review and Community Engagement	
b. About the Charter Review Workshop Series	
c. About the Evaluation and Limitations	
2. Collective Discussion Analysis Across All Organizations.....	5-12
a. Collective Key Themes of Form of Government	
b. Collective Key Themes of City Council Elections	
3. Appendix.....	13-33
a. Charter Review Workshop Discussion Activity	
b. Charter Review Workshop Curriculum	

Project Background

About the Charter Review and Community Engagement

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

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

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

About the Charter Review Workshop Series

Two-Part Workshop: To educate community members about the Charter Review process in an accessible way, the Coalition of Communities of Color decided to design a **two-part workshop**. The first part of the workshop, titled the Charter Review 101 Workshop, took place in November 2021. Participants from the first workshop were prioritized for part two of the series, which took place in January 2022. New participants were also welcome to join. The objective of part one was to inform community members about a high level of what the Portland Charter Commission is and to present foundational education about Portland's current form of government and City

Council elections. The objective of part two was to present a more refined set of proposals the Charter Commission is currently considering to gather feedback, concerns, and opinions from community members about potential changes to the form of government and City Council elections.

Curriculum: For part two of the workshop, the CCC created a [two-hour-long workshop](#) curriculum to provide the background context and information about several of the proposals the Charter Commission is considering. The curriculum included an educational presentation that covered the topics of Portland's current form of government and alternative forms, and Portland's current City Council elections and alternative voting systems and methods. Such topics included the mayor-council form of government, the council-manager form of government, multi-member districts, ranked-choice voting and STAR voting, and others. The second component of the workshop was a discussion designed for small groups to participate in and share their opinions on some of the potential alternatives to Portland's systems. The presentation was roughly 40 minutes while the discussion was set up for 60 minutes.

Role of Partner Organizations: Partner organizations from the Phase One Collaborative were responsible for hosting a workshop with their community base in November 2021 and hosting a part two workshop in January 2022. Partner organizations engaged in targeted outreach to their community base to recruit participants for the workshop series. Outreach varied per organization and included multi-lingual outreach, phone call outreach, social media outreach, and other digital communications outreach. Portlanders of color and historically disenfranchised Portlanders were prioritized in outreach efforts, including community members who have a meaningful connection or spend a lot of time working, playing, etc. in Portland. The role of partner organizations was to engage in outreach and host a workshop with their community base.

Total Engagement: There were a total of eleven workshop events that took place, one was hosted by the Coalition of Communities of Color, and the rest were hosted by the CCC's Phase One Collaborative. The baseline goal of engagement across the workshop events was 150 total participants (10-15 per organization). **A total of 170 participants were engaged across the organizations' workshop events.**

About the Evaluation and Limitations

Overall Limitations: Although the goal of this workshop series was to center the lived experiences, perspectives, and knowledge of historically disenfranchised communities, it is crucial to reiterate this workshop series and report are *not* reflective of Portlanders at large or reflective of any individual community group that participated in this series. This report is the analysis of a very small sample size of Portlanders, and moreover, ongoing engagement and outreach efforts are essential to meaningfully center Black, Indigenous, communities of color, and other historically disenfranchised communities. No community is a monolith, each participant is an individual with their own set of lived experiences and opinions, and this report only captures the perspectives of those who participated in the workshop series. It should not be

distorted through any misrepresentations that there are universal preferences from any community. Participants were recruited by partners and the workshops were not designed to function as a random sample of community perspectives.

Methodology: This report analyzes the discussions that small groups engaged in as they shared their perspectives on a set of the Charter Commission's potential recommendations of reform. Small groups ranged from 2-8 participants depending on each event's total size. Staff from each organization, who are trusted community leaders, facilitated the small group discussions using a discussion guide that the CCC created. Due to the nature of discussion groups, it is important to acknowledge that not every participant shared their perspective for every discussion question. Facilitators recorded their discussions and completed sets of high-level notes based on their group conversations. The CCC and Charter Commission staff then worked to analyze any key themes or findings from the discussions based on topics the group discussed. These themes were identified by closely assessing the available materials and taking note of which sentiments were repeated the most often or seemed to resonate deeply with participants. This analysis is not intended to portray an absolute community opinion, but rather explore the diverse thinking and experiences of community members who participated in these workshop events.

Collective Discussion Analysis Across All Organizations

As a preface to the collective themes from the eleven organizations that participated in this workshop report, we would like to restate that this workshop report is not meant to substitute for ongoing engagement to gather policy input. The Charter Commission must continue its important work to center community-based organizations, culturally-specific organizations, service providers, and others to refine their policy proposals. This report is not meant to point to specific policy outcomes, but rather explore the valuable perspectives of community members who were able to make their voices heard through trusted mediums.

Collective Key Themes of Form of Government

Participants elevated the importance of accountability, regardless of the form of government— Across all the organizations, there was a strong sentiment that Portland's city government must strive to be more accountable and responsive. Regardless of the form of government, every organization felt that the underlying issue is accountability.

- **Participants uplifted the need for the city government to equitably invest in all parts of the city and address current crises.** As participants discussed potential reform to the city government, there was a common theme that currently many areas of the city have not been funded equitably. Participants wanted to see city dollars address geographic disparities and fund the immediate needs of Portland communities. Participants felt that bureaus and elected leaders have failed to take accountability for the rollout of services and city priorities. There was a sentiment that elected leaders don't always carry out the promises they centered their campaigns on. Accountability was a crucial value and framework that participants shared while thinking about potential changes to the city government.

Participants supported shifting away from the commission form of government—

Although all organizations expressed the desire for some type of change, five organizations explicitly shared that Portland should shift away from the commission government structure.

