



*Proprietary & Confidential*

FINAL REPORT

---

**City of Stockton**  
**CITY CHARTER REVIEW**

April 12, 2024

---

Moss Adams LLP  
999 Third Avenue, Suite 2800  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 302-6500



# Table of Contents

<b>I. Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B. Summary of Observations and Recommendations</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A. Background</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B. Scope and Methodology</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>III. Observations and Recommendations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A. Civil Service Rules</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B. Public Information Officer Rules</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix A: Civil Service Analysis</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix B: PIO Analysis</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Appendix C: Charter Review Best Practices</b>	<b>41</b>



# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A. INTRODUCTION

The City of Stockton (the City) engaged Moss Adams LLP (Moss Adams, we, our) to conduct a City Charter Review. The purpose of this review was to assist the City in re-evaluating key components of its City Charter (the Charter), identifying potential updates and changes, and enabling a productive charter revision process.

City Council and City leadership expressed interest in evaluating charter language related to the Public Information Officer (PIO) and civil service rules, to identify opportunities that support the following goals:

- Modernize, simplify, and streamline charter language
- Create efficiencies and clarity
- Address areas of risk and concern
- Evaluate alignment with industry best practices on where policies should reside (e.g., the Charter, Municipal Code, Council policies)

## B. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations and recommendations were grouped by relation to civil service rules or PIO, as follows:

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
Civil Service Rules		
1.	<b>Observation</b>	The City's charter is significantly more detailed regarding civil service rules than examined peers.
	<b>Recommendation</b>	To align with best practices and encourage flexibility in its employment practices, Stockton should consider revising Article XXV to set succinct guiding principles for its civil service system and transfer detailed personnel and governance guidelines to its Municipal Code (the Code).
2.	<b>Observation</b>	The Charter is sometimes vague and difficult to interpret, and information is not always topically organized which can create inefficiencies in employment practices.
	<b>Recommendation</b>	In revising Article XXV of the Charter, ensure information is presented clearly, concisely, and in appropriate sections to promote clarity in civil service guiding principles.



OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
3.	<b>Observation</b>	The City’s personnel-related requirements defined in the Charter are highly prescriptive and complex, which impacts hiring and promotion processes.
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<p>A. To increase flexibility and align with best practices, consider moving detailed personnel provisions in the Charter to the Code.</p> <p>B. Consolidate personnel guidelines where possible.</p>
<b>Public Information Officer</b>		
4.	<b>Observation</b>	There are several areas in the Charter where the City’s approach related to the PIO is potentially misaligned with best practices.
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Consider a Charter amendment to align the City’s approach to the PIO with peers and best practices.



## II. INTRODUCTION

### A. BACKGROUND

The City of Stockton (the City) operates under a City Charter (the Charter), which serves as its municipal constitution. This charter, established in 1922, provides the framework for governance in Stockton, California. It outlines various provisions and regulations that govern the City's operations and administration. Additionally, it allows for the adoption of ordinances and codes that serve as laws within the City.

The purpose of this review was to assist the City in re-evaluating key components of the Charter, identifying potential updates and changes to modernize and align with best practices, and enabling a productive charter revision process.

### B. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

City Council and City leadership requested an evaluation of charter language related to the PIO and civil service rules to identify opportunities that support the following goals:

- Modernize, simplify, and streamline charter language
- Create efficiencies and clarity
- Address areas of risk and concern
- Evaluate alignment with industry best practices on where policies should reside (e.g., Charter, Municipal Code, City Council policies)

To conduct this review, we evaluated the City's charter provisions alongside those of peer cities and industry best practices. We compared the City's charter language and practices to five peer cities in California: Riverside, Bakersfield, Sacramento, Santa Ana, and Anaheim. Best practice analysis was informed by the National Civic League's [Model City Charter](#) and the Municipal Research and Services Center's [Guide for Charter Commissions](#).

We have also included a summary of best practices related to the Charter review process, including roles and responsibilities, scope management, public outreach, and community messaging (see [Appendix C](#)).

This review was conducted between January and March 2024. The project consisted of four major phases:



PROJECT PHASES			
Phase	Description	Period	
1	<b>Startup and Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Project initiation consisted of collaborative project planning with the City of Stockton and project management, including developing our scope of work and final work plan.</li> </ul>	January 2024
2	<b>Fact-Finding and Data Collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In the second phase we conducted fieldwork, including charter review and interviews. Our procedures included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reviewing the existing City Charter</li> <li>● Conducting interviews with key stakeholders to understand the operational impacts of existing provisions included in the Charter</li> <li>● Evaluating charter provisions for appropriateness of policy location, operational impacts, efficiency, risk, and modernization</li> <li>● Conducting peer analysis of relevant charter sections</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	January–February 2024
3	<b>Targeted Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Based on the information gained during Phase 2, we performed a comparative analysis to identify opportunities for Stockton to revise its Charter to align with peer and best practices. Leveraging best practice information and a review of charter provisions for similar cities, we developed practical recommendations for the City to consider. Key procedures included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For each charter section recommended for potential revisions, comparing the City's existing language to peer and best practice provisions</li> <li>● Identifying and summarizing best practices for the process of evaluating charter revisions</li> <li>● Preparing, presenting, and revising the draft report</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	February–March 2024
4	<b>Reporting Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ We communicated the results of our analysis with observations and recommendations, presented first in a draft report that was reviewed with management to confirm the practicality and relevance of recommendations before finalizing the report.</li> </ul>	March 2024



### III. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the input gathered from interviews, charter review, best practice research, and a review of peer city charters, we prepared the following set of observations and recommendations. Our aim is to provide City leadership with actionable information on opportunities for charter improvement, with recommendations intended to provide positive impact on operational effectiveness and efficiency at the City and in its governance, risk management, and control processes. While we encourage the City to implement the recommendations contained in this report, the City must assess its own degree of risk tolerance and the cost/benefit of revising each charter section.

