

City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee Council Presentation

February 2, 2026

Rene Lopez, Committee Chair

Ryan Peters, Deputy City Manager





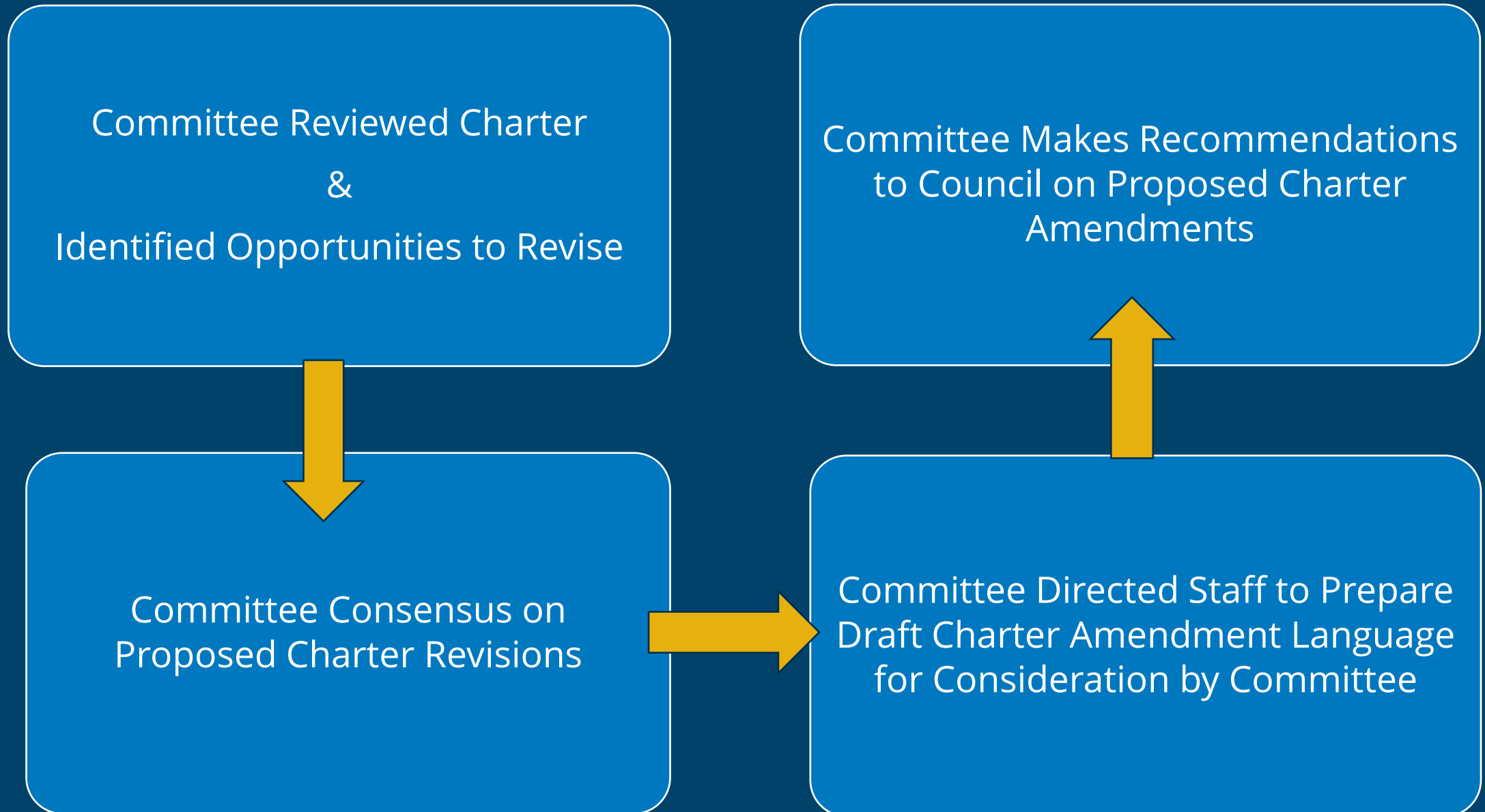
Background

The City Charter Amendment Resident Advisory Committee was established by City Council in June 2025 to make recommendations on potential charter amendments to be considered for referral to the voters.