- **Participants supported shifting away from the commission structure to ensure City Commissioners no longer run bureaus.** Participants had a strong desire to have City Commissioners (Councilors) solely focus on passing policies, approving the city budget, and interacting with communities. They shared that running a bureau is a time-consuming and technical role that City Commissioners are not the most equipped to engage in. Participants gave examples of several specific bureaus, like water, fire, and police, which they highlighted require extensive training and expertise. Participants felt that shifting this management authority elsewhere would ensure that bureaus are run by individuals who have the background and experience to carry out those particular functions. They also felt that shifting this management authority would free up City Council members to engage more frequently and meaningfully with Portlanders. Participants saw a direct link between City Commissioners running bureaus and a lack of understanding of community needs since they don't have the time to meet with communities. Freeing up City Commissioners to focus on passing policy, would ensure they can involve more communities in their decision making and processes. One participant shared, "The Mayor has seven bureaus, plus the police [bureau], plus, plus, plus. That's a lot of work for him, that's why you don't see him on the streets talking to people. You don't see the other Commissioners, or the other Councilors, on the streets talking to people."

Overall, participants did not have a clear preference between a mayor-council or council-manager form of government—

Of the eleven organizations, five of them did not have a clear preference for either form of government. Among those who did share a specific preference, four organizations preferred a council-manager government and two preferred a mayor-council government.

Council-Manager Support and Opposition

- **Participants who preferred a council-manager government liked the idea of a professional City Manager who has the background to run bureaus, can be hired**

for a longer time and can carry out the city's policies in a politically neutral way.

One of the key reasons participants supported a council-manager government was the idea that a professional manager has the specialized expertise and previous experience to manage the city's bureaus and day-to-day operations. Participants felt that this was a significant improvement to the current system of City Commissioners managing bureaus, who may not have the qualifications to do so. Participants liked the consistency of a manager who can be hired for a longer time than the four-year term a Mayor serves, so they can adequately plan longer term and add more consistency to the role. Participants also felt that a City Manager was more likely to carry out the city's policies and budget in a politically neutral way because they don't need to campaign or navigate re-election, and they are not a member of the City Council. Participants highlighted that a Mayor who is helping to make decisions on the City Council may have more bias or an agenda when implementing policies or the budget. Participants felt that the City Council is able to continuously hold the City Manager accountable; meanwhile, a Mayor can only be held accountable through re-election or a recall election.

- **Participants who opposed the council-manager government did not like that they can't directly elect a City Manager, were concerned community needs would not be heard and questioned the notion of political neutrality.** One of the key reasons participants opposed a council-manager government was because they do not hold an elected position. Participants wanted the opportunity to add their voice to the process of choosing the individual who serves the executive role of the city by directly voting for them. Participants were concerned that a City Manager who is not elected, may not have a direct investment in community needs since they don't have to run on a specific platform or garner the support of the voters. Participants were also concerned that a City Manager who is not a resident of the city may lack a comprehensive understanding of what issues the city faces and how to best address them. Participants also questioned the notion of political neutrality and did not agree that a City Manager would be completely removed from political influence. There was a fear that it may be difficult to hold a City Manager accountable without their direct voting power.

Mayor-Council Support and Opposition

- **Participants who preferred a mayor-council government liked that they can directly vote for a Mayor, shared this structure is familiar to people, and liked having one leader at the forefront of the city government.** One of the key reasons participants supported a mayor-council government was because they can directly contribute to the outcome of who is chosen. Participants liked that they could directly use their voting power to make their voice heard and to influence a Mayor once they are in office. Participants emphasized that elected leaders are in office because they built a platform of promises to voters, and this platform helps to keep them accountable. Participants also shared that many communities are accustomed to a system in which the Mayor is the head of the city and leads the City Council members. Having a leader who is at the forefront of the city government was appealing to participants because they could clearly identify who to hold accountable for government action or inaction. Participants were concerned that having shared power can make it difficult for decisions

to be made and liked having one person who can bring others together and can be the deciding factor.

- **Participants who opposed a mayor-council government shared concerns that a Mayor may not represent the entire city, can be difficult to remove from office, and risks too much concentration of power in one individual.** One key reason participants opposed the mayor-council government was that although voters can directly elect a Mayor, there is a risk they can get elected without the majority of votes, which has previously happened. Participants shared that there is no guarantee that a Mayor will represent the entire city or historically disenfranchised communities like communities of color, low-income communities, and unhoused communities. There is also no guarantee that a Mayor will carry out the promises they built their platform on. Participants expressed that it can be difficult to remove a Mayor from office if they are not meeting community needs because voters have to wait for reelection every four years or set up a recall election, which is expensive. Participants also felt a hesitancy with one leader having too much-concentrated power since they may lead based on their agenda and limit the perspectives of others.

Collective Key Themes of City Council Elections

Participants preferred district representation for City Council member seats—

Across all the organizations, there was a strong preference for district representation within the City Council, rather than Portland's current at-large system. Of the eleven organizations, all of them highlighted the importance of geographic and district representation.

- **One of the reasons for district representation that was most echoed by participants was the idea that having an elected leader who lives in the area they represent increases their understanding of the community's needs.** A common scenario that participants gave an example of is that someone who lives in outer East Portland has a unique lived experience compared to someone who lives in Northwest Portland or downtown. Participants expressed they want to be able to connect with an elected leader who truly is integrated into their community, who buys groceries in their neighborhood, who frequents the community places they do, and has a more accurate understanding of what it's like to live in that area. Participants agreed that elected leaders would be better equipped to not only understand community needs but to design solutions in ways that are comprehensive and accurate to the existing conditions of that geographic area.
- **Another reason participants preferred district representation is that it would help to more equitably represent Portland's geographic communities.** As participants shared their experiences living in Portland, there was a recurring theme that outer East Portland has been neglected over the years. It was clear that participants felt the city government has not equitably invested in or been responsive to the needs of East Portland. From issues of infrastructure to public safety, participants noticed a disparity within funding and city investments. For this reason, participants emphasized that a

model of district representation would help to increase the representation of Portland's geographic communities. Additionally, participants felt that district elections would increase the diversity of voters who participate in the election process because there would be a specific choice of candidates to interact with and research, and once elected, communities would have a clear idea of who represents them.

