

City Council Work Session Briefing

Citizen Initiated Petitions for Charter Amendments and Ordinances

February 2, 2021



The Three Voter Petitions

Petition Sponsor	Type of Petition
1. Austinites for Progressive Reform	Charter Amendment
2. Austin Firefighters Association	Charter Amendment
3. Save Austin Now	Ordinance



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

Purpose: amend the City Charter in these ways

- Change the election date for electing the Mayor
- Require “ranked choice” voting in City elections, if allowed by state law
- Change the form of City government from “Council-Manager” to “Mayor-Council”
- Replace the City’s current public campaign finance program with “Democracy Dollars”



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

Changing the Mayoral Election Schedule:

- Mayoral election would coincide with the general (November) election in presidential years
- **Transition:** Mayor elected in 2022 serves a 2-year term, Mayors elected in 2024 and after serve a 4-year term



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

Ranked Choice Voting In City Elections:

- Allows voters to rank up to 5 candidates per office in an election
- The 1st place votes are counted. If a candidate receives a majority of the 1st place votes, they are the winner
- If there is not a winner after the first round, tabulation continues in rounds until there is a winner
- No runoff election



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

Ranked Choice Voting In City Elections:

- Tabulation Rounds:
 1. Candidate with lowest number of votes is eliminated.
 2. Those ballots that ranked the eliminated candidate 1st are retabulated, adding the 2nd ranked candidate on those ballots to the vote totals.
 3. If no candidate receives a majority vote, the tabulation rounds will continue.



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

Change to Mayor-Council form of government:

- **City Council:** 11-member Council is the City's legislative body (requires creation of new 11th Council district)
- **Mayor:** elected Mayor is City's chief executive and administrative officer (no longer member of Council but has veto authority over Council legislative actions)
- **City Manager:** eliminates position of City Manager
- Effective after 2022 election



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

Change to Mayor-Council form of government

City Council:

- Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission would redraw Council districts to create new 11th Council district
- Creates “President of the Council” position
- Passes all legislation (subject to Mayor’s veto authority)



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

Change to Mayor-Council form of government

Mayor:

- Head of City government for official and ceremonial purposes
- Responsible for administering the City government (similar to current City Manager)
 - Hires and directs City workforce (subject to civil service rules)
 - Prepares budget and submits to Council
 - Prepares financial reports and advises Council on City finances



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

Change to Mayor-Council form of government

Ordinances in a Mayor-Council government:

- Council passes all ordinances
- Mayor may approve or veto ordinances w/in 10 days (if no action, then ordinance is effective)
- Council may override veto w/in 45 days
 - Requires 2/3 Council vote (8 members) to override veto
 - Requires 3/4 Council vote (9 members) to override veto if ordinance required 2/3 vote to approve



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

Change to Mayor-Council form of government

Position	Current	Proposed
City Clerk	City Council	Same (Appointed by and serves at the pleasure of City Council.)
City Auditor	City Council	Same (Appointed by Council; after 5-year term may be removed by majority vote of Council, but during 5-year term may only be removed by 3/4 vote of Council.)
City Attorney	City Manager	Mayor, with confirmation of Council Removed by mayor or 2/3 vote of Council
Director of Finance	City Manager	Mayor
Director of Human Resources	City Manager	Mayor
Directors of Planning, Growth Management and Land Development	City Manager	Mayor
Other Department Directors	City Manager	Mayor

1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

Change to Mayor-Council form of government

Position	Current	Proposed
Municipal Court Judges	City Council	Mayor, with confirmation of Council Removed by mayor with confirmation of Council
Municipal Court Clerk	City Council	Mayor, with confirmation of Council Removed by mayor with confirmation of Council
Planning Commission	13 by City Council	11 by Council 2 by Mayor
Municipal Civil Service Commission	City Council	Same



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

“Democracy Dollars” Campaign Finance Program:

- Repeals the City’s current Fair Campaign Finance Program
- Requires City Clerk to mail \$25 vouchers to all registered voters in the City before every City general election
 - Up to 2 vouchers per election – one for council and one for mayor if both offices are on voter’s ballot.
- Voters contribute their vouchers to a City Council or Mayoral candidate who has chosen to participate in the program



1. Austinites for Progressive Reform Petition

“Democracy Dollars” Campaign Finance Program:

- Candidates may receive Democracy Dollar contributions only:
 - If they qualify by receiving at least 2X number of signatures required for a place on the ballot and by receiving at least 150 contributions; and
 - If they agree to accept conditions on their campaigns (i.e., not solicit funds on behalf of a PAC, party, or independent expenditure entity, participate in 3 debates, and agree to limits on contributions)
- Aggregate voucher limits: \$300,000 for Mayoral race or runoff; \$75,000 for Council race or runoff
- Candidates may also accept contributions other than vouchers



2. Austin Firefighters Association Petition

- **Purpose**: Add new provision to City Charter creating binding arbitration process for labor contract negotiations between City and AFA if negotiations reach impasse
- Permits either City or AFA to demand arbitration if contract negotiations not completed w/in 60 days
- Arbitration before 3-member panel
- Arbitration panel makes final, binding decision on all issues
- Petition establishes timetable and standards for decision



3. Save Austin Now Petition

- **Purpose**: Replaces current City Code provisions on camping; aggressive confrontation; and obstruction in the downtown area with City Code provisions that were in place before passage of the June 2019 ordinance on camping; solicitation; and sitting or lying on public sidewalks or sleeping outdoors.
 - EXCEPTION: The petitioned ordinance expands the area where sitting, lying, sleeping is prohibited.



3. Save Austin Now Petition

- Camping: Prohibits camping in public areas not designated as a camping area by the Parks and Recreation Department.



3. Save Austin Now Petition

- Solicitation: Prohibits aggressive solicitation or solicitation in certain areas/during certain times:
 - On buses or at bus stations, transportation facilities
 - Within 25 feet of an ATM or financial institution
 - At a crosswalk
 - Near school entrances/exits
 - At sidewalk cafes or patio areas of bars/restaurants
 - Within the City of Austin from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.



3. Save Austin Now Petition

- Sit/Lie: Prohibits sitting or lying in a right-of-way or sleeping outdoors in areas downtown and around the University of Texas campus.



3. Save Austin Now Petition

Additional restricted area
in petitioned ordinance

Currently restricted area