Members of the committee include:

- Chair Rene Lopez
- Pastor Brad Davis
- Heather Anguiano
- Ursula Gordwin
- Sherida McMullan
- Lisa Askey
- Jim Jurnak
- Jennifer Pawlik
- Allison Stewart

Committee Review and Recommendation Process





Recommendation No. 1 – Gender Neutrality, Grammar, Punctuation, Capitalization, & Elimination of Legalese

Description:

Non-substantive changes to modernize and ensure consistency throughout the Charter.

Key Changes:

Applies across Articles II–X (e.g., gender neutrality, grammar/punctuation fixes, removal of legalese, consistent capitalization). Adds words like “city” before “manager” or “council”.

Committee Vote:

Unanimous recommendation.

Visual:

Green highlights from original summary.



Other Charter City Comparisons

City	Approach to Gender Neutrality in Charters
Scottsdale	Includes a specific "Gender" section (Article 15) stating: "Wherever the context requires, words used in the masculine gender include the feminine and neuter."
Tempe	Applies gender-neutral language throughout the charter (noted in amendment history for multiple sections).
Mesa/ Glendale/ Tucson	No explicit charter provisions found for broad gender neutrality; handled via modern drafting or ordinances where needed (e.g., anti-discrimination updates separately).
Phoenix	No specific charter-wide gender neutrality provision identified; relies on general interpretation rules (common in many charters).



Recommendation No. 2 – Clarifying Changes

Description:

Changes to clarify existing provisions, align with state law, and remove outdated initial-adoption language.

Key Changes:

Article I: Clarifies contract authority.

Article II: Clarifies reimbursement policies, city employment prohibition, petition rights, eliminates outdated utility rate references.

Article X: Strikes obsolete initial-adoption sections.

Committee Vote:

Unanimous recommendation.

Visual:

Blue highlights from original summary.



Recommendation No. 3 – “Resign to Run” & Filling Council Vacancies (Sections 2.05 & 2.06)

Description:

The proposed changes bring the charter’s “resign to run” provisions in line with Arizona state law (A.R.S. §38-296) by requiring the mayor or a councilmember intending to run for any other public office to resign upon filing nomination papers for that office.

Key Changes:

Resign to Run: Brings local rules in line with A.R.S. §38-296, which deems an incumbent to have offered themselves for nomination/election (triggering resignation) specifically on the "filing of a nomination paper" (per A.R.S. §38-296(B)).

Vacancy Filling: Provisions for filling vacancies in the office of mayor or councilmember are consolidated under Section 2.06. The council has 45 days to fill the vacancy; otherwise, it is filled at the forthcoming election or, if no election is forthcoming, at a special election held as soon as practicable.

Committee Vote:

Unanimous recommendation.



Other Charter City Comparisons

City	Resign-to-Run Requirement	Vacancy Filling Method / Time Limit
Scottsdale	Must resign upon filing nomination paper or formal declaration or 90 days prior to primary election, whichever occurs first	Council appointment within 31 days
Tempe	Resign at least 90 days prior to primary election	Council appointment within 30 days
Mesa	Similar to Tempe (at least 90 days prior to primary election)	Council appointment within 30 days
Tucson	No specific "resign-to-run" provision in charter (follows state law A.R.S. §38-296 where applicable)	Council appointment within 30 days
Glendale	No specific "resign-to-run" provision in charter (follows state law A.R.S. §38-296 where applicable)	Council appointment by majority vote of remaining members (no specific time limit stated in charter summaries)
Phoenix	Follows state law (A.R.S. §38-296); automatic resignation upon filing nomination papers for another office if >1 year left in current term (or if term overlap)	Special election if ≥365 days remain in term; council appointment if <365 days (or <90 days before regular election, may leave vacant)



Recommendation No. 4 – Authorization to Reorganize City Departments with Council Approval (Sections 2.08 & 2.13)

Description:

Authorizes the city manager to establish and organize the offices and departments of the city subject to the review and approval of the city council.

Key Changes:

Eliminates ordinance requirement for establishing or altering city departments and provides for council review and approval of city manager's proposed changes by resolution.