- One participant shared, "City Council has historically been represented by those living in Southwest, we only really just started receiving representation on Council in the last couple of years, with North and Southeast based representatives."

Participants preferred a model of multi-member districts with multiple elected leaders per district—

A majority of participants across the organizations preferred multi-member districts with multiple elected leaders representing each district, rather than single-member districts. Of the eleven organizations, eight of them preferred multi-member districts.

- **One of the key reasons participants preferred multi-member districts is that it would increase accountability and productivity among City Councilors.**

Participants emphasized that having more than one elected leader to reach out to when community priorities are not being addressed would be helpful to effect change.

Participants also shared that elected leaders would need to work together to make decisions and address their constituency, which would help keep them accountable. The crises that Portland is facing are complex, and multiple leaders per district increase the capacity of those leaders to adequately address localized issues and divide the workload. Participants recognized that building relationships with community members and working to pass needed policies takes great effort, so more elected leaders per area can elevate new perspectives and ideas.

- **Another reason participants preferred multi-member districts is that it would help to increase their chances of connecting with a City Councilor.** Participants described that multiple elected leaders per district open more opportunities for them to connect with a candidate that shares their values. If there is only one elected leader per district, there is a greater risk they could be someone who doesn't share your values. Participants highlighted that having more open seats for each district would lead to more diverse candidates getting elected since historically disenfranchised voters would have more chances to elect a candidate they want, and their community's votes would count more as a result.

Participants raised concerns about the districting process and called for an equitable and community-centered process—

Although participants supported a model of district representation, there were many concerns about how districts will be drawn and how this process will involve historically disenfranchised communities.

- **A key concern that was raised is how district lines would be drawn equitably.**

Participants were concerned about the possibility of gerrymandering and questioned how communities would be equitably represented within a district. There was a fear that

communities of color, low-income communities, unhoused communities, and other historically disenfranchised communities may not be kept together within districts, thus diluting their voting power. There was also a concern about who would draw the districts and how their interests would influence the process. Several participants interrogated the idea of the political neutrality of an independent redistricting commission. Although participants did not point to a specific body they would like to draw the districts, they wanted a process that was transparent and community-centered. Additionally, participants were curious how communities would have the opportunity to make their voices heard in the redistricting process. Creating a process that is open, accessible, and provides robust education to communities will be necessary.

Participants supported an increased City Council size— The majority of participants supported an increased City Council size, with no specific preference for how many. Of the eleven organizations, six of them expressed support for an increased City Council size.

- **The primary reason participants supported an increased City Council size is to ensure the City Council has the capacity to address Portland’s complex issues and community needs.** Participants agreed that it makes sense that a city of Portland’s size should have more City Councilors to work on meeting community needs and priorities. The more City Councilors there are, the more capacity there will be to create policies, meet with communities, and divide the workload.
- **Equally important, participants emphasized that increasing the size of the City Council can help to ensure City Councilors come from diverse backgrounds and represent Portland’s many communities.** Participants highlighted that having more seats on the City Council can open more opportunities for minority candidates to be elected. However, many participants also mentioned that having a voting system that reduces financial and other barriers for minority candidates is crucial to address alongside an increased City Council size. Portland has become more diverse since the City Council size was first established and it’s important that the City Council better reflects this diversity.

Participants supported the shift to an alternative voting method rather than Portland’s “pick one” method— Of the eleven organizations, all of them supported the shift to an alternative voting method.

- **Participants supported an alternative voting method to have more choices and express their preferences.** Participants strongly agreed that Portland’s current “pick one” voting method limits their voting options and does not allow them to express their preferences. Participants shared many personal experiences in which they liked more than one candidate but were not able to support more than one, and wished they had the opportunity to do so. Additionally, participants recalled instances of thinking multiple candidates were similar but had important differences which they wanted to be able to capture on their ballot. Being able to rank or score the candidates would give voters more choices and full use of their ballot.

- **Participants emphasized that an alternative voting method would reduce strategic voting and help minority candidates get elected.** Participants described the many barriers that minority candidates face, like access to financial resources, and felt that an alternative voting method could help get more minority candidates elected since voters would be voting based on their preferences and not strategically. Participants felt that having to make one choice on their ballot affects whether voters can truly vote for the candidate they want or vote based on who is more likely to win. One participant shared, “I think it [alternative voting method] helps kind of dilute a bit of like the intensity of the weight that like our vote can have that can really make things feel very politicized.” Several participants shared their support for a proportional system that can elect multiple representatives and lower the threshold of votes needed to win.
 - A few participants raised concerns about the current winner-take-all system and how it could impact communities of color if paired with a district model, emphasizing that the voting system and voting method are crucial to consider.
- **Participants stressed the importance of a robust civic and voter education process to implement a new voting method.** A clear theme across organizations was that communities of color and other historically disenfranchised communities struggle to participate in elections due to voting barriers related to language access, information access, and voting eligibility. As participants discussed a new voting method, they elevated the need for voter education that meets communities where they are, is multilingual, and works with trusted mediums and community organizations to ensure all communities are informed. Concerns about a new voting method being confusing and overwhelming were shared by many participants, but overall, participants were eager for a new voting method that can be implemented with comprehensive attention to voter education needs. Many participants shared that framing an alternative voting method by letting voters know they don’t have to rank or score every candidate will help address confusion.
 - One participant shared, “I’m pretty sure my community, this is so new, that they need a community education opportunity, you know? For my community, just to learn that A, these options are available and are being used elsewhere.”