#### A. CIVIL SERVICE RULES

The observations and recommendations in this section pertain to the civil service rules section of the Charter. A comprehensive comparison, including where the City is currently aligned with peers and best practices, is included in [Appendix A](#).

Among the five peer cities identified for review, two (Riverside and Anaheim) do not stipulate the existence of a civil service board in their charters. Where relevant, we included comparable information from other charter sections and municipal codes to understand Stockton's alignment with peers on each topic in the Charter.

#### Detailed Information in Charter

<p><b>1. Observation</b></p>	<p>The City's charter is significantly more detailed regarding civil service rules than examined peers.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation</b></p>	<p>To align with best practices and encourage flexibility in its employment practices, Stockton should consider revising Article XXV to set succinct guiding principles for its civil service system and transfer detailed personnel and governance guidelines to its Municipal Code.</p>

Stockton's City Charter includes more detailed information about civil service rules than all reviewed peer city charters. According to best practices, city charters should set overarching guidelines for a civil service system, while detailed practices should exist within municipal code to enable changes over time. City charters should outline the purpose and scope of the civil service system, including guidelines that will ensure fair and impartial processes for hiring and promotion, classification and compensation, performance evaluation, discipline and termination, and an appeals process. The level of detail currently included in Stockton's City Charter indicates that many provisions would be better addressed by ordinance, and/or that the guidelines set forth in the Charter could be more succinct.

The table below summarizes the areas of Stockton's charter pertaining to civil service rules that are more prescriptive than examined peers and would typically be found in municipal code. The City should review each section and determine which provisions should be removed from the Charter. The City should also consider where it might benefit from the additional flexibility that the Municipal Code provides, particularly pertaining to personnel and governance guidelines, as the process to amend



the Code provides greater flexibility over time. For sections that pertain to setting guidelines for the system, the City should consider opportunities to present that information in a more succinct manner.

CHARTER AREAS: CIVIL SERVICE RULES			
Section	Stockton Charter	Peer Charter Analysis	Recommendation
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that Civil Service Commission (Commission) members are compensated by ordinance or resolution</li> <li>States that Commission members can be removed for good cause</li> <li>Sets quorum number and majority vote rules</li> <li>States that successors are appointed for three-year terms after terms expire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not stipulate anything regarding Commission compensation, quorum, or majority vote in the charters</li> <li>One city charter includes a process for removing Commission members and re-appointment term guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provisions related to Commission compensation, quorum, and majority vote from the City Charter and integrate these requirements into the City's Municipal Code (the Code)</li> </ul>
Section 2503: Functions and Duties of the Civil Service Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States meeting cadence</li> <li>Requires the Civil Service Commission to appoint leading roles</li> <li>Defines powers of Commission</li> <li>Defines interim position limitations</li> <li>States that candidates on an eligible list for three years are dropped from list and must retest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers largely do not include comparable information in charters</li> <li>One city stipulates that the City Manager appoints leading roles</li> <li>One city states an expiration for eligible lists (see also <a href="#">Exams and Eligible Lists</a>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provisions related to meeting cadence, appointment of leading roles, interim position limitations, and expiration of eligibility lists from the City Charter and integrated these requirements into the Code</li> <li>Review the Commission's powers to ensure alignment with best practices and provide clarity on its role for members serving in this capacity</li> </ul>
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assigns the weight that each test counts toward overall score (see also <a href="#">Exams and Eligible Lists</a>)</li> <li>States overall guidance for test practicality</li> <li>Requires that tests be open to inspection by Police and Fire Chiefs and, at the discretion of the Commission, by the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers largely do not include comparable information in charters</li> <li>One city states that exams shall fairly test the relative capacity of candidates</li> <li>Two cities set minimum service requirements for Fire and Police in their charters, but provide less detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate test weighting and notice of examinations from the City Charter and incorporate into HR policies and procedures</li> <li>Eliminate test inspection provisions and minimum service requirements from the City Charter and incorporate into the Code</li> </ul>





CHARTER AREAS: CIVIL SERVICE RULES			
Section	Stockton Charter	Peer Charter Analysis	Recommendation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires that notice of tests be posted in three public places not less than two weeks prior to testing</li> <li>Sets detailed minimum service requirements for Fire and Police</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to create efficiencies in the eligible list certification process<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Section 2513: Military Service; Promotional Rights Upon Return	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States conditions under which members of armed forces can retain eligibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in charters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from City Charter and incorporate into HR policies and procedures</li> </ul>
Section 2514: False Marking, Grade, Etc.; Prohibited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States rule of no interference with exams or results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in charters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from the City Charter and incorporate into the Code</li> </ul>
Section 2517: Candidate While Under Civil Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that anyone employed under civil service or on the eligible list cannot accept a conflicting public office without immediately resigning from their civil service position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in charters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from the City Charter and incorporate into the Code</li> </ul>
Section 2523: Official Roster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that the Commission maintains an official roster of all civil service positions, and salary payments cannot be made to a person not certified by the Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in charters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from the Charter and incorporate into the Code, or consider elimination of this provision entirely</li> </ul>
Section 2527: Period of Duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets regular working hours for the Fire Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in charters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from the City Charter</li> </ul>
Section 2531: Rewards and Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prohibits Fire and Police officers or members from accepting additional compensation without approval</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in charters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from the City Charter and incorporate into HR policies and procedures</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Section 2503 (i) stipulates that a function of the Commission is to certify the candidate list. Because the Commission meets monthly, this often means that hiring processes are stalled for several weeks until the next Commission meeting. While this is standard practice for Police and Fire positions, it is an unusual delay for non-sworn classified positions (all positions at the City are currently classified), and staff report that it often results in candidates finding other employment in the interim.



