

CITY CHARTER REVIEW

Introduction to the City Charter Review Process

Charter Review Committee
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Background

- Santa Rosa is a Charter City
- City Charter adopted by the voters pursuant to California Constitution “home rule” provisions
- Home rule gives the City greatest autonomy
- City Charter forms the City’s constitution

Significance of City Charter

- Adoption of City Charter gives City maximum authority over its own governance and operations
- With respect to municipal affairs, the City Charter, ordinances and resolutions prevail over state law

Significance of City Charter

- City authority, however, is not absolute
- With respect to matters of statewide concern, state law will preempt local regulation
- The line between what is a municipal affair vs a matter of statewide concern is evolving as statewide circumstances change

Significance of City Charter

- The City Charter is a high-level governing document
- Sets the general framework for the City's governance
- Details of City governance and operation are set forth in Council-approved ordinances and resolutions

Significance of City Charter

- Absent a voter-approved City Charter, the City would be a general law city, governed by the general laws of the state
- Just a note of curiosity -- of California's 481 cities, 121 are Charter Cities

Key Elements of SR City Charter

- Before the Committee begins the Charter review process, it's helpful to briefly review the scope of the existing City Charter

Key Elements of SR City Charter

- Preservation of local control:
 - Authorizes Council to adopt ordinances in relation to municipal affairs
 - Those ordinances to control over the general laws of the state
 - Allows general state laws fill in the gaps, while retaining maximum City control

Key Elements of SR City Charter

- Establishment of the City
- Composition of the City Council
- Meetings and procedures of the City Council
- Selection, roles and responsibilities of Mayor and Vice Mayor

Key Elements of the SR Charter

- Ordinance procedures
- Boards, Commissions and Community Engagement
- Roles and responsibilities of key City officers and employees
- Labor and employment, including personnel rules and regulations and binding arbitration

Key Elements of the SR Charter

- Budget and Finance
- Utilities, including establishment of Board of Public Utilities
- Timing and procedures for municipal elections
- Public records

Key Elements of the SR Charter

- Procurement and contracting, including design build
- Employee ethics
- Campaign finance reform

Charter Review

- City Charter Section 12 provides for review of the City Charter every ten years
- Last Charter review began in 2011 and resulted in proposed revisions placed on the November 2012 ballot
- Council has appointed this Committee to lead the 2022 Charter review

Charter Review Committee

- Committee is comprised of 21 city residents
- Each Council member appointed three Committee members
- Diversity of age, race, background and interest

Charter Review Committee

- Committee to research and draft recommended amendments to the City Charter
- Bring its own knowledge and interests to the table
- Research proposals, including existing programs in similar communities, review of academic studies, evaluation of costs

Charter Review Committee

- Committee recommendations will be presented to City Council
- If approved by Council, proposed revisions to the Charter will be placed on the November 2022 ballot for voter consideration
- If approved by the voters, the proposed revisions will be incorporated into the Charter

Charter Review Topics

- Council has recommended twelve topics for consideration
- Committee may consider additional topics
- Topics may include revisions, additions or deletions of Charter provisions
- Any proposed changes to the Charter are subject to voter approval

Charter Review Topics

- Council recommendations for consideration:
 - Directly elected at-large Mayor
 - Ranked choice voting
 - Police auditor / Police citizen oversight commission
 - Council compensation

Charter Review Topics

- Council recommendations for discussion (con't):
 - Climate change
 - Diversity, equity and inclusion
 - Excise taxes
 - Regulation of rental properties

Charter Review Topics

- Council recommendation for discussion (con't):
 - Procurement policy reforms
 - Board and Commission quorums
 - Removal of Mayor or Council members for misconduct
 - Two year budget process

Charter Review Topics

- Possible additional topics for discussion:
 - Committee or community proposals
 - Council also seeks recommendations from those who work most closely with the current Charter, including City employees, unions and department heads

Charter Review Process

- Caution regarding number of recommended Charter amendments:
 - Time commitment
 - Potential voter fatigue
 - Cost of ballot measures

Recent Charter Reviews - 2012

- The 2012 Charter review process resulted in four ballot measures presented to the voters
- Three of the four measures passed:
 - Measure Q: District Council Members Elections (failed)
 - Measure R: Binding Arbitration for Police and Fire Employee Disputes (passed)
 - Measure S: Design Build Procurement (passed)
 - Measure T: Charter reorganization, update and clarifications (passed)

Recent Charter Reviews - 2002

- The 2002 Charter review resulted in three ballot measures presented to the voters
- Two of the three measures passed:
 - Measure L: Combined Charter Amendments (passed)
 - Measure M: Council Compensation (failed)
 - Measure O: Campaign Finance Reform (passed)

Committee Next Steps

- Develop meeting schedule
- Develop work plan
- Roll up our sleeves!

QUESTIONS?