Participants preferred ranked choice voting as the alternative voting method— Of the eleven organizations, six organizations shared a preference for ranked choice voting to STAR voting. Although participants were open to both in most cases, there was stronger support for ranked-choice voting.

- **Participants liked the idea of placing candidates in order of preference and having candidates as their “runner up” if their first choice, second choice, and so on, isn’t elected.** Participants emphasized that placing their candidates in order of preference would give them more opportunity to see one of the candidates they want to get elected. Participants felt excited and reassured knowing that their vote would be redistributed to their next choice candidate if their number one choice didn’t get elected. They liked being able to look at the process of how their ballot was used and felt the city would be ultimately more satisfied with the election results if their votes could be redistributed to their next choice options. One concern that was raised for STAR voting

that could minimize the impact of a voter's ballot was that if you score two candidates the same score, there is a chance your vote can count as a "no preference" vote in the run-off.

- **Participants felt that ranked choice voting was easier to understand and use than STAR voting.** The majority of participants preferred ranked choice voting because they felt it was easier to understand and explain, and also felt the instructions of ranking in order of preference are more clear as opposed to scoring candidates.
 - Participants highlighted that STAR voting could create confusion among voters. One participant shared, "The way how I look at it is with the STAR voting, it feels as though it might dilute the choices. I'm not necessarily an expert with this but you know I'm just thinking from an administrative perspective, right? Where one it's something that is completely new, but two I could easily see people just putting straight zeros for all of [the candidates] except for one." She elaborated on ranked choice voting and stated, "One of the things I like about the choice voting is you have to put people in an order, there's like a definitive order, that way you at least know there's a clear place that each person stands."

Concluding Remarks

Throughout this workshop series, it has been clear that many communities struggle to access information and education about how Portland's city government and voting system work. The opportunities for historically disenfranchised communities to engage in city processes and civic engagement are limited, inaccessible, and transactional. Although this workshop report focused on the Charter Commission's proposed changes, there was a deeper-rooted call for a city government and democracy that are truly equitable and represent all Portland communities.

Countless communities shared that they do not feel represented by Portland's current systems or elected leaders. There are clear disparities among those who have traditionally had access to city decision-making spaces, and those that have been historically excluded. The charter review process is an important outlet to consider changes that can include more voices and effect better representation for Portland communities.

We would like to conclude this report by sharing that more engagement and outreach must be prioritized both throughout the charter review process and longer-term once this process is over. Portlanders have unique, powerful, and insightful community knowledge about the changes they would like to experience for their city. Our hope is that this process will spark conversations and actions that last beyond charter review and become an everyday part of City Hall culture.

Appendix

A. Charter Workshop Community Discussion

START PART ONE: Form of Government

[Press record button]

INTRODUCTION

SAY: For our first discussion, we're going to talk about how we would like our city government to be structured and what roles elected officials should have.

SAY: We know these topics are new to many of us, so we don't expect your answers to be technical. We simply want to hear from you about your opinions on the alternatives the Charter Commission is considering.

SAY: One fundamental question is whether the powers and responsibilities of our city government should be distributed as equally as possible among elected leaders or more concentrated in a single leader.

❖ QUESTION 1: Is it important that power is distributed as equally as possible among elected leaders or that a single leader has more power?

- **Example Response:** I think it's important that power is distributed as equally as possible because it means there is less risk of one individual's agenda being the only focus.
- **Example Response:** I think it's important that power is more concentrated in one person because they can be the person that voters and communities can hold directly accountable.

QUESTIONS IF YOU HAVE TIME

- ❖ **FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:** Do you think a Mayor should have more power than a City Council member? Why or why not?

- **Example Response:** Yes, I think the Mayor should have more power than a City Council member because they can be the primary champion for the city's priorities and needs.
- **Example Response:** No, I don't think a Mayor should have more power than a City Council member because there is no guarantee they will listen to the entire city's concerns

TRANSITION

SAY: Let's transition to talk about how we can make sure our city government is responsive to our needs and how we would like to hold our city government accountable. As a reminder, a Mayor is an elected leader that is chosen by voters and represents the entire city. A City Manager is a professional manager that is not directly chosen by voters but is selected by the City Council, and helps to manage our city services (water, roads, emergency services, etc).

❖ **QUESTION 2: Who would you prefer to hold accountable for making sure the city's priorities and policies are being carried out: a Mayor or a City Manager?**

- **Example Response:** I would prefer to hold a Mayor accountable for the city's priorities because they are someone I could vote directly for and influence about my concerns.
- **Example Response:** I would prefer to hold a City Manager accountable for the city's priorities because they would not be tied to special interests and would be expected to act politically neutral.

QUESTIONS IF YOU HAVE TIME

❖ **FOLLOW-UP QUESTION: Do you have any concerns about any of the concepts we discussed today, including a Mayor-Council government or a Council-Manager government?**

- **Example Response:** I have concerns about a Mayor-Council government because of the strained relationship between communities and our current leadership we have seen in recent years.
- **Example Response:** I have concerns about a Council-Manager government because it could be difficult to voice community concerns to an official that is not directly elected.

[Press stop recording button]

STOP/LEAVE BREAKOUT ROOMS

START PART TWO: City Council Elections Questions

[Press record button]

INTRODUCTION

SAY: For our next discussion, we're going to talk about how we would like to be represented by our city elected leaders and how we would like to participate in our local elections. The Charter Commission is exploring a few different options about how elected leaders should represent Portlanders and how our local elections are run.

