



Amarillo Charter Review

June 13 Citizen's Committee Meeting

Baker Tilly Advisory Group, LP and Baker Tilly US, LLP, trading as Baker Tilly, operate under an alternative practice structure and are members of the global network of Baker Tilly International Ltd., the members of which are separate and independent legal entities. Baker Tilly US, LLP is a licensed CPA firm that provides assurance services to its clients. Baker Tilly Advisory Group, LP and its subsidiary entities provide tax and consulting services to their clients and are not licensed CPA firms.

Call to Order

City Council Representatives and Committee Members

Councilmember Scherlen	Councilmember Simpson
Chair Freda Powell	Vice Chair Gary Pitner
Kim Benson	Rodney Hill
Audrey Castillo	Toby Hudson
Dean Crump	Sandra McCartt
Michael Haning	Donna Ward

Baker Tilly Team

Dennis Hawkins, project lead	Mary Locey
Al Zelinka	Shauna Clark



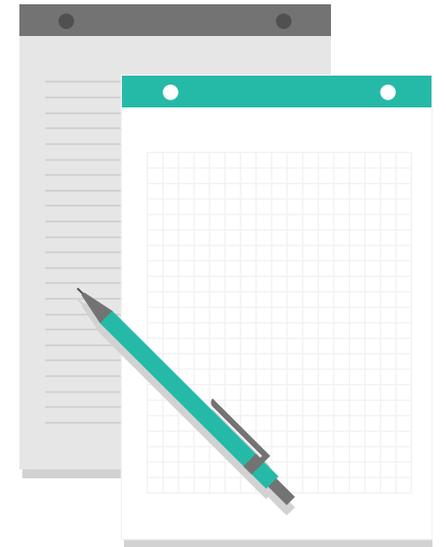


Public Comment



Review and Adopt June 13 Agenda

- Discuss and confirm Committee consensus from June 6
- Discuss and determine preferred alternate City Council composition and election method
- Discuss and determine preferred election calendar
- Discuss and determine preferred Charter provisions regarding Mayor and Council recall requirements
- Discuss and determine any change to allow the City Council appointing authority for other City officials
- Committee bike rack items – future agenda topics
- Comments from the Committee
- Review and wrap up



Discuss and Confirm Committee Consensus

On June 6, received Committee consensus on:

- Increase seats from five to **seven elected officials**
 - Mayor and six Councilmembers
- Update terms of office from two-year non staggered to **four-year staggered**



Review and Discuss – Council Composition

	Composition	Election Method
Current System	A. Mayor and Councilmembers	A. Elected at-large, citywide basis; all residents vote for Mayor and Councilmembers
Hybrid 1	A. Mayor and some Councilmembers	A. Some elected at-large (citywide) and some Councilmembers required to live in a specific geographic district with citywide voting on all seats.
Hybrid 2	A. Mayor and some Councilmembers B. Some Councilmembers	A. Elected at-large (citywide) B. Required to live in a specific geographic district with voting on that seat limited only to voters living within that district
Hybrid 3	A. Mayor B. All Councilmembers	A. Elected at-large (citywide) B. Elected to represent a single, specific geographic district. Each member required to reside within the area they seek to represent; voting on that seat limited only to voters living with that district



Review and Discuss – Election Calendar

	Advantages	Disadvantages
May, Alternating Odd Years¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electorate familiar with this election calendar for Council seats• Maintain focus on local elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traditionally lower voter participation in May elections
November, Alternating Even Years¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides manageable transition to four-year terms on alternate calendar (even years)• County run elections; City contracts with County• Potential for higher voter participation due to general election calendar with state and national elections (even years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competes with state and national elections (even years)• Potential voter fatigue and ballot drop off; City elections are at the end of larger, more complex ballot with state and national issues

¹May 2025: All seats on ballot. Election cycle transitions for odd and even years reflected on the next two slides.



