



## **CHARTER REVIEW FAQ**

### **What is the purpose of the Charter Review Committee?**

The Charter Review Committee will review and recommend updates to the Charter sections concerning Denver's municipal elections. In particular, the committee will evaluate the wisdom of a runoff election, debate alternative voting methods, and hear concerns about the current election calendar.

The committee works directly with Clerk López, his office, and other appointed members of the community, including subject matter experts and elected officials.

The seven-member committee represents an inclusive, objective approach to solving these problems. It invites feedback from numerous stakeholders, including the community for guidance during the review process.

### **Why is the committee proposing changes to the Charter?**

The Charter currently requires that all elected officials in Denver, except for at-large Councilmembers, must receive a majority of the votes cast in an election. Therefore, a runoff election is often necessary to secure this majority. The Charter also requires that the runoff election be conducted about one month after the municipal election.

At the same time, the Charter requires the Clerk's Office to conduct elections according to state election law, which requires the office to automatically mail ballots to voters three weeks before Election Day. For military and overseas voters, state law requires ballots to be mailed 45 days before Election Day. As a result, Denver has conflicting timelines in its Charter.

Finally, it costs Denver about \$1 million to conduct a citywide runoff election and the city typically sees a drop in voter participation in the runoff election compared to the municipal election. Denver is also hearing a desire from activists to change our voting methods, so the committee will take this opportunity to evaluate what changes Denver ought to pursue in its home rule Charter.

### **What are the possible outcomes of the Charter review? How could the committee's recommendations change the election process in Denver?**

#### *Modify the Municipal Election Voting Method*

The committee will evaluate plurality, approval, and ranked choice voting methods. If Denver adopts one of these methods and eliminates the runoff election, it would save the city \$1 million and could improve voter participation.



## OFFICE OF THE CLERK AND RECORDER | THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

---

CITY CLERK | ELECTIONS | PUBLIC TRUSTEE | RECORDING & MARRIAGES

### *Move the Municipal Election to November*

Another option would be to move the municipal election to coincide with the existing November election. This could save \$2 million by combining the costs of the elections. This option would need to be implemented alongside one of the modified voting methods (approval, plurality or ranked-choice), since it doesn't provide the time needed to administer a runoff.

### *Increase the Time Between the Election and the Runoff*

The committee could also recommend that the city simply increase the time between the municipal and runoff elections, providing for a minimum of 30 additional days between the elections. This option would solve the timeline conflict experienced by elections administrators. Moving the election from May to April would eliminate the time crunch and the need to implement a modified voting method like approval or ranked-choice voting. The election could be administered as it is now, just on a different timeline.

### **What would these changes cost the city?**

It is unlikely that these changes would result in extra costs, but the office anticipates any costs would be minimal.

### **What happens once the committee makes a recommendation to amend the Charter?**

The committee will provide a written recommendation to Clerk López, who may ask City Council to place it on the November ballot for voters to approve in the November 2021 election.