SAY: One idea is to divide the City of Portland into geographic areas, so let's say NW Portland, SE Portland, and so on. The voters in each area would be represented by the elected leaders from that area.

❖ **QUESTION 3: The Charter Commission is considering the idea of dividing the city into different areas with more than one elected leader representing each area. So, let's say Portland was divided into 4 areas, and 3 leaders represent each area. Do you like this idea? Why or why not?**

- **Question 3 Example Response:** I would like more than one leader to represent each area of the city because it gives me more options to connect with a leader who shares my values.
- **Question 3 Example Response:** I believe having a single leader for each area of the city is preferable so it is clear who to hold responsible.

QUESTIONS IF YOU HAVE TIME

- ❖ **FOLLOW-UP QUESTION: Five elected leaders currently represent Portland. Should there be more elected leaders to represent the city's population? Why or why not?**

- **Example Response:** I would like more elected leaders to represent Portland because our population is growing and diverse, and elected leaders should reflect our different communities.
- **Example Response:** I would not like more elected leaders to represent Portland because I worry it would be harder for elected leaders to be accountable to community issues.

TRANSITION

SAY: Let's transition to talk about how it can feel to fill out a ballot and make voting decisions. Sometimes voters feel that none of the candidates running for office stand out to them but have some important differences. Other times, voters might like more than one candidate, but feel stuck deciding between their top choices.

- ❖ **QUESTION 4: Would it be easier to decide who to vote for if you could rank or score all of the candidates you support? Why or why not? (For example, you could rank the candidates in the order of your preference or you could give the candidates a score of 0-5 of how much you like them.)**

- **Question 4 Example Response:** It would feel easier to decide who to vote for if I could rank or score the candidates I support because I could express more of my preferences.
- **Question 4 Example Response:** I prefer voting for a single candidate because ranking or scoring is time-consuming and would make the process longer.

QUESTIONS IF YOU HAVE TIME

- ❖ **FOLLOW-UP QUESTION: Portland's City Council elections include two total elections, a primary election in May and a general election in November. Would you prefer that there is only one general election, or that Portland has two elections in the same year?**

- **Example Response:** I would prefer there is one election because learning about the process and candidates takes time, so it would be more accessible if I only had to do it once.
- **Example Response:** I would prefer if there were two elections because I like being able to narrow down the candidates from one election to the next.

[Press stop recording button]

STOP/LEAVE BREAKOUT ROOMS

B. Charter Workshop Presentation Curriculum

Format:

- Virtual event
- 15-20 participants total
- 4 organizational staff to host the workshop total
 - **1 presenter**
 - 1 presenter will be responsible for presenting the PPT presentation of the workshop.
 - **3 facilitators**
 - 3 facilitators will be responsible for facilitating the community discussion activity in breakout rooms.
 - **1 tech support (optional)**
 - 1 tech support to help participants and set up the breakout rooms.
 - ***Adding an extra person for this role is optional.*** If you only have 4 staff available, you can assign one of the facilitators the tech support responsibility.

Workshop Goals:

- To understand how the Charter Review process works and where we are in the process
- To learn about the Charter Commission's early areas of agreement
- To provide input about the alternative changes the Charter Commission is considering

Content	Format	Time Allotted
Introductions	Presentation (Slides 1-5)	13 minutes
Charter Review 101 and City Government	Presentation (Slides 6-18)	19 minutes
Community Discussion	Zoom Breakout rooms	30 minutes

on City Government		
BREAK		5 minutes
Voting Systems	Presentation (Slides 18-28)	18 minutes
Community Discussion on Voting	Zoom Breakout rooms	30 minutes
Next Steps and Closing Remarks	Presentation (Slides 29-30)	5 minutes

Charter Review Part Two Presentation Guide

Slide 1: Introduction [7 minutes]

WAIT 5-7 MINUTES FOR PARTICIPANTS TO JOIN THE EVENT

SAY: Hi everyone, thank you so much for joining us today for our Charter Review Part Two workshop! We hope you were able to join the first part of this workshop in November, but don't worry if this is your first time learning about the Charter Review process. We'll make sure everyone feels refreshed.

SAY: As we wait for folks to join, please share your **name, pronouns, and something you are excited to learn about today** in the chat.

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

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 2: Getting Familiar with Zoom [1 minute]

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

1. We encourage you to turn on your video so that we can all be present with one another. Please keep your audio muted while someone is presenting. Your audio and video buttons are in the lower-left corner.

2. We encourage you to use the chat and ask any questions you have. The chatbox is in the bottom center.
3. If you're having any issues using Zoom please send a private message to [\[insert staff name\]](#) in the chat.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 3: Land Acknowledgement [2 minutes]

[\[Insert your organization's land acknowledgment here or read example below\]](#)

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

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 4: Group Agreements [2 minutes]

SAY: Let's be mindful of our group agreements as we share space.

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

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 5: Workshop Goals [1 minute]

SAY: Today we're going to learn about the Portland Charter Commission's current process and explore potential reforms to our city government and voting system.

The goals for our workshop are:

- To understand how the Charter Review process works and where we are in the process
- To learn about the Charter Commission's early areas of agreement
- To provide input about the alternative changes the Charter Commission is considering

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 6: Refresher about the Charter Review Process (30 seconds)

SAY: As a refresher, let's go over the Charter Review process to make sure we understand how it works.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 7: What is the Portland Charter Commission? (1 minute)

SAY: Every ten years, the Portland City Council appoints 20 Portland community members to a group called the Charter Commission.

SAY: The Charter Commission is responsible for reviewing our City Charter (constitution) to **recommend** changes about how our city works. This is known as the Charter Review process and the Charter Commission is currently considering changes to how our city government and voting system are set up.

