



Community Engagement Fair

Wednesday, October 28, 7:00 - 8:30 PM
Community Center North Gym



Talk with community groups making a difference in Worthington



Discover volunteer opportunities for teens and adults



Find a cause you're passionate about and get involved!



Charter Amendments on the November Ballot

On November 3, 2026, Worthington residents will vote on proposed amendments to the City Charter, which serves as the City's "local constitution." The Charter was first adopted in 1956 and has been amended periodically since then.

Section 9.04 of the Charter provides for a Charter Review Commission at least every ten years to review the Charter and recommend any amendments it deems necessary or appropriate. City Council appointed an 11-member Charter Review Commission in March 2026. The Commission held meetings open to the public in April, May, and June, and received public comments before finalizing its recommendations. On July 20, City Council voted to place the recommended amendments on the ballot. Any and all changes to the Charter must be approved by the voters.

The Commission's recommendations will appear on the ballot as three separate issues: Issues 35, 36, and 37.

Issue 35: Referendum Petition Timeline for Zoning Matters

Issue 35 reduces the number of days for collecting signatures on referendum petitions related to zoning matters from 60 to 30, clarifies the zoning actions that are involved, and moves the requirements to Sections 2.17 and 2.19 where similar topics are located.

In 2015, a Charter amendment by petition changed the number of days from 20 to 60. State law provides 30 days for cities that do not specify another timeframe. The Commission recommends 30 days to be consistent with state law and the vast majority of Central Ohio cities. The amendment would continue the prohibition against the adoption of zoning matters by emergency that was put in place by the 2015 Charter amendment.

Issue 36: Referendum Petition Signature Requirement

Issue 36 reduces the number of signatures required for a referendum petition from 35% of the City's voters in the last gubernatorial election to 10% of voters in the last gubernatorial election.

The Charter defers to State law for the number of signatures required for a referendum petition. Prior to last year, State law required signatures from 10% of the City's voters in the last gubernatorial election. State law was changed to increase that signature threshold to 35%. The Commission recommends returning to the threshold that was in place since the adoption of the City Charter in 1956 prior to the state law revision.

Issue 37: Charter Review Commission Recommendations

Issue 37 includes the remainder of the Commission's recommended amendments. Highlights are included below with the full list available at worthington.org/CharterReview:

- Provide the option for a referendum question to be placed on a primary or special election ballot in addition to a general election ballot.
- Combine the authority of the Municipal Planning Commission, Architectural Review Board, and Board of Zoning Appeals into one body called the Municipal Development Commission with eight members. Provide for up to two years before implementation.
- Provide authority for City Council to opt for a different court in place of Mayor's Court.
- Remove the prohibition of the Mayor and Vice Mayor receiving a salary change during a term of office since they are not eligible to vote on the matter.
- Remove the requirement to appoint the City Manager by ordinance.
- Add to the list of ordinances effective upon publication certain ordinances related to public improvements.
- Review the Master Plan, official map, area plans, and development standards at least every ten years rather than every five years.
- Provide Council with the ability to determine by ordinance the posting locations for notices of public hearings on ordinances and for publishing ordinances.
- Modify the procedure for situations where an officer or employee have an interest in a contract.
- Add reasons for instances where a Council member shall be removed from office.
- Add the right for the City Manager to attend Council meetings, participate in discussions, and bring matters to the attention of Council but without the right to vote.
- Clarify procedures related to multi-year contracts and consequences related to any contract that exceeds the amount of funds available.
- Allow for refunding bonds or notes to be passed by emergency.
- Require Charter Review Commission members to be electors of the City.

Issue 38: Resident Petition

Issue 38 was submitted by petition and is not a Charter Review Commission recommendation. It changes the referendum petition signature requirement to 10% of the City's voters in the last municipal election. By comparison, Issue 36 would return the requirement to 10% of the City's voters in the last gubernatorial election. This issue sets a lower threshold of signatures and includes language that expands the types of Council actions that are subject to referendum.

What happens if both Issues 36 and 38 are approved?

Issue 37 includes language addressing conflicting Charter amendments approved at the same election. If Issues 36 and 38 are both approved and Issue 37 is approved, the issue receiving the higher number of "yes" votes will take effect. If Issue 37 is not approved and both Issues 36 and 38 are approved, the determination of which language goes into effect would need to be determined in court.

When would approved changes take effect?

Amendments approved by voters take effect immediately, subject to certification by the Board of Elections, with the exception of the Municipal Development Commission. If approved, the City would have until December 31, 2028, to transition to the Municipal Development Commission.

Learn More

The complete proposed amendments, Charter Review Commission Report, a redlined version of the Charter, and additional information are available at worthington.org/CharterReview.