CHARTER AREAS: CIVIL SERVICE RULES			
Section	Stockton Charter	Peer Charter Analysis	Recommendation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows City to give awards for heroic conduct</li> </ul>		
Section 2535: Appropriations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the Council to provide necessary resources to the Commission and pay for exams through the general fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in charters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from City Charter and incorporate into the Code</li> </ul>
Section 2536: Provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows Council to enact ordinances to bring penalties on people who violate the civil service provisions in the Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in charters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from City Charter</li> </ul>
Section 2537: Classified Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that the City Council has the authority to include additional City employees under civil service rules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers largely do not include comparable guidance in charters</li> <li>One city's code allows the HR Director to classify employees in response to regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to declassify all positions outside of Police and Fire (see also <a href="#">Charter Language</a>, pg. 11)</li> </ul>
Section 2539: Constitutionality of Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that the Act remains valid if one part is found unconstitutional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in the Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from City Charter</li> </ul>
Section 2540: Repeal of Conflicting Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that any conflicting provisions in City Ordinances or the Charter are repealed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in the Charter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from City Charter</li> </ul>
Section 2541: Emergency Provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that the Council can set aside these rules during an emergency, for a maximum of 90 days or until the emergency ends—whichever is shorter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers largely do not include comparable guidance in the Charter.</li> <li>One city stipulates that the council can introduce and pass urgently need changes within a single meeting with at least four-fifths voting in favor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from City Charter and incorporate into Council emergency provisions</li> </ul>
Section 2542: Appointments from Classified Service to Unclassified Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that an employee who moves from classified to unclassified service has the right to be re-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peers do not include comparable guidance in the Charter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate provision from City Charter and incorporate into HR policies and procedures</li> </ul>



CHARTER AREAS: CIVIL SERVICE RULES			
Section	Stockton Charter	Peer Charter Analysis	Recommendation
	employed in a classified position		

The City of Santa Ana provides a good example of using the civil service section of a charter to establish guidelines that promote fairness, impartiality, and accountability. Its civil service rules, as set forth in [Article X](#), focus on the outcomes that a code should be written to achieve: that the most qualified and competent employees should be hired and promoted, that no outside influences should affect appointments and promotions, and that equal opportunity and equitable treatment should be afforded to all persons. It makes the necessary definitions for a civil service system to be established and leaves all operating detail for inclusion in the municipal code. As the City of Stockton reviews Article XXV, management may consult this example to help guide revisions.

### *An Additional Note on the Code*

While discussing the proscriptive nature of its civil service rules, City staff also raised the issue that Rule II Section 5 (d) (4) of the City's Code of Ordinances requires that public hearings, appeals, and all other actions before the Commission be posted "in a daily newspaper printed and circulated in the City of Stockton." In practice, The Record (an online-only publication) is the only newspaper that meets those requirements. Staff report that the City pays \$80,000 a year to post public notices to The Record to comply with this rule. Beyond the additional expense, staff shared that The Record has very few employees so cannot quickly turn posts around, and the requirement to first post notices to this publication can sometimes affect the timeline of appeals and hearings. In addition, staff report that it does not appear that any job applications are submitted through postings made on The Record. Though this is not a Charter rule, it suggests that the issue of overly prescriptive language may extend to the Code and that updates to such rules could enhance efficiency and effectiveness in hiring processes.

## Charter Language

<b>2. Observation</b>	<b>The Charter is sometimes vague and difficult to interpret, and information is not always topically organized which can create inefficiencies in employment practices.</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>In revising Article XXV of the Charter, ensure information is presented clearly, concisely, and in appropriate sections to promote clarity in civil service guiding principles.</b>

Interviewed City staff shared that the language used to explain civil service rules in the Charter is sometimes vague and difficult to interpret. Staff err on the side of caution when interpreting the Rules due to the risk of implementing a rule differently than it has been implemented in the past, but the ambiguity of the language naturally results in some staff having different interpretations of the Rules. When staff are uncertain about how to interpret a rule, they often refer to the City Attorney's Office for guidance that slows down internal processes.



A city's charter should be clear, concise, and easily understandable by staff and the general public. The Charter's civil service rules are currently aligned with some best practices that support readability, such as the use of headings and subheadings and inclusion of definitions for key terms and concepts. However, the Rules would be easier to interpret if they used simple words and sentence structures and were presented in a more condensed format.

Areas of the Charter that may benefit from increased clarity include:

- **Sections 2502 and 2503:** These sections explain the roles and responsibilities of the Civil Service Commission. While the Charter includes significant detail on the operations of the Commission as described in [Detailed Information in the Charter](#), it does not explicitly define the overarching role of the Commission. Staff shared that this ambiguity has resulted in uncertainty about the scope of the Commission's work, and that additional guidance regarding what is and is not under the Commission's purview would help clarify roles and responsibilities.

There is also an opportunity to more clearly organize the content in the Charter and, as mentioned in [Detailed Information in the Charter](#), consider opportunities to present the information in a more succinct manner. For example, Section 2503 covers the functions and duties of the Civil Service Commission and Section 2503 (j) includes the requirement that "any person carried on the eligible list for a period of three years without being appointed or promoted, shall be dropped from said eligible list and shall thereafter not be eligible for appointment or promotion without re-examination." This is important information regarding eligible lists, and therefore would be better positioned in Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists. After careful reading, the meaning of the requirement becomes clear—but it would be more straightforward to rephrase this sentence using plain language. For example, "If a candidate on an eligible list has not been appointed or promoted within three years, they will be dropped from the list. To be considered again, they will need to retake the examination."

