

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

Major issues as identified by City Council

Technical amendments as identified by staff

Major Issues as Identified by City Council

Issue	Current Charter provisions
Longer terms of office	Two-year terms
Staggered terms	Concurrent terms
Compensation	\$29,999 for Mayor \$25,000 for Council members
Number of Council Members	Current: 8+1 Proposed: 10+1 Redistrict in 2021 (after 2020 census) for 2023 election.
Conflicts of interest	Prohibits any direct or indirect financial interest in City contracts

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



