Overview of the City Charter and Scope of City Charter Review

Charter Review Task Force
August 19, 2015
History of Home Rule Charters

• In 1912 the voters of Texas adopted the Home Rule Amendment to Article XI, Section 5 of the Texas constitution

• Applies to any city with a population over 5,000

• Allows these cities to adopt a charter provided the charter is not inconsistent with the state constitution or the statutes
Home Rule Concept

• Full power of self-government
  – Full authority to do anything the legislature could have authorized the city to do

• Home rule cities look to the acts of the state and federal legislatures only for limitations on their power

• Gives cities the opportunity to reflect their own cultures, traditions and other preferences
What goes into a Home Rule Charter

- Form of government
  - Mayor-council; council-manager; commission
- Details regarding the governing body
  - Size, qualifications, terms, term limits, method of electing officials, compensation, vacancies, powers of the mayor etc.
- Selection of administrative personnel
- Publication and passage of ordinances
- Creation of boards and commissions
- Annexation
- Municipal finances and issuance of debt
- Personnel functions
- Conflict of interest and ethical matters
- Elections, initiatives, referendums and recalls
- Franchises
- Planning and zoning
Amending a City Charter

• State Law: a city charter cannot be amended more often than every two years
• The governing body (City Council) approves the submittal of charter amendment to the voters
• In Fort Worth, the usual practice has included a charter review committee to consider and formulate recommendations to the City Council and a public hearing process
City of Fort Worth Charter

- Special Legislature Charter in 1873

- First Fort Worth Home Rule Charter adopted in 1924 which created the City Council/City Manager form of government

- Amended thirteen times between 1924 and 2006
# Scope of City Charter Review

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<th>Major issues as identified by City Council</th>
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<td>Technical amendments as identified by staff</td>
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## Major Issues as Identified by City Council

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Current Charter provisions</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Longer terms of office</strong></td>
<td>Two-year terms</td>
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<td><strong>Staggered terms</strong></td>
<td>Concurrent terms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Compensation</strong></td>
<td>$29,999 for Mayor&lt;br&gt;$25,000 for Council members</td>
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<td><strong>Number of Council Members</strong></td>
<td>Current: 8+1&lt;br&gt;Proposed: 10+1&lt;br&gt;Redistrict in 2021 (after 2020 census) for 2023 election.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conflicts of interest</strong></td>
<td>Prohibits any direct or indirect financial interest in City contracts</td>
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Technical Amendments as Identified by Staff

• Revise **specific chapters**

• Reorganize chapters and sections into more **logical order**

• Ensure compliance of election provisions with **state law**

• Revise or delete **archaic language** and unused provisions