- **Sections 2508, 2509, and 2510:** These sections consider the filling of vacant positions in the Police and Fire Departments through similar approaches, but are organized in a confusing manner.
- **Section 2537:** This section gives the Commission the authority to include additional City employees under civil service rules. Peer cities largely do not give any comparable body the authority to do this, although one city's code allows the HR Director to do so in response to regulations. Interviewed staff shared that there is some uncertainty around how the list of currently classified positions came to be, and that it would benefit the City to declassify some positions that are currently classified, because it would shorten hiring processes.

As the City reviews Article XXV, it should identify areas that are vague, confusing, or misplaced to create clarity in civil service guidance.



## Personnel Considerations

<b>3.</b>	<b>Observation</b>	The City’s personnel-related requirements defined in the Charter are highly prescriptive and complex, which impacts hiring and promotion processes.
	<b>Recommendation</b>	<p><b>A. To increase flexibility and align with best practices, consider moving detailed personnel provisions in the Charter to the Code.</b></p> <p><b>B. Consolidate personnel guidelines where possible.</b></p>

### *Promotion and Probation*

Stockton’s charter provisions on promotion and probation are highly detailed and complex. Although this was not raised as a concern by staff, it would support charter readability to simplify this information. The areas concerning promotion and probation where the Charter is not aligned with peers are detailed in the following table.

CHARTER AREAS: PROMOTION AND PROBATION			
Section	Stockton	Peers	Recommendation
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes minimum service requirements for Fire promotions: 18 months for Firefighter, five years for Captain, three years at previous rank for Battalion Chief, requirement of holding the prior rank for Assistant Chief, and Captain for six months to be eligible for Fire Chief.</li> <li>Establishes minimum service requirements for Police promotions: 18 months for Police Officer, five years for Sergeant, Sergeant for two years for Lieutenant, hold Lieutenant rank for Captain, and be ranked above Police Officer for Police Chief.</li> </ul>	<p>Only two peers include minimum service requirements for Police and Fire promotions in their charters, and both have shorter tenure requirements.</p> <p>Bakersfield:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire: three years for Assistant, Deputy, and Fire Chief; three years in Department and one year in current rank for all other positions</li> <li>Police: five years for Police Chief; three years in Department for all other positions</li> </ul> <p>Sacramento:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire and Police: three years in Department; two years in role for subsequent promotions</li> </ul> <p>Although this was not raised as a current issue, cities across the country are experiencing difficulty recruiting for Police and Fire departments. Taking</p>	Consider eliminating minimum service requirements from the City Charter and incorporating them into the Code. Review minimum service lengths, to determine whether timelines could be shortened in alignment with peer cities and to support the City’s public safety departments in filling all ranks.



CHARTER AREAS: PROMOTION AND PROBATION			
Section	Stockton	Peers	Recommendation
		promotion requirements out of the charter might afford the City greater flexibility when needed to fill vacant positions—particularly leadership positions.	
Section 2508: Appointments to Vacant Positions, Certification	Stipulates length of probation and sets the process for demotion, which is duplicative of Sections 2535 and 2534.	Peer cities usually include probation information in one place.	Eliminate duplicative sections from City Charter.
Section 2535: Probationary Period	Sets the Fire Department probation period not to exceed 18 months.	Of the two peers who stipulate a probationary period in the charter, only one sets the duration and it is set at six months. Two peers set the duration outside of the charter at 12 months each.  Probationary periods often last anywhere from six to 24 months.	Eliminate the provision from the City Charter and incorporate into HR policies and procedures and/or labor agreements.
Section 2534: Probationary Period	Sets the Police Department probation period not to exceed 18 months.	Of the two peers who stipulate a probationary period in the charter, only one sets the duration and it is set not to exceed 12 months. Two peers set the duration outside of the charter at 18 months (12 if lateral, six if Detective) and 12 months, respectively.  Probationary periods often last anywhere from six to 24 months.	Eliminate the provision from the City Charter and incorporate into HR policies and procedures and/or labor agreements.

### *Exams and Eligible Lists*

The City Charter requires the use of exams and eligible lists that rank top-scoring candidates in the hiring process for classified positions. Although this is a common practice and all examined peers use exams and eligible lists (though only two require it in their charter), interviewed employees shared that eligible list certifications significantly slow down the hiring process. In the current labor environment, delays in hiring personnel often results in the loss of qualified candidates. Additionally,



research shows<sup>2,3,4</sup> that exams often favor dominant social groups and therefore, reliance on exam results to qualify for positions could present unintended biases into the hiring process.

In addition, staff shared that the Charter's rules around certifying candidates from eligible lists to fill vacancies are limiting in practice. When a department has two similar openings within a short period of time, they are required to use the same eligible list (and candidates are eligible to be certified three times), but the department has often already interviewed many of the candidates on that list and determined that they are not a good fit. Departments must then either re-interview candidates they do not want to hire to move them off the list and receive new candidates, or wait several months until the list expires, during which time they leave the vacancy unfilled. This is not a good use of staff time and resources, does not support the City's goal of hiring the best candidates available, and often results in operational impacts to departments that are unable to perform certain responsibilities due to personnel limitations.

The table below summarizes charter provisions on exams and eligible lists that do not align with peer or best practices.