SAY: We're working with the City of Portland to host small group discussions with communities of color and historically disenfranchised communities to ensure their voice and perspectives are heard.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 8: Phases of Charter Review (1 minute)

SAY: The Charter Commission decided to approach their work in two phases. Phase one is happening right now and is focused on our city government and City Council elections.

SAY: In the next two months, the Charter Commission will determine which issues to address during Phase two. Some ideas that Portlanders have shared are climate action and housing issues. If you have any ideas you can email them to CharterReview@portlandoregon.gov.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 9: Where are we in the Charter Review process? (2 minutes)

SAY: So where are we in the Charter Review process?

SAY: For the past few months, the Charter Commission has been researching how our current city government and voting system work and gathering input from Portlanders about the problems that exist. If you participated in our previous workshop, your experiences helped to give the Charter Commission insight into what isn't working for our communities.

SAY: The Charter Commission has also been researching possible alternatives and today you'll have the opportunity to share your opinion about these changes.

SAY: Next month, the Charter Commission will release their initial proposals of recommended changes. In March they'll host a public hearing on the initial proposals and vote on which proposals will be officially drafted. In May, there will be more public hearings for Portlanders to provide feedback about the drafted proposals. Then in June, they'll vote on their final recommendations. Recommendations that have the support of 15 members, or more, will be on the ballot for Portlanders to vote on in the November 2022 election. Recommendations that have the support of 14 members, can be referred to the ballot by a vote of the City Council.

Slide 10: Portland's Current System of City Government (30 seconds)

SAY: Before we dive into the possible changes, let's talk about Portland's current systems and what the problems are.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 11: Current form of government, Commission (1 minute)

SAY: Portland has a “**Commission**” form of government and is the **only large city in the United States with this type of government.**

SAY: There are **five** elected leaders in the Commission government: the Mayor and four City Councilors. This type of government is unique in the sense that the Mayor and the City Councilors **share** responsibility and have **huge** administrative roles. The Mayor and City Councilors run the city’s bureaus, which means they’re responsible for the bureau’s daily operations and choosing the bureau’s director. Mayor Ted Wheeler oversees the Portland Police Bureau and City Councilor Carmen Rubio oversees the Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

SAY: The Mayor and City Councilors are **also** responsible for passing laws and deciding how our public dollars are spent. Our current form of government strains our city leaders.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 12: Problems with our current form of government (2 minutes)

SAY: Let’s go through some problems that exist with our current type of government.

SAY: One key problem is that Portlanders don’t know where to go or how to get help from the city when they have an issue. This is something many of you shared in our previous workshop. Because City Councilors directly run bureaus, it’s confusing to know who to reach out to **and** City Councilors don’t have enough time to interact with communities.

SAY: There has also been a lack of understanding of what the community needs. Because City Councilors are focused on their individual bureaus and bureau leadership can change often, this creates a lack of vision and difficulty addressing long-term issues. Another problem has been that many Portlanders feel that they are constantly being bounced from one bureau to another without anyone taking accountability for helping them.

SAY: Portlanders should feel confident they will be helped and heard by our city government, so it’s important to think about how we can change our systems.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 13: Early Areas of Agreement Form of Government (2 minutes)

SAY: The Charter Commission has come to some early areas of agreement about what can help to address these problems. They haven't officially voted on these areas, but have a strong belief they can lead to a more responsive and equitable government.

SAY: #1 The first area of agreement is that we should **increase the size of our City Council**. Our City Council currently has **five** elected leaders. Increasing the size to a greater number can ensure that more leaders are responding to Portland's diverse and growing communities.

SAY: #2 The second area of agreement is that **City Councilors should no longer run bureaus, and we should shift the management authority elsewhere**. Shifting this responsibility can help free up our City Councilors to be more accessible to Portlanders.

SAY: #3 The third area of agreement is that we should **clearly redefine the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor and the City Council**. In our current system, the Mayor and City Councilors share responsibility which makes it difficult for Portlanders to know who is responsible for what. Redefining the roles of the Mayor and the City Council can ensure that Portlanders have clear pathways to voice government action.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 14: Alternative Forms of City Government (30 seconds)

SAY: Today you'll be able to provide feedback on the areas of agreement and the alternative changes the Charter Commission is considering. So let's go over what the alternatives are.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 15: Alternative Forms of Government, Mayor-Council (2 minutes)

SAY: There are two main types of government that the Charter Commission is considering: a **mayor-council government** and a **council-manager government**.

SAY: In a mayor-council government, there is a Mayor and a City Council as the elected leaders, which means they are chosen by voters. There is also a Chief Administrative Officer that is hired by the Mayor and is not directly elected by voters.

SAY: In this government, the Mayor acts as the chief executive of the city, much like the President does for our national government. The Mayor would be held accountable for **carrying out** our laws, policy, and budget. The Mayor would also create the **first draft** of the city's budget to determine how our public dollars are spent. Lastly, the Mayor would **supervise** the person who runs the city's bureaus, which is called the Chief Administrative Officer. The Chief Administrative Officer would **only** report to the Mayor, although the City Council would approve the Mayor's selection.

SAY: The City Council would act as the primary law-making body for the city and City Councilors would develop policy agendas and approve the budget. Here you can see the Mayor would be the person that communities could hold accountable for carrying out the city's priorities. Since City Councilors would not run bureaus, they would have more time to listen to the community concerns.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 16: Alternative Forms of Government, Council-Manager (2 minutes)

SAY: Let's talk about the other option, a council-manager government.

SAY: A council-manager government has a Mayor and a City Council as its elected leaders, which means they are chosen by voters. There is also a City Manager that is appointed by the City Council and is not directly elected by voters. In this government, the Mayor has limited executive power over carrying out the laws and has more **similar** powers to the City Council. The Mayor decides the daily policy agenda for the City Council's meetings and works *with* the City Manager to draft the city's budget.

