

The Committee Process

1. The Columbus City Charter provides for our form of government, serves as a means of local self-determination, and expresses, or restricts home rule powers. It is, in essence, our municipal constitution – the framework of our government.
2. The charter may only be adopted and amended by a vote of the electors of the City of Columbus. These requirements are set forth in the Ohio Constitution sections 18.08, 18.09, and 18.14, as well as the Columbus City Charter section 234. Other sections of the Charter, general laws of the state, and case law provide requirements and guidance for the process.
3. Amendments to the charter may be initiated by vote of City Council or by a citizen petition. However, the Committee may not initiate the charter amendment process. For the purposes of a Charter Review Committee, City Council will receive recommendations, if any, and may at its discretion submit, in whole or in part, any proposed amendments for a vote of the people.
4. The Charter Review Committee is appointed by City Council and the Mayor of Columbus. As a public body, the Committee must adopt by-laws memorializing its mission and governing its structure, operations, and actions; adhere to Ohio’s public meeting laws; provide for proper public notice of meetings and hearings; and prepare and preserve general minutes, reports, and ancillary documents.
5. To preserve Committee documents, the City Clerk will prepare a file folder for inclusion in the City Clerk’s General File. The Committee Secretary, or similar person, must provide all Committee-related documents to the City Clerk’s office for inclusion in this folder. This provides a central repository to respond to public records requests and for retaining the records for further review.
6. At the conclusion of its public process, the Committee must submit a report and recommendations, if any, to City Council by filing it with the City Clerk. This report may include recommended amendments to the Columbus City Charter, recommended ordinances for adoption, recommended policies or rules, recommended further study, or recommendations for no change. The committee may then be dissolved by order of the appointing authorities, or may be asked to reconvene and consider additional issues.

The Post-Committee Process

1. If Council agrees with one or more recommendations and wishes to initiate the charter amendment process, an ordinance will be prepared to “submit to the electors of the City an amendment of the Columbus City Charter...” setting forth the change(s) sought. A two-thirds vote of Council is required to place an issue before the voters (see Columbus City Charter section 234, and Ohio Constitution section 18.09)
2. If the charter amendment ordinance is ordained by City Council, the issue must be submitted to the electors of the city at the next regular municipal election occurring not less than sixty days nor more than one hundred and twenty days after its passage. If there is no regular municipal election during that time, City Council must call and provide for a special election during the aforesaid.

3. Once the ordinance is passed by Council, which neither requires the Mayor's signature nor is subject to mayoral veto, the City Clerk must forthwith forward a certified copy of the proposed charter amendment to the Franklin County Board of Elections, along with any order calling and providing for a special election on the same. The Board must provide notification of the ballot issue to other county boards of elections with Columbus electors in their jurisdiction.
4. Columbus City Council will submit the official ballot language to the Franklin County Board of Elections
5. Not less than thirty days prior to the election, the City Clerk must either give notice of the proposed charter amendment in a newspaper of general circulation or mail a copy of the proposed amendment to each elector whose name appears upon the registration books of the last regular municipal or general election. Please note that in recent history, the Franklin County Board of Elections has published such notice. In conferring with the City Attorney and the County President at those times, the City Clerk has determined that the board's notice is sufficient to meet the aforesaid requirements.
6. No less than fifteen days before the election, the City Clerk must publish the same public notice in the City Bulletin for two consecutive Saturdays.
7. The Franklin County Board of Elections provides final election results for the ballot issue after the official canvass has been issued by the Ohio Secretary of State. Those results are filed in the Charter Review Committee folder in the City Clerk's General File.
8. If, according to the official canvass, a majority of the electors voting in the election have approved the proposed charter amendment, it shall become a part of the charter upon the date fixed therein or the date of the official canvass, whichever is later. If two or more charter amendment proposals exist that are in conflict, as determined by City Council, the proposed charter amendment with the higher vote total goes into effect.
9. The City Clerk's office must then send a copy of the amendment language to the codifier so the charter amendment can be codified; and must update the City Clerk's Charter History overview document, which is located on a shared network drive.