CHARTER AREAS: EXAMS AND ELIGIBLE LISTS			
Section	Stockton	Peers	Recommendations
Section 2503: Functions and Duties of the Civil Service Commission	States that anyone on an eligible list for three years without appointment or promotion is dropped from the list and must take an exam to be reconsidered.	One peer stipulates the length of time a candidate may remain on an eligible list, and in that city the time frame is one year unless extended by the Commission. One other city sets the time limit in its code as two years for Police and Fire, and six months for all other positions.	Eliminate provision from City Charter and incorporate into HR policies and procedures
Section 2508: Appointments to Vacant Positions, Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires Commission to certify one eligible candidate per open position based on ranking in the eligible list. Stipulates length of probation and sets process for demotion.</li> <li>Requires Commission to certify three highest ranked</li> </ul>	Two peer cities include stipulations about filling PD or FD vacancies in their charter. The City includes far more detail than each of these peers.	Eliminate provision from City Charter and incorporate guidance into Municipal Code, with specific details outlined in HR policies and procedures peers.

<sup>2</sup> [Testing for Whiteness? How High-Stakes, Standardized Tests Promote Racism, Undercut Diversity, and Undermine Multicultural Education](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Rethinking Standardized Testing from an Access, Equity, and Achievement Perspective: Has Anything Changed for African American Students?](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Reducing Reliance on Test Scores Reduces Racial Bias in Neurology Residency Recruitment](#)



CHARTER AREAS: EXAMS AND ELIGIBLE LISTS			
Section	Stockton	Peers	Recommendations
	members of the eligible list when the position of Assistant Fire Chief is vacant and sets a process to certify additional names if needed.		
Section 2509	Requires Commission to certify two more than the number of vacancies for vacant entry-level Fire Dept. positions. Allows the Fire Chief to select one of three certified candidates.	<p>Two peer cities include stipulations about filling Fire Department vacancies in their charter, though not specifically entry-level vacancies. The City is relatively well aligned with peers in these cases, although one city allows the City Manager to choose from the top three highest standing candidates on the eligible list rather than the Fire Chief. However, there are some differences in approach with cities who include this information in the code.</p> <p>In one city, HR reviews the eligible list with the hiring department when a vacancy occurs. HR may post a job announcement to augment the qualified applicant pool when there is a need to expand the pool to achieve greater diversity, prior experience, or expanded skill sets. This approach may yield more diverse candidates who are a good fit for an individual position. The other two cities who include this information in the code both allow the appointing authority to select the best qualified</p>	Eliminate the provision from the City Charter and incorporate guidance into the Code, with specific details outlined in HR policies and procedures.





CHARTER AREAS: EXAMS AND ELIGIBLE LISTS			
Section	Stockton	Peers	Recommendations
		candidate from the certified list.	
Section 2510: Filling Vacant Position	Requires the appointing authority to consider the re-employment list first, for vacant entry-level Police Department positions. States that the Commission will certify two more names than the number of vacancies, and the authority can then select one individual on the eligible list or one individual from the lateral list to fill the vacancy.	Peers do not include comparable information concerning re-employment lists.	Eliminate the provision from the City Charter and incorporate into the Code.

### ***Best Practices***

National Civic League best practice is to design personnel provisions that will create a flexible system and encourage the development of competent staff. Personnel systems are increasingly controlled by state law and are subject to federal regulatory authority. Therefore, the Charter should not impose additional constraints and details affecting personnel administration. Instead, it should strongly state the City's commitment to the merit principle and call on City Council to provide, by ordinance, for the organization and procedures of the personnel system.

To align the Charter with best practices, the City should consider amending the detailed personnel provisions in the Charter to instead emphasize the merit principle and allow the Council to provide, by ordinance, the organization and procedures of the personnel system. By removing specific details from charter language, the City will have increased flexibility to meet evolving demands to recruit, retain, and develop personnel.

## **B. PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER RULES**

<b>4.</b>	<b>Observation</b>	There are several areas where the City's approach related to the PIO in the Charter is potentially misaligned with best practices.
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Consider a charter amendment to align the City's approach to the PIO with peers and best practices.



## Peer Comparison

Areas where the City is potentially misaligned with peers are noted in the table below.

PIO PEER COMPARISON		
Topic	Stockton	Peer Analysis Summary
Inclusion of PIO in the Charter	Stockton's City Charter stipulates the existence of a PIO who serves under the direction and supervision of the Mayor, and details the functions and duties of the role.	None of the peer cities included in this analysis mention the PIO role in their city charter.
Appointment of Officers	Stockton's charter stipulates that the PIO is appointed by the Mayor.	Of the two cities that include information about appointing officers other than the City Attorney and City Clerk in their charter, one stipulates that the City Manager appoints officers and one stipulates that the City Council appoints officers.
Existence of a Public Information Office	Public information is currently coordinated through the Mayor's Office, with support from the City Manager's Office (CMO).	Although some peers have dedicated Communications offices, most handle media and public communications out of the CMO.
PIO Reporting and Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a PIO in the Mayor's Office.</li> <li>The Charter states that PIO is under the direction and supervision of the Mayor.</li> <li>There is a Community Relations Officer in the CMO, who also performs some PIO-related duties.</li> <li>There is a PIO in the Police Department to manage public safety records requests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PIO or equivalent position in all peer cities reports to the City Manager or Deputy City Manager. Some cities also have dedicated PIOs embedded in departments like Police.</li> <li>PIOs at three cities lead dedicated public communications offices.</li> <li>One city employs a Media and Communications Officer in the CMO, and a Communications Director in the Mayor's office, similar to Stockton.</li> </ul>
PIO Duties	According to the City Charter, the PIO gathers and disseminates information to the public and the news media concerning the policies of the Council and other information regarding the City.	All comparable positions at peer cities undertake similar job duties.

## Best Practice Analysis

This section provides further research on each area where the City is potentially misaligned with best practices.

