

6/9/2025

RESOLUTION M-4339

A RESOLUTION to submit to the voters of the City of Vancouver a proposal to add Section 2.19 requiring the City Council to appoint a Districting Commission to divide the city into four voting districts of roughly equal population, have districted council candidates elected within their own district for both the primary and general elections, have two council candidates elected at-large, city-wide, and have the Mayor elected city-wide.

WHEREAS, the 2024 Charter Review Committee held seven meetings between October 2023 and April 2024, to review proposed amendments to the City Charter and included as one of their recommendations a shift to election by districts; and

WHEREAS, the City Council created a districting subcommittee to consider the election by district recommended amendment more thoroughly; and

WHEREAS, the City Council conducted multiple discussions on the proposed election by districts charter amendment; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a duly noticed hearing on the 9th day of June, 2025 and voted to submit the proposed amendment to the Charter below to the voters.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF VANCOUVER:

Section 1. That the following amendment adding Section 2.19 requiring the City Council to appoint a Districting Commission to divide the city into four voting districts of roughly equal population, have districted council candidates elected within their own district for both the primary and general elections, have two council candidates elected at-large, city-wide, and have the Mayor

elected city-wide, (“Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1”) be submitted to the voters of the City of Vancouver:

(Proposed language to be added is shown by underline.)

New Section 2.19. Election of Councilmembers; Councilmember Districts.

A. General

- a. The Council will be apportioned and elected as follow:
 - i. The Mayor will be elected city-wide.
 - ii. Two (2) Councilmembers will be elected city-wide.
 - iii. Four (4) Councilmembers will be elected from within geographically distinct districts.
- b. General municipal elections are held in November in odd-numbered years.
- c. For purposes of this section, residence in an area annexed to the city shall be deemed residence within the city.

B. Election by District

- a. Councilmembers and candidates for city council shall be residents of the district they represent or seek to represent.
- b. If a Councilmember elected to represent a district continues to live in the City but moves out of their district, they will remain the councilmember for that district until the next municipal election.
- c. Only voters residing in a district at the time ballots are distributed by the Clark County Auditor are eligible to vote for the Councilmember representing that district.

C. Districting Plan

- a. A Districting Plan shall be maintained by the City and contain detailed maps and descriptions of the district boundaries and other relevant data necessary for implementation.
- b. Revisions to the Districting Plan shall be made by a Districting Commission, consistent with applicable state law and this Charter.
- c. The Districting Plan shall be revised within three hundred and sixty-five (365) days of the release of census block level data of each federal decennial census, unless more frequently as directed by this Charter.
- d. The Districting plan shall be based on the most recent federal decennial census, together with additional population estimates that the Districting Commission deems reliable.
- e. Revisions to the Districting Plan shall take effect at the first possible municipal primary election more than one hundred fifty (150) days after ratification by the Council.

- f. Any territory annexed to the City of Vancouver shall, at the time of such annexation, be added to an adjacent district or districts by an ordinance of the Council.
- g. Council districts shall be as equal in population as practicable. In no case shall the most populous district exceed the population of the least populous district by more than ten percent.
- h. In the event that any existing voting precinct established by the Clark County Auditor is located partly within two or more Council Districts, the Districting Plan shall be modified to assign the entire precinct to the Council district in which the largest number of voters within the precinct reside.
- i. If data becomes available, including the adoption by the Council of an annexation, that the population of the most populous district exceeds that of the least populous by more than ten percent, a new Districting Commission shall be appointed by the Council, following the process outlined in this Charter, to develop a new Districting Plan between decennial censuses.
- j. The Districting Plan, shall be based on the following guidelines:
 - i. Districts should preserve identifiable communities of interest.
 - ii. Districts should be geographically compact and populous contiguous territory shall not be bypassed to reach distant populous areas.
 - iii. Districts should be composed of contiguous territory with reasonable access between population centers in the district.
 - iv. Districts should not be drawn for purposes of protecting incumbents.
 - v. Districts should be bounded by natural boundaries, such as by street lines, by neighborhood association boundaries, or by other geographic or political boundaries.
 - vi. Districts should be drawn to promote demographic and economic diversity on the Council.
- k. The draft Districting Plan shall be made public by the Commission on or before June 1 of the convening year. The Commission shall hold public hearings in each of the proposed districts.
- l. The final Districting Plan shall be adopted by the Districting Committee on or before October 1 of that year.
- m. Within thirty (30) days after adoption by the Districting Commission, the Council must either ratify the Districting Plan without modification or amendment except to correct data errors upon request by the Districting Commission or return once it to Districting Commission for further consideration. The Districting Commission then has thirty (30) days thereafter to adopt a final Districting Plan for Council ratification.

D. Districting Commission

- a. Districting Commission members must be appointed on or before January 31 of the convening year.
- b. Districting Commission members shall serve until the Council has ratified the revised Districting Plan.
- c. One (1) member of the Districting Commission and one (1) alternate shall be nominated by the Mayor, and four (4) members shall be nominated by the

remainder of the City Council, from those applying upon a determination of reasonable geographic representation among the applicants. Commissioners are selected at-large, city-wide.

- d. Commission members shall have been a resident of the City of Vancouver for at least two years and shall demonstrate a general knowledge of the neighborhoods and geography of the city.
- e. No person may serve on the Commission who, at time of appointment, is an elected official (except precinct committee officer), or a City of Vancouver employee. The Council shall ratify each member of the Districting Commission by simple majority.
- f. Two city staff members, including one city GIS employee, will be assigned to the Districting Commission.
- g. The Districting Commission shall appoint its own chair and vice chair during its first meeting of each cycle.
- h. A majority of Commission members shall constitute a quorum, and decisions shall be made by a consensus of at least three votes.
- i. The Districting Commission, in compliance with this Charter and state law, will set its own rules to complete the Districting Plan.

E. Transition

- a. The Districting Commission shall prescribe, as part of the 2026 Districting Plan, a system by which the current Council seats will convert to the new election system.
- b. At the 2027 election there shall be elected one (1) at-large councilmember and two (2) councilmembers to non-contiguous districted positions, and every four years thereafter. At the 2029 election there shall be elected the Mayor, one (1) councilmember at-large and two (2) councilmembers to non-contiguous districted positions, and every four years thereafter.
- c. The initial districting plan shall be based on the 2020 federal decennial census, together with additional population estimates that the Commission deems reliable.
- d. Council members elected or appointed at-large prior to the November 2027 municipal general election shall continue in office until the terms to which they were elected or appointed expire as provided by law.
- e. Section 2.19.E shall be automatically stricken from the Charter of the City of Vancouver after the completion of the 2029 General Election.

2. The Clark County Auditor, as ex officio supervisor of elections in Clark County, is hereby requested to submit Proposed Charter Amendment No. 1 to the November 4, 2025, general election ballot.

3. The City Clerk is authorized and directed to take those actions necessary to submit Proposed Charter Amendments No. 1 before the voters at the November 4, 2025, election.

ADOPTED at regular session of the Council of the City of Vancouver, this 9th day of June 2025.

Signed this 9th day of June, 2025.

DocuSigned by:

Anne McEnerny-Ogle

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Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Mayor

Attest:

DocuSigned by:

Natasha Ramras

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Natasha Ramras, City Clerk

Approved as to form:

DocuSigned by:

Nena Cook

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Nena Cook, City Attorney

Prior to the adoption of the final districting plan and district boundaries the Commission shall conduct public hearings in each of the four proposed districts.