SAY: In a council-manager government, the City Manager is a professional that is responsible for running the city's bureaus, carrying out the laws, and helping to draft the city budget. The City Manager reports to **both** the Mayor and the City Council. Here you can see the City Manager holds the most executive power and serves the executive and administrative role for the city.

SAY: The City Council is the primary law-making body and focuses on passing policies. In this government, the City Council would be able to focus on solving local issues, while the City Manager would be accountable for the city's daily operations and bureau services.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 17: Similarities & Differences (3 minutes)

SAY: So what are the similarities and differences?

SAY: Under both forms of government, the City Council has the ultimate authority, since it makes the laws, sets policies, and approves the city budget. The executive officer, whether it's the Mayor or the City Manager, must work within the bounds of policies the City Council passes. Additionally, a Chief Administrative Officer and City Manager have the same role in both types of government. Lastly, the Mayor is always elected by the entire city, whereas some City Councilors could be elected to represent areas of the city.

SAY: The biggest difference between these governments is **who** has the most executive power. In a mayor-council government, the Mayor has the most executive power, whereas, in a council-manager government, the City Manager holds this role.

SAY: Another difference is **who** supervises the person that runs bureaus. In a mayor-council government, the **Mayor alone** supervises the Chief Administrative Officer, whereas, in a council-manager government, the **City Council and Mayor together** supervise the City Manager. In a mayor-council government the Mayor is accountable for the city's operations and government action, while in a council-manager government, the City Manager is the person accountable.

SAY: That brings us to a core question about how we believe that power should be distributed across our city's officials and how we believe the city would be most responsive.

Slide 18: Community Discussion Part 1 (30 seconds)

SAY: That brings us to our next activity. We're going to break out into **small groups to have some discussions** about everything we have covered so far. Please join your breakout room when you see the notification pop up.

OPEN BREAKOUT ROOMS

Community Discussion Part One: City Government

[Attached separately]

CLOSE BREAKOUT ROOMS AFTER 29 MINUTES

[WELCOME FOLKS BACK INTO THE MAIN GROUP AND TAKE 5-MINUTE BREAK]

Resume Presentation

Slide 19: Portland's Current System of City Council Elections (30 seconds)

SAY: For the next half of our time, we're going to talk about Portland's City Council elections and go over the alternative changes.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 20: Our Current City Council Elections (2 minutes and 30 seconds)

SAY: Three main things affect how we vote: constituency, voting method, and timing of elections.

SAY: The word constituency refers to the people in an area a leader represents. A leader could represent the whole city or a smaller neighborhood. In Portland, the Mayor and the four City Councilors represent the city **as a whole**.

SAY: The open seats for City Councilor are marked Position 1 through 4, and each candidate decides which position to run for. Then voters pick **only one candidate** for **each position**. Let's say there are four candidates for Position 1, as a voter you would only be able to choose one of those four candidates for that position.

SAY: Portland holds city elections every two years. During election years, Portland has **two total elections**: a primary election in May and a general election in November. Any candidate who wins more than 50% of the vote in May, wins **instantly** and gets elected in the primary. If no candidate wins more than 50%, the two candidates with the **most** votes, move on to the general election in November. If a candidate doesn't win more than 50% of the vote during the general election, the candidate with the most votes wins.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 21: Problems with our current City Council elections (2 minutes)

SAY: Let's go through some of the problems that exist with our current City Council elections.

SAY: The first problem the Charter Commission has identified is that there is **no form of district or geographic representation**. Having leaders that represent certain parts of the city could make it easier for people to reach out, since that leader may better understand what issues that area is facing.

SAY: Since elected leaders represent the whole city, this creates a **significant financial barrier** for minority candidates since they have to campaign to the entire city and it's very expensive.

SAY: Our current system **doesn't represent political minorities** like renters or communities of color. Because the candidate with **the most votes wins instantly**, minority voters have to be strategic about whom they are voting for or simply may not see anyone running that shares their interests.

SAY: Another barrier for historically disenfranchised voters like communities of color, immigrants, and low-income communities is the **timing of elections**. These voters have low turnout in the May primary and tend to vote in greater numbers in the general election especially because the presidential election, which is more visible, happens in November. If a candidate wins in the primary election, this means that there was a big part of the population that did not get to help make that decision.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 22: Early Areas of Agreement City Council Elections (1 minute)

SAY: The Charter Commission has come to some early areas of agreement about what can help to address the problems with our elections.

SAY: #1 The first area of agreement is to **increase the size of our City Council**. Portland has five elected leaders and the Charter Commission believes that increasing the number of elected leaders can help to bring more voices into decision-making by increasing the capacity of the City Council to listen to the concerns of our diverse communities.

SAY: #2 The second area of agreement is to **shift to a form of voting** that allows results in one election and captures people's preferences. This means getting rid of the primary election, so there is only the general election instead, and allowing voters to have more choices on their ballot rather than only picking one candidate.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 23: Alternative Voting Systems (30 seconds)

SAY: So let's go over the alternatives that match with these areas of agreement.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 24: Multi-member Districts (3 minutes)

SAY: One alternative the Charter Commission is considering is dividing Portland into multi-member districts so that elected leaders can represent areas of the city instead of the entire city.

SAY: A district is an area in which an elected leader represents the people who live there. Multi-member districts mean that more than one elected leader would represent each of those geographic areas. So for example, let's say Portland was divided into three districts like in this graphic, and three elected leaders represented each district.