Review and Discuss – Election Calendar/Cycle

Cycle	May 2025	May 2027	May 2029	May 2031
Hybrid 1	<p>A. Places 1, 3, 5, Citywide vote, Serve until 2027¹</p> <p>B. Mayor, Places 2, 4, 6 Citywide vote, Serve until 2029</p>	<p>Places 1, 3, 5 Citywide vote, Serve until 2031</p>	<p>Mayor Places 2, 4, 6 Citywide vote, Serve until 2033</p>	<p>Places 1, 3, 5 Citywide vote Serve until 2035</p>
Hybrid 2	<p>A. Places 1, 3, Citywide vote Serve until 2027¹</p> <p>B. Mayor, Places 2, 4, Citywide vote Serve until 2029</p> <p>C. Places 5, 6 Residency, District vote Serve until 2027¹, 2029</p>	<p>A. Places 1, 3 Citywide vote Serve until 2031</p> <p>B. Place 5 Residency District vote Serve until 2031</p>	<p>A. Mayor, Places 2, 4 Citywide vote Serve until 2033</p> <p>B. Place 6 Residency District vote Serve until 2033</p>	<p>A. Places 1, 3 Citywide vote Serve until 2035</p> <p>B. Place 5 Residency District vote Serve until 2035</p>
Hybrid 3	<p>A. Mayor, Citywide vote Serve until 2029</p> <p>B. Places 1, 3, 5 Residency, District vote Serve until 2027¹</p> <p>C. Places 2, 4, 6 Residency, District vote Serve until 2029</p>	<p>Places 1, 3, 5 Residency, District vote Serve until 2031</p>	<p>A. Mayor Citywide vote Serve until 2033</p> <p>B. Places 2, 4, 6 Residency District vote Serve until 2033</p>	<p>Places 1, 3, 5 Residency, District vote Serve until 2035</p>

¹Councilmembers elected for a two-year term (2025 to 2027), then elected to serve a four-year term thereafter.



Review and Discuss – Election Calendar/Cycle

Cycle	May 2025	November 2026	November 2028	November 2030
Hybrid 1	<p>A. Places 1, 3, 5, Citywide vote, Serve until 2026¹</p> <p>B. Mayor, Places 2, 4, 6 Citywide vote, Serve until 2028</p>	<p>Places 1, 3, 5 Citywide vote, Serve until 2030</p>	<p>Mayor Places 2, 4, 6 Citywide vote, Serve until 2032</p>	<p>Places 1, 3, 5 Citywide vote Serve until 2034</p>
Hybrid 2	<p>A. Places 1, 3, Citywide vote Serve until 2026¹</p> <p>B. Mayor, Places 2, 4, Citywide vote Serve until 2028</p> <p>C. Places 5, 6 Residency, District vote Serve until 2026¹, 2028</p>	<p>A. Places 1, 3 Citywide vote Serve until 2030</p> <p>B. Place 5 Residency District vote Serve until 2030</p>	<p>A. Mayor, Places 2, 4 Citywide vote Serve until 2032</p> <p>B. Place 6 Residency District vote Serve until 2032</p>	<p>A. Places 1, 3 Citywide vote Serve until 2034</p> <p>B. Place 5 Residency District vote Serve until 2034</p>
Hybrid 3	<p>A. Mayor, Citywide vote Serve until 2029</p> <p>B. Places 1, 3, 5 Residency, District vote Serve until 2027¹</p> <p>C. Places 2, 4, 6 Residency, District vote Serve until 2029</p>	<p>Places 1, 3, 5 Residency, District vote Serve until 2030</p>	<p>A. Mayor Citywide vote Serve until 2032</p> <p>B. Places 2, 4, 6 Residency District vote Serve until 2032</p>	<p>Places 1, 3, 5 Residency, District vote Serve until 2035⁴</p>

¹Councilmembers elected for a one-and-a-half-year term (May 2025 to November 2026), then elected to a four-year term thereafter.

²Councilmembers elected for a three-year term (2025 to 2028), then, elected to a four-year term thereafter.



