



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Nicole Emery, City Clerk
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: A resolution placing proposed Charter amendment 1 on the November 5, 2024, General Election ballot – Requested for July 16, 2024
DATE: July 10, 2024

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution placing proposed Charter amendment 1 on the November 5, 2024, General Election ballot.

BACKGROUND:

The Recommendation is Based On:

On October 17, 2023, Resolution No. 41282 was adopted creating a Charter Review Committee (CRC), consisting of 15 citizens (residents), to review the existing Charter of the City of Tacoma and make such recommendations to the City Council for charter amendments as the committee may deem necessary and proper to improve the manner of operation and efficiency in conducting the affairs of the City. On December 19, 2023, Resolution No. 41324 was adopted appointing members to the CRC. Starting January 11, 2024, CRC members begin to meet to review the City Charter and develop recommendations.

On May 6, 2024, the City Council received the final report from the Charter Review Committee and a presentation on their recommendations. Starting May 7, 2024, the City Council reviewed the recommendations, brought forward new recommendations, and refined recommendations for consideration for the November 5, 2024, general election ballot. At the July 9, 2024, meeting City Council Members made motions to refer recommendations to the July 16, 2024, meeting for title drafting and final consideration to place on the ballot and redirected some amendments to other policy processes.

This recommendation would change the Salary Commission procedure to align with the requirements of RCW 35.21.015 by removing the requirement that the Council adopt the Commission’s salary changes; and change the commission title from “Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries” to “Commission on Elected Salaries.”

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

The City Charter requires the City Council to commence a comprehensive review of the City Charter no less frequently than once every ten years by appointing citizens to a Charter Review Committee (CRC). The CRC met between January and May of 2024. They took comment at public meetings, and held two extended public comment meetings with opportunities to comment in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Khmer. On May 6, 2024, the CRC presented final report to the City Council. The City Council reviewed every proposal from the CRC, in addition to creating new proposals for consideration. All materials were published in advance of the City Council’s public hearing on July 2, 2024.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility: (Mandatory)

The Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries exists to set proper salaries, that are appropriate for the duties, for the City’s elected officials, and to remove political considerations from the process.

Civic Engagement: Equity Index Score: Moderate Opportunity

Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.



Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

Washington law, RCW 35.21.015, allows salaries for elected officials in towns and cities to be set by salary commissions. In 2014, Tacoma voters approved a charter amendment creating a salary commission to determine the salary of the Mayor and Council Members. RCW 35.21.015(3) provides, “*Any change in salary shall be filed by the commission with the city clerk and shall become effective and incorporated into the city or town budget without further action of the city council or salary commission.*” (Italics added.) Section 2.3 of the Charter requires the City Council to adopt the Commission’s salary changes, which is inconsistent with the state law making such changes automatic. This amendment would make the recommended changes automatic, without further action by the Council, and bring the Charter into alignment with state law and the purpose of having an independent body set salaries.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. Keep current charter language	Reduced election costs for ballot items	Existing charter language is inconsistent with state law.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

If approved, this Charter amendment will be placed on the ballot for voters in the November 2024 election.

RECOMMENDATION:

None.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Staff in the Office of Management & Budget (OMB) provided Fiscal Notes during City Council review of proposed amendments. OMB reviewed all proposed amendments and provided fiscal impacts on amendments may require investments above \$50,000 to implement. OMB did not provide a Fiscal Note for this amendment. The cost to place amendments on the ballot will be captured in the combined resolution brought forward on July 23, 2024.

What Funding is being used to support the expense?

N/A

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium’s current budget?

N/A

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

No

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

No

Will the legislation change the City’s FTE/personnel counts?

No