SAY: The Charter Commission believes this system would increase accountability between communities and elected leaders. Because multiple leaders would represent one area of the city, this would also increase collaboration for geographic issues between those leaders. Multi-member districts also work well with proportional voting which helps to give minority groups **more representation** on the City Council. Proportional voting is a system in which multiple winners are elected in one election based on their percentage of the vote, rather than having one candidate with the most votes win. Proportional voting means that a candidate doesn't need 50% of the vote to win and reduces the barrier this can cause.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 25: Voting Methods (3 minutes)

SAY: Let's move on to the form of voting.

SAY: Currently, voters can only pick **one candidate** they want to represent them which is the ballot you see on the left. Let's say that you decide to vote for Candidate Andres so you mark him as your only choice. This can be tricky, especially if you were stuck between two candidates who you wanted to win.

SAY: The two alternatives the Charter Commission is considering are STAR voting and choice voting. STAR stands for score then automatic run-off. Using STAR voting, voters can give the candidates a scoring of how much they like them using a scale of 0-5. So let's say you don't really like candidate Allen, so you only give him one star. But Bianca and Edith are your favorites, so you give them both five stars which means your maximum support.

SAY: The other option is choice voting in which voters can rank the candidates based on how much they prefer them. So let's say Jada is your top choice, so you rank her in your first-choice spot. And let's say Vera is not your top choice, so you give her the fifth spot on your ballot.

SAY: Using both STAR and choice voting, it's clear that voters get more use out of their ballot and get to express their preferences for the candidates. Voters don't have to score or rank **every single** candidate, they can fill out their ballot as much as they'd like.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 26: STAR Voting (2 minutes)

SAY: So how is the winner determined using STAR voting? After a voter gives the candidates a scoring, all the stars get added up for each candidate. So if you gave a candidate three stars, that candidate gets three stars added to their count from your ballot. The candidates with the **two highest scores become finalists** and go into an automatic-run off to see who has the most votes. The automatic-run off is not a separate election, it's just a second step to determine the winner. In the runoff, each ballot counts as one vote for the finalist that the voter preferred. So if you gave Candidate Ben one star and Candidate Carmen four stars, your vote gets counted for Carmen. If you gave both finalists the same score, it gets counted as a "no preference" vote since you basically said you don't prefer one over the other. Ultimately, the finalist preferred by more voters wins.

SAY: It's important to note that STAR voting is not currently used anywhere in the United States (or in the world) for City Council elections and a key argument against this voting method is that it is largely untested. STAR voting can be used with proportional elections that elect multiple winners, but this also has limited research. One example of how STAR has been used in Oregon was when the Deschutes County Democrats conducted a STAR election for the local Special District election endorsements.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 27: Choice Voting (3 minutes)

SAY: Choice voting can be used with proportional elections that elect multiple winners or with elections that only elect one winner.

SAY: First let's go over how choice voting works with elections that have one winner. After a voter ranks the candidates in order of preference, the ballots are counted for each voter's **first choice**. If a candidate has more than half of the vote based on first choices, that candidate wins. If no candidate reaches half the votes, then the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. The voters who selected the eliminated candidate as a first choice then have their votes added to their next choice. This process continues until a candidate has more than half of the votes and wins.

SAY: Proportional elections are different and use a **formula** to determine how many votes a candidate needs to win. The amount of votes needed to win is called a threshold and is lower than 50%. Candidates that meet the threshold get elected. If no candidate meets the threshold to win, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes go to their voters' next-choice candidate. This process continues until all the seats are filled.

SAY: As of November 2021, 43 jurisdictions used choice voting in their most recent elections. Some of these examples include Benton County in Oregon, which uses choice voting for their general elections to elect County Commissioners, and New York City, which uses choice voting to elect their Mayor and City Council. Cambridge, Massachusetts uses choice voting with proportional elections to elect their City Council. An argument in favor of choice voting is that it is proven and has been tested on a large scale.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 28: Community Discussion Part Two (30 seconds)

SAY: That brings us to our next activity! We're going to break out into the same groups again to share our thoughts about the alternatives we just looked at.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

Slide 29: Next Steps in the Charter Review Process (3 minutes)

SAY: The perspectives you discussed today will be shared with the Charter Commission to help them understand your opinions about the alternatives they are considering.

SAY: We also encourage you to submit a public comment directly to the Charter Commission. Written comments can be emailed to CharterReview@portlandoregon.gov.

SAY: Be on the lookout for the series of public hearings the Charter Commission is hosting in the spring. This will be a key opportunity for you to provide more feedback on proposals the Charter Commission is drafting.

SAY: Right now, the Charter Commission is also looking to hear from you about what issues they should address in phase two of the Charter Review process. If you have any ideas, feel welcome to email them directly.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SLIDE

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

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

Sources

- Sightline Articles

- [“When elections are decided in the May primary, many Portlanders don’t have a voice in city hall”](#)
- [“In some cities, most voters put someone they want on City Council—but not Portland”](#)
- [“Portland City government doesn’t represent Portland very well”](#)
- **MGGG Redistricting Lab**
 - [“Analysis of Election Systems for the Portland, OR City Council”](#)
 - [“Ranked Choice Voting and Minority Representation”](#)
- **City Club Research**
 - [“Rethinking 100 Years of the Commission System”](#)
 - [“New Government for Today’s Portland: Rethinking How We Vote”](#)
- **Additional Sources**
 - [“The Future is Proportional”](#)
 - [“More Equitable Democracy: Electoral Methods and Form of Government in Portland”](#)
 - [STAR Voting Website](#)
 - [Fair Vote, Ranked Choice Voting Website](#)
 - [Represent Women Website: Multi-Winner Districts](#)
 - [Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center 2021 Website](#)
 - [Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington Website](#)
 - [National League of Cities Website](#)

- [Ballotpedia Website](#)