Review and Discuss – Election Cycles

Comparison Cities	Term Length	2024	2025	2026	2027
El Paso	4-years staggered	Mayor, Districts 2, 3, 4, 7		Districts 1, 5, 6, 8	
Arlington	3-years staggered			Mayor, Districts 3, 4, 5, 8	Districts 1, 2, 6, 7
Plano	4-years staggered		Mayor (Place 6), Places 2, 4, 8		Places 1, 3, 5, 7
Lubbock	Mayor 2-years, Council 4-years, all staggered	Mayor, Districts 2, 4, 6		Mayor, Districts 1, 3, 5	
Laredo	4-years staggered	Districts 4, 5, 7, 8		Mayor, Districts 1, 2, 3, 6	
Amarillo	2-years		All seats		All seats
Brownsville	4-years staggered		Districts 3, 4		Mayor, Districts 1, 2
Grand Prairie	3-years staggered	Districts 5, 6, 8	Mayor, Districts 2, 4	Districts 1, 3, 7	Districts 5, 6, 8
Killeen	2-years staggered	Mayor, three at large	Districts 1, 2, 3, 4	Mayor, three at large	Districts 1, 2, 3, 4
Mesquite	2-years		All seats		All seats
Waco	2-years staggered	Mayor, Districts 1, 3	Districts 2, 4, 5	Mayor, Districts 1, 3	Districts 2, 4, 5



Discussion – Composition and Calendar

- Questions and clarification
- Straw voting
 - Council Composition:
 - Current system (all at-large, citywide voting)
 - Hybrid 1 (Mayor and some at-large, some districts with a residency requirement, all citywide voting)
 - Hybrid 2 (Mayor and some at-large citywide voting, some with a residency requirement with district voting)
 - Hybrid 3 (Mayor at-large citywide voting, all resident requirement with district voting)
 - Election Calendar:
 - May or November
 - Odd or even years



Review and Discuss – Recall Requirements

- Any **elective officer(s)** (a), not within six months after election (h).
- Petition obtained from (c) and filed with city secretary **within 30 days** (e) signed by at least **30% of registered voters** whom **1/5 certify they voted** for the officer(s) proposed to be recalled (b).
- Upon return of petition, **at once** submit to governing authority and **notify officer(s)** of recall action (e).
- Within **five days**, if official(s) **does not resign**, a **recall election** shall be called (e).
- If majority voters **pass recall**, the officer(s) are **removed from office** (g).
- If a majority **fails to pass recall**, the officer(s) **continue to serve subject to recall** (g).
- For **initiative or referenda**, **5% of registered voter's signatures** are required to qualify for the ballot.



Review and Discuss – Recall Requirements

Comparison Cities	Recall Percent and Requirements	Timeline ¹
El Paso	20% of the total number of votes cast in the election of the officer being recalled	60 days
Arlington	N/A	N/A
Plano	30% of the number of votes at the last regular municipal election, but no less than 150 petitioners	N/A
Lubbock	30% of qualified voters of the district determined by the number of votes in the last regular municipal election	30 days
Laredo	10% of registered voters in City or District election of officer being recalled	6 months
Amarillo	30% of registered voters, 1/5 certify they voted for the officer being recalled	30 days
Brownsville	10% of the voters registered to vote for a successor to the challenged officer	6 months
Grand Prairie	15% of the registered voters entitled to vote for that Place, or 40% of those who voted for that Council Place in the last municipal election, whichever is greater	30 days
Killeen	50% of total number of voters in the last municipal election for that seat	30 days
Mesquite	40% of qualified voters at the last regular municipal election	30 Days
Waco	30% of qualified voters of the City or District, as applicable	N/A

¹Timeline from obtaining to filing the petition form.



Review and Discuss – Recall Requirements

- Of the ten comparison cities:
 - One has **no recall provision**
 - Four require **20% or less** registered voter signatures
 - Five require **30% or more** registered voter signatures

Review and Discuss – Recall Requirements

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reducing the signature threshold of the percent of registered voter’s signatures may make it more practical to recall an elected official; more accountability for office holders.• Changing the signature threshold of the percent of registered voter signatures and number of days for signature gathering to be more in alignment as for referendum and initiative petitions promotes more equity across all issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current requirements make it almost impossible for a petition seeking to recall an elected official to succeed.



