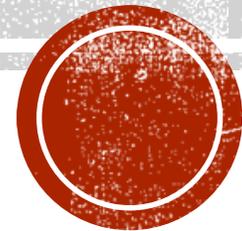


# GOVERNING BEAVERTON: THE CITY'S NEW DRAFT CHARTER

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**National Policy Consensus Center**  
College of Urban and Public Affairs | Hatfield School of Government



# SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEW DRAFT CITY CHARTER:

- What is a city charter?
- Why does Beaverton need a new city charter?
- What are the common forms of government in Oregon?
- What forms of government were studied by the Beaverton mayor and council?
- What tentative decision has been made by the council for form of government?
- What is the role of elected officials under the new draft charter?
- What is the role of the city officers under the new draft charter?
- What other major changes have been made in the new draft charter?
- What issues are the mayor and council especially interested in hearing about related to the new draft charter?
- What are the next steps?



# WHAT IS A CITY CHARTER?

- The U.S. federal government and the state of Oregon each have **constitutions**, while cities in Oregon have **charters**.
- Constitutions and charters are foundational documents describing how the government is organized and how it will govern itself.
- They are the legal documents that define the **organization, powers, functions, and essential procedures of the government**.
  - The U.S. constitution describes the roles and powers of the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court.
  - The Oregon constitution describes the roles and powers of the Governor, Legislature, and the state Supreme Court.
  - The City of Beaverton charter describes the roles and powers of the mayor, city council, and city officers. The charter describes the basic framework within which the city conducts its business.



# WHY DOES BEAVERTON NEED A NEW CITY CHARTER?

- It is common for cities and counties to periodically review their charters to make sure they are up-to-date and describe what the city needs for governing the city into the future.
- The current city charter has been in place since 1981—for 39 years, without a review and without any changes.
- The city continues to grow and the city council wants to make sure that the charter language and form of government in Beaverton work well for residents for the next 39 years—or longer.



# WHAT ARE THE COMMON FORMS OF GOVERNMENT IN OREGON?

- There are 241 cities in Oregon. They are organized into four basic forms of government:
- **1. Mayor/Council.** Smaller Oregon cities typically have the mayor-council form, in which the legislative and policymaking body is through a popularly elected mayor and council.
- **2. Commission.** Portland is the only city in the state with the commission form of government, where the elected commissioners function collectively as the city council and serve as administrators of city departments.
- **3. Strong Mayor.** Beaverton is the only city in the state with the strong mayor form, in which the mayor, serving as the chief executive officer, has the authority to appoint city staff, is responsible for city administration, and serves as the presiding officer at council meetings.
- **4. Council/Manager.** Most Oregon cities with populations over 2,500 have the council-manager or council-administrator form, in which the council hires (and can fire) a chief executive officer to be responsible for the daily supervision of city affairs.



# WHAT FORMS OF GOVERNMENT WERE STUDIED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- As they considered the form of government for the future, the council focused on two of the four methods of governance:
  - 1) the current strong mayor form; and,
  - 2) the council-manager form of government.
- They studied arguments pro and con of these two forms of government.
- They looked at model charters for cities from the National Civic League and the League of Oregon cities.
- They reviewed charter language from a variety of cities in Oregon and around the country.



# TENTATIVE DECISION ON FORM OF GOVERNMENT

After considerable review, analysis, and discussion, the council tentatively decided that:

- The best form of government to serve the city into the future is the council-manager form of government.
- But, the council wants to vary from the “typical” council-manager form by continuing with a full-time mayor who would be the official head of the city for “political, ceremonial, emergency management, and military purposes”.
- The mayor would continue to chair council meetings and be the political head of city government, but the new draft charter would also give the mayor a major role in the development and implementation of short and long-term goals for the city and in working on intergovernmental issues.
- The council believes this change reflects the city’s special history, character, and individuality.



# WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ELECTED OFFICIALS UNDER THE NEW DRAFT CHARTER?

- Under the new draft charter, the mayor and council—the elected officials—are the legislative body and the city’s policy makers. The power to govern is centralized with them:
  - They approve the city’s budget and adopt city laws and regulations.
  - They identify and then focus on the city’s short and long-range goals and objectives, such as community growth, sustainability, delivering cost-effective services to city residents, cooperative efforts with other agencies, and ensuring long-term financial stability.
  - They hire a professional city manager based on that person’s education, experience, skills, and abilities.
  - They then supervise the manager’s performance and oversee the achievement of city goals and objectives. If that person is not responsive and effective in their role, the elected officials have the authority to remove the city manager at any time, consistent with an employment agreement.



# WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CITY MANAGER UNDER THE NEW DRAFT CHARTER?

- The city manager is an at-will employee who can be fired by a majority of the elected officials, consistent with local laws and their employment agreement. The city manager:
  - Proposes the city budget for consideration by the budget committee and then by the mayor and council.
  - Recruits, hires, supervises, and may terminate city staff.
  - Serves as the mayor and council's chief advisor by providing complete and objective information about city operations, providing options for their consideration, offering an assessment of the long-term consequences of decisions, and making recommendations on how best to manage the city and deliver services.
  - Carries out the policies established by the mayor and council, enforces laws and regulations, and implements short and long-range city goals and objectives.



# WHAT OTHER MAJOR CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE NEW DRAFT CHARTER?

- The new draft charter adds one additional position to the city council--from five councilors to six councilors. With the mayor, that means there will be seven people voting on issues that come before them.
- Salaries for the mayor and councilors are set by council in the draft charter, but no change is effective for the mayor and councilors in office when the decision is made. They would go into effect in the next term of office.
- Term limits for the mayor and councilors are established at 12 years (three terms).
- The process for amending and adopting ordinances for the city is simplified and a public hearing is always required before an ordinance is amended or added.



# PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

- The council is especially interested in hearing comments from the public on two issues:
  - **1. Form of Government.** The new draft charter changes the form of government from a strong mayor form to a council-manager form; that is, moving from a full-time mayor as an elected chief executive of the city to a full-time city manager hired as chief executive.
    - The city would continue to have a full-time mayor and would add a full time city manager.
    - What is your opinion of this change to the city's form of government?
  - **2. Term Limits.** Should the new draft charter have term limits which restrict the mayor and councilors from serving beyond a certain number of years?
    - If there are term limits, how many terms should there be? The draft says 3 terms, or 12 years.
    - If there are term limits, how should they affect the mayor and councilors in office today?



# WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- The council will hold two public hearings to receive resident comments on the new draft charter.
- The council will make any final changes to the draft.
- The council will direct staff to prepare the agenda materials to place the new charter before the voters for final approval.