Committee Vote:

5-2 recommendation.



Other Charter City Comparisons

City	Authority to Establish/Organize/Alter Departments	Required Method
Scottsdale	Requires ordinance	Ordinance
Tempe	No ordinance required	Not by ordinance
Mesa	Requires ordinance	Ordinance
Glendale	Requires ordinance	Ordinance
Phoenix	Requires ordinance	Ordinance



Recommendation No. 5 – Elimination of the “Two-Readings” Requirement for Ordinances (Section 2.15)

Description:

Eliminates the requirement that the city council consider an ordinance twice – as introduced and as adopted.

Key Changes:

Removes the requirement for ordinances to be considered twice by the City Council.

Committee Vote:

Unanimous recommendation.



Other Charter City Comparisons

City	Ordinance Reading Requirement	Notes
Scottsdale	Typically two readings (introduction and adoption)	Standard council procedure; charter allows flexibility but practice is two.
Tempe	Two readings required unless emergency	Charter Section similar to many; can waive for urgency.
Mesa	Two readings standard	Common in council rules.
Glendale	Two readings typically required	Follows standard municipal practice.
Phoenix	Two readings (first and second)	Charter and rules require separate introduction and adoption readings.
Tucson	Two readings required for most ordinances	Charter mandates unless waived.



Recommendation No. 6 – Add “gender” and “other protected status” as bases for prohibited discrimination (Section 9.02)

Description:

Expands prohibited discrimination grounds.

Key Changes:

Adds “gender” and “other protected status” to existing list.

Committee Vote:

Unanimous recommendation.



Other Charter City Comparisons

Scottsdale	None.
Tempe	Prohibits discrimination in city employment based on race, color, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, familial status, age, political affiliation, disability, or veteran status.
Mesa	None.
Glendale	None.
Phoenix	Prohibits discrimination in city employment based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, political or religious opinions or affiliations.
Tucson	Prohibits discrimination in city employment based on religious or political affiliation.



Recommendation No. 7 – Residency requirement for department directors (Section 9.03).

Description:

Eliminates requirement that department heads establish residency in the city within six months of appointment; continues residency requirement for city manager; authorizes council to require residency as a condition for any other position council appoints.

Key Changes:

Removes automatic residency requirement for department directors.

Committee Vote:

5-2 recommendation.

Other Charter City Comparisons



City	Residency Requirement for Department Directors / Heads	Residency Requirement for City Manager	Notes / Other Positions
Scottsdale	Officers of the City (including city manager, treasurer, clerk, attorney, auditor) within 6 months	Yes – within 6 months (for specified officers)	Council may provide residency requirements for all city employees by ordinance
Tempe	Not required for department heads	Yes – within 6 months	Limited to city manager
Mesa	Not required	Yes – within 60 days	Limited to city manager
Glendale	Not required	Yes – during tenure	Limited to city manager
Tucson	Almost all department heads are required to be residents	Yes – within 6 months	Applies to city manager, deputy/assistant managers, chiefs (police/fire), and listed department directors
Phoenix	Required within 24 months of appointment	Yes- time not specified	Applies to City Manager, Deputies, Dept Heads, Asst Heads, and designated executives (HR policy).



Recommendation No. 8 Staff Recommendation for Additional Clarity (Section 2.03)

Description:

Provides additional clarity regarding the timing of the selection of the vice-mayor by codifying a long-standing past practice of the City Council.

Key Changes:

Clarifies that the vice-mayor is selected at the first regular City Council meeting in January of each year, rather than within a specified number of days (31 days).

Committee Vote:

Not applicable – staff recommendation.



Other Charter City Comparisons

City	Vice-Mayor / Deputy Mayor Selection Timing	Method / Notes
Scottsdale	Annually, often at first meeting in January or organizational meeting	Council selects; timing per council rules, commonly early year.
Tempe	Annually in January (first or organizational meeting)	Codified or by practice; aligns with new council terms.
Mesa	Annually, typically January	Council election at start of year.
Glendale	Annually in January	Standard practice at first regular meeting post-election cycle.
Phoenix	Vice-Mayor selected annually, often in January	Council chooses; timing flexible but commonly early year.
Tucson	Mayor Pro Tempore selected annually, typically January	At first council meeting of calendar year or as needed.