Discussion – Recall Requirements

- Questions and clarification
- Straw voting
 - Signature requirements for elected official
 - Number of days to return petition
 - Signature requirements for initiatives or referenda



Review and Discuss – Appointing Authority

- The current City Charter reserves to the Mayor and City Council the appointing authority of the City Manager, all other employees are hired, supervised, and evaluated under the City Manager's authority.
- Comparison cities:
 - Some designate the City Council as the appointing authority for all key leadership positions – City Manager, City Attorney, City Secretary, etc.
 - In seven cities, the City Council has appointing authority for the City Attorney.
 - Two provide hiring of the City Attorney by the City Manager, subject to City Council confirmation.
 - One city reserves City Attorney hiring authority to the City Manager.



Review and Discuss – Appointing Authority

Comparison Cities	City Manager	City Attorney	City Secretary	Municipal Judge
El Paso	Council	Council	City Manager	
Arlington	Council	Council	City Manager	Council
Plano	Council	Council	City Manager	
Lubbock	Council	Council	Council	Council
Laredo	Council	City Manager, subject to Council confirmation	City Manager, subject to Council confirmation	Elected by city at-large
Amarillo	Council	City Manager	City Manager	
Brownsville	Council	Council	City Manager	
Grand Prairie	Council	City Manager, with advice/consent of Council	City Manager	City Manager, with advice/consent of Council
Killeen	Council	City Manager	City Manager	Council
Mesquite	Council	Council	Council	Council
Waco	Council	Council	Council	Council



Review and Discuss – Appointing Authority

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City Council appointments of the City Attorney emphasizes that the City is the client and that the privilege is held by the Council.• Some cities use the City Attorney as an outside neutral source to investigate complaints like discrimination or harassment from a City Manager.• Enabling the City Council, rather than the City Manager, as the appointing authority for certain City officials eliminates potential conflicts regarding whose authority should be followed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A City Attorney who reports to the City Manager might have more job security than a City Attorney who reports to the Council, especially a Council that can be replaced every two years.• Having the City Council as the appointing authority may introduce more politics in the offices of the City Attorney.• It may be better to have the City Attorney report to the City Manager, who may have more institutional knowledge than the City Council.• Council appointment of some key officials may increase the potential for conflict among the City's professional leadership due to differing objectives.



Discussion – Appointing Authority

- Questions and clarification
- Straw voting
 - Council appointment of City Attorney
 - Council appointment of City Secretary

Committee Bike Rack Items/Future Agenda Topics

- Update Charter to remove/replace archaic language and provisions
- Establish regular Charter review cycle
- Change/update Charter to be consistent with state law, particularly regarding annexation, purchasing, etc.





Committee Comments



Meeting and Project Schedule

- **Charter Review Committee**

- Every Thursday
- 5:30 p.m.
- In person or via Teams
- Dates:
 - June 20
 - June 27



- **City Council Action**

- **July 9:** Review committee recommendations
- **July 23:** First reading of ordinance
- **August 13:** Second reading of ordinance

- **Ballot Initiative**

- **August 19:** Deadline per Texas Election Code
- **November 5:** Election





Dennis Hawkins
SPECIAL ADVISOR
dennis.hawkins@bakertilly.com

Al Zelinka
DIRECTOR
al.zelinka@bakertilly.com

Mary Locey
CONSULTING MANAGER
mary.locey@bakertilly.com

Shauna Clark
SPECIAL ADVISOR
shauna.clark@bakertilly.com

Next meeting, June 20



Baker Tilly US, LLP, trading as Baker Tilly, is a member of the global network of Baker Tilly International Ltd., the members of which are separate and independent legal entities. © 2024 Baker Tilly US, LLP.

Thank you