**Inclusion of PIO in the Charter:** None of the city peers examined include PIOs in their city charter. While including a PIO in the charter can have benefits such as providing a clear reporting structure, promoting transparency, and ensuring a consistent approach to public communication, the drawbacks can include limited flexibility and the possibility of politicizing the position. Therefore, including PIOs in a charter may be a more natural fit for cities with large populations and complex communication needs. The model City Charter does not mention a PIO.



**Appointment of Officers, PIO Reporting, and Organizational Structure:** The City's charter states that the PIO is appointed by and supervised by the Mayor. In all peer cities examined, the PIO or equivalent position reports to the City Mayor's Office (CMO). While reporting to the CMO or the Mayor's office affords similar benefits for PIOs in terms of direct access to the City's top decision-makers and the ability to exercise more control over messaging, it is important to consider the risks of political interference and limited perspective that may arise from the PIO reporting to and being appointed by an elected official. It is important that the PIO is seen as a trustworthy and reliable source of information by the public, and that key communications functions and interdepartmental collaboration is in compliance with [state laws pertaining to emergency alerts and warnings](#).

**PIO vs. Public Records Requests:** Although the City and all peer cities examined state on their websites that the City Clerk can receive public records requests, the [California Public Records Act](#) does not require that the City Clerk manage the response to these requests. Typically, a PIO focuses on acting as a liaison between a city and the media as well as on public communications, and responding to such requests appears to be generally out of scope for this position. In most cities, City Attorney's Offices respond to public records requests due to state compliance requirements, and management of these activities is not specified within city charters.



## APPENDIX A: CIVIL SERVICE ANALYSIS

**Note:** Gray fill in the following table indicates comparable information that was not taken from a charter.

STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
Section 2500: Departments Subject to Civil Service	Fire and Police operate under civil service rules/regs while maintaining separate organization/identity led by a Department Chief	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board	Fire and Police maintain separate organizations but there are three civil service boards (Fire, Police, Miscellaneous)	All employees except exempt	All employees except exempt	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2500: Departments Subject to Civil Service	Legislative body of City can sometimes appoint officers/staff.	N/A	N/A due to Miscellaneous board	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	N/A
Section 2501: Employees Subject to Civil Service	Classified service includes all Fire and Police Department employees, including Chiefs	N/A	Classified service includes all Fire and Police	Classified service includes all Fire and Police	Classified services includes all Fire and Police	Charter does not stipulate
Section 2501: Employees Subject to Civil Service	Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs are appointed	N/A	Fire: Chief is appointed by City Manager Police: Chief is appointed by City Manager	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	All other officers, department heads and employees of the City shall be appointed and may be removed as elsewhere in this Charter provided.

<sup>5</sup> Note: Relevant rules included in Policy and Procedure Manual, not in Charter



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
Section 2501: Employees Subject to Civil Service	All appointments and promotions are based on merit, efficiency, and fitness	N/A	Similar	Does not stipulate	Similar	All other officers, department heads and employees of the City shall be appointed and may be removed as elsewhere in this Charter provided.
Section 2501: Employees Subject to Civil Service	All appointments and promotions are subject to an open, competitive examination and impartial investigation	N/A	All applicants/promotions subject to public, competitive, free examination	City Council determines who is exempt from civil service rules (Article VII, Section 83)	Civil service rules apply to all city employees except for list of exempt positions (Article X, Section 1002)	All officers and positions of the City are divided into the classified service and the exempt service. The exempt service shall include the following: (1.05.030 SCOPE)
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	Civil Service Commission consists of 5 members	N/A	Fire 3, Police 3, Miscellaneous 5	5 members	7 members total (website)	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	Members cannot hold other public office, position, or employment within the City	N/A	No ties to City government	No ties to City government	No ties to City government, PACs, any political club or organization	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	Members are appointed by the City's legislative body	N/A	Appointed by Council	Appointed by Council	Appointed by Council	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	Members are appointed to staggered terms of three years	N/A	Three-year term	Five-year term	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	Members are compensated by ordinance or resolution	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	Members must be U.S. citizens & Stockton residents/electors.	N/A	Must be City residents	Must be City residents	Must be City residents	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	Members can be removed by City's legislative body for incompetency, incompatibility or dereliction of duty or malfeasance in office or other good cause. Charges must be in writing, due notice given, and a full hearing had.	N/A	Members can be removed by the same process as elected city officers or by a unanimous vote of eligible Council members	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	A quorum is three members.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	Decisions are made by majority vote (three members).	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	At the expiration of each of the terms so provided for, a successor shall be appointed for a term of three years.	N/A	Within 60 days of ratification, the Council reappoints two members for three-year terms, two for two-year terms, and one for a one-year term – the three-year term to be that of the incumbent with the longest remaining term, the one-year term to be that of the incumbent with the shortest remaining term	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2502: Civil Service Commission; Creation and Term of Office	Vacancies are filled by a majority vote of the City's legislative body for the unexpired term.	N/A	Vacancies are filled by appointment for the remaining term.	Vacancies are filled by the council as needed.	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2503: Functions and Duties of the Civil Service Commission	Commission must elect chairperson and hold meetings every 60 days. Commission must appoint a Secretary of the Civil Service Board and a Chief Examiner. Commission can create rules and regulations outlining the process for examinations and employment changes.	N/A	Does not stipulate	City Manager appoints a director of personnel who serves as secretary of board, chief examiner	Meetings on an as needed basis at 6:00 p.m.	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
	Commission can conduct investigations. Commission handles appeals and complaints about the Personnel Department.					
Section 2503: Functions and Duties of the Civil Service Commission	The rules adopted by the Commission must award five points on the entrance exam for individuals who have served on active duty in any branch of the United States Armed Forces.	Veteran - 5 points Disabled Veteran - 10 points Spouse or Widow of Disabled or Deceased Veteran - 10 points	Does not stipulate	Individuals who have served in the US armed forces get 10 points on their entrance exam. Conditions apply. (Article VII, Section 85)	Preference for veterans for appointment to civil service positions consistent with the principle of merit. (Article X, Section 1000) In all examinations for entrance into the civil service of the city, veterans who attain a passing grade shall be allowed an additional preferential credit of five (5) percent, and disabled veterans obtaining a passing grade shall be allowed a preferential credit of ten (10) percent of the maximum possible grade for such examination. (Article II, Section 9-37)	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board
Section 2503: Functions and Duties of the Civil Service Commission	One person may only fill a temporary or interim position for four months in any fiscal year.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate existence of any civil service board





STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
Section 2503: Functions and Duties of the Civil Service Commission	Anyone on an eligible list for three years without appointment or promotion is dropped from the list and must take an exam to be reconsidered.	N/A	Any person carried on the eligible list for a period of one year, unless extended by the Commission, without being appointed or promoted shall be dropped from said eligible list and shall not be eligible for appointment or promotion without re-examination. (Section 211)	Does not stipulate	Eligible lists for classifications designated as "local police/fire safety" members of the public employees' retirement system shall be in effect for two (2) years.(b)Eligible lists for all classifications which are not included in subsection (a) above shall be in effect for six (6) months, but may be extended in six-(6)-month increments with the approval of the city manager to allow for a maximum life of list of two (2) years. (Article II, Section 9-46)	Charter does not stipulate use of exams and eligible lists.
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists (a)	The Chief Examiner provides public and competitive exams for positions.	HR administers competitive exams as necessary.	Fire and Police Civil Service Boards hold public and competitive exams and tests	Civil Service Board conducts exams to establish eligible candidates for filling classified positions. Higher-ranking positions are filled through promotions from lower ranks. In police and fire, higher uniform positions are exclusively filled through promotional exams, requiring a minimum tenure and rank-holding period. (Article VII, Section 84)	Exams are conducted but charter does not stipulate anything about them	Charter does not stipulate use of exams and eligible lists.



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists (b) and (c)	For the Police and Fire Departments, written exams may count toward 50% of the passing score and oral interviews may count for up to 30% for the rank of Sergeant in the Police Department and 35% for the rank of Captain in the Fire Department. Seniority credit is limited to 5% of the total passing score.	HR determines the weight assigned each test.	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists (d)	All tests shall be practical and consist only of subjects that fairly determine a person's capacity to perform the duties of the position. No religious or political questions.	HR consults with affected departments to determine the appropriate means of examining applicants. HR determines the content and combinations of tests to be used.	Fairly test relative capacity	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate use of exams and eligible lists.
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists (d)	The Commission shall establish a list of eligibles for each grade based on minimum scores, ranked by performance.	HR determines which candidates are placed on the eligibility list based on the results of the selection process.	Board prepares eligible list	Prepares eligible list from exams	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate use of exams and eligible lists.
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists (e)	Tests shall be open to inspection by Police and Fire Chiefs and to public inspection at the discretion of the Commission.	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate use of exams and eligible lists.



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists (e)	Notice of the time, place, and general scope of every test and relevant duties for positions shall be posted in three public places in the City not less than two weeks prior to exams.	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Whenever an exam is to be given, HR executive director shall give sufficient public notice. Notices shall be posted on a bulletin board at the city hall, readily available to the public, in the office of the executive director of personnel services and in the departments where exist classifications for which examinations are being held	Charter does not stipulate use of exams and eligible lists.
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists (f)	Minimum service requirements for Fire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 months for Firefighter</li> <li>• Five years for Captain</li> <li>• Three years at previous rank for Battalion Chief</li> <li>• Hold prior rank for Assistant Chief</li> <li>• Captain for six months for Fire Chief</li> </ul>	Does not stipulate	Fire: three years in Dept, one year in current rank  Three years for Assistant FC, Deputy FC, FC	Three years in Department; subsequent promotion for two years	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate. An ordinance outlining employment lists is to be established. "The City Council shall by ordinance establish a personnel system for the selection, employment, classification, advancement, demotion, suspension and discharge of those appointive officers and employees who shall be included in the system." (Section 1000)
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists (g)	Minimum service requirements for Police: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 months for Police Officer</li> <li>• Five years for Sergeant</li> <li>• Sergeant for two years for Lieutenant</li> </ul>	Does not stipulate	Police: Five years for PC, three years all other positions	Three years in Department; subsequent promotion for two years	Does not stipulate	



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold Lieutenant rank for Captain</li> <li>Above Police Officer for Police Chief</li> </ul>					
Section 2507: Establishment of Employment Lists (h)	Promotions can only be made to the next higher grade, with the exception of the Police and Fire Chief.	Does not stipulate	Promotions only to next grade	Promotions only to next grade	Vacancies in positions of the higher classification shall, as far as practicable, be filled by promotion of employees occupying positions of lower classifications (Article II, Section 9-35)	
Section 2508: Appointments to Vacant Positions, Certification	<p>When a vacancy in the Police or Fire Department arises, the Commission certifies one eligible candidate per open position based on their ranking in the eligible list. Probationary appointments are made, lasting 12 months. During the probationary period, the Chief may demote the appointee, who may repeal within 10 days which triggers the Commission to complete an investigation.</p> <p>When the position of Assistant Fire Chief becomes vacant, the Commission will certify the three highest ranked members on the eligible list; if two of these positions are open the Commission will</p>	HR maintains eligibility lists of qualified candidates. If an eligibility list exists for the positions requested, HR will review applications with the hiring department. HR may post a job announcement to augment the qualified applicant pool when there is a need to expand the applicant pool to achieve greater diversity, prior experience and/or desired skill sets.	<p>Fire: All officers or members shall be chosen or nominated by the City Manager from top three highest standing candidates on eligible list</p> <p>Police: Commission shall certify two or three candidates with highest standing on list</p>	Fire/Police not separate. "For the filling of one vacancy, the appointment shall be made from among the eligible persons whose scores, at the time of certification, represent the three highest whole percentage score ranks on the list." (Article VII, Section 84)	The appointing authority can select the best qualified candidate from the certified list, with restrictions on how many times a candidate can be certified, and options for selecting from existing lists or making temporary appointments if necessary, followed by confirmation of the appointment by the executive director of human resources. (Article III, Section 9-67)	Charter does not stipulate civil service position vacancies. A vacancy in the office of Mayor or on the City Council, from whatever cause arising, shall be filled by appointment by the City Council.