Current Estimated Election Costs

Election Types	County Costs	Pamphlet Costs	Additional Election Costs	Total Estimated Cost
Primary	\$111,000	\$190,000 (+\$10,000 if added Charter Amendments)	\$9,000	\$310,000 (or \$320,000 w/ Charter)
General	\$111,000	\$150,000 (if ballot measures are added)	\$9,000	\$120,000 (or \$270,000 w/ ballot measures)
Special	\$392,200	\$150,000	\$9,000	\$551,200

- Informational Pamphlet:
 - Varies by page count, arguments submitted, & postage
 - No pamphlet cost if no ballot measures on General Election
- Additional Election Costs:
 - (~\$9,000): translation, security, legal notices, etc.
- Note: special election costs are higher because the costs are not shared unless other jurisdictions have ballot measures.



2026 Election Timelines

Action Step	Primary/ Special Election Date(s)	General/ Special Election Date(s)	Notes
Council Call of Election & Notify County (180 days prior to election) Ballot Language Due (Deadline: 150 days prior to election)	Feb 5, 2026 (Jan 29, 2026) Mar 7, 2026 (Feb 28, 2026)	May 7, 2026 Jun 6, 2026	Can be same resolution/meeting.
Publish Call of Election (Deadline: 120 days prior to election – suggested)	Apr 6, 2026 (Mar 30, 2026)	Jul 6, 2026	After council approval.
First Day to Accept Pro/Con Arguments (Deadline: 120 days prior to election: suggested)	Apr 6, 2026 (Mar 30, 2026)	Jul 6, 2026	Date flexible after ballot language adopted.
Deadline to File Pro/Con Arguments for Publicity Pamphlet (Deadline: 90 days prior to election)	May 6, 2026 (Apr 29, 2026)	Aug 5, 2026	
Begin Mailing Informational Pamphlet (42 days prior to election)	Jun 23, 2026 (Jun 16, 2026)	Sep 22, 2026	Must precede ballot mailing.
Last Day for Voter Registration (Deadline: 29 days prior to election)	Jul 6, 2026 (Jun 29, 2026)	Oct 5, 2026	
First Day to Mail Ballots (Deadline: 27 days prior to election)	Jul 8, 2026 (Jul 1, 2026)	Oct 7, 2026	
Election Day	Aug 4, 2026* (Jul 28, 2026)	Nov 3, 2026	<i>*It is anticipated that the August 4 Primary date will be moved to July 28 by the legislature within the next month or so.</i>
Deadline for Council to Canvass (≤20 days after the election)	Aug 24, 2026 (Aug 17, 2026)	Nov 23, 2026	



2027 Election Timelines

Action Step	March 9, 2027 Special Election Date(s)	May 18, 2027 Special Election Date(s)	Notes
Council Call of Election & Notify County of adding ballot measures (180 days prior) Ballot Language Due to the County (150 days prior)	Sep 10, 2026 Oct 10, 2026	Nov 19, 2026 Dec 19, 2026	The resolution calling the election, and the adoption of the ballot language can be done at the same Council meeting on the same Resolution.
Call of Election Published (120 days prior – suggested)	Nov 9, 2026	Jan 18, 2027	After council approval.
First Day to Accept Pro/Con Arguments for Publicity Pamphlet (120 days prior – suggested)	Nov 9, 2026	Jan 18, 2027	Date flexible after ballot language adopted.
Deadline to File Pro/Con Arguments (90 days prior)	Dec 9, 2026	Feb 17, 2027	
Begin Mailing Publicity Pamphlet (42 days prior)	Jan 26, 2027	Apr 6, 2027	Must precede ballot mailing.
Last Day for Voter Registration (29 days prior)	Feb 8, 2027	Apr 19, 2027	
First Day to Mail Ballots (27 days prior)	Feb 10, 2027	Apr 21, 2027	
Election Day	Mar 9, 2027	May 18, 2027	
Deadline for Council to Canvass (≤20 days after)	Mar 29, 2027	Jun 7, 2027	

Thank you!



Questions?