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
	certify two additional names. If three names are not available, the Commission will schedule and conduct an exam until the number of eligible names can be attained.					
Section 2509	When an entry-level Fire Department position becomes vacant, the appointing authority requests candidates from the Commission, which certifies two more than the number of vacancies. The Fire Chief can then select one of the three certified individuals to fill the vacancy.	HR maintains eligibility lists of qualified candidates. If an eligibility list exists for the positions requested, HR will review applications with the hiring department. HR may post a job announcement to augment the qualified applicant pool when there is a need to expand the applicant pool to achieve greater diversity, prior experience and/or desired skill sets.	Fire: All officers or members shall be chosen or nominated by the City Manager from top three highest standing candidates on eligible list	When appointing from an eligible list, the top 3 candidates by % score are considered. If tie, they share the same rank. For promotional appointments, the top 3 are selected directly from the list. (Article VII, Section 84)	The appointing authority can select the best qualified candidate from the certified list, with restrictions on how many times a candidate can be certified, and options for selecting from existing lists or making temporary appointments if necessary, followed by confirmation of the appointment by the executive director of human resources. (Article III, Section 9-67)	
Section 2510: Filling Vacant Position	For vacant entry-level positions in the Police Department, the appointing authority considers the re-employment list first; otherwise, requests candidates from the Commission. The Commission certifies 2 more names than the number of vacancies, based on their rank order on the eligible list. The authority can then	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	N/A	N/A



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
	select one individual on the eligible list or one individual from the lateral list to fill the vacancy.					
Section 2513: Military Service; Promotional Rights Upon Return	Members of the Police or Fire Department who join the armed forces during war or emergencies and therefore left employment can have the time spent away from City service applied to their promotion eligibility to the next rank upon returning if they resumed City employment within three months of terminating their active service, and no later than six months of the end of the emergency.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate
Section 2514: False Marking, Grading, Etc.; Prohibited	No Commissioner, or anyone else, should interfere with exams, manipulate results, provide false information, or allow impersonation.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate
Section 2515: Recommendation of Applicants	No recommendations, except those allowed by the Commission's rules, should be considered for anyone applying for a civil service position or undergoing examination or registration.	N/A	If, in the opinion of the Civil Service Board, any of said candidates become ineligible, the Civil Service Board shall strike his name from the list and advise the	Does not stipulate	In examinations where the executive director of human resources considers it appropriate, education, experience and personal qualifications of the candidates shall be	Charter does not stipulate



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
			Department Head or his/her designee of such action.		evaluated on the basis of interviews conducted by a board composed of persons known to be interested in the improvement of public administration and in the selection of efficient personnel according to merit system principles. (Article II, Section 9-39)	
Section 2516: Political Services Disregarded and Prohibited	Civil service individuals are not required to contribute to political activities, and refusal should not lead to consequences. Public officers cannot change the position or compensation of civil service individuals based on their political actions.	N/A	No questions in any examination shall relate to political or religious opinions or affiliations.	“No person in the classified service shall be appointed, promoted, demoted or discharged or in any way favored or discriminated against because of political opinions or affiliations or because of race, color or religious belief.” (Article VII, Section 87)	No officer or employee of the City shall in any way favor or discriminate against any employee of the City or any applicant for employment with the City because of the employee's Membership in a protected class under state or federal law. (Article X, Section 1010)	Charter does not stipulate. City code says City employees are not allowed to engage in political activities during working hours or on city-owned property
Section 2517: Candidate While Under Civil Service	Anyone employed under civil service or on the eligible list cannot accept a conflicting public office without immediately resigning from their current civil service position	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	No officer or employee of the City shall engage in any political activities in violation of Chapter 9.5 of Division 4 of Title 1 of the California Government Code (commencing with Section 3201) as the same exists on the date of adoption of this section or as the same may be thereafter amended, or in violation of any other	Charter doesn't not stipulate



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
					provisions of applicable law. (Article X, Section 1010)	
Section 2518: Tenure of Office of Civil Service Employees	Anyone under this act can be removed for reasons like incompetence, misconduct, violation of rules, or criminal convictions.	N/A	Does not stipulate	“The city manager or other official or board in whom is vested disciplinary or removal power shall be allowed full freedom in his or its action on such matters, it being the intent and spirit of this article to provide a fair and honest approach to municipal employment for every inhabitant or the city, but in no sense to handicap or curtail the responsible administrative officer in securing efficient service.” (Article VII, Section 91)	Article V	City Manager can appoint, demote, suspend, or remove all employees except for elective officers and employees whose power is vested in the Charter. No department head can be appointed or removed until the City Manager has reviewed the appointment or removal with the City Council and received its approval.
Section 2519: Removal From Promotion List	The appointing authority can ask the Commission to remove a member from the promotion list. This request requires a written statement and an investigation to determine if the request is made for a valid reason. The Commission's decision is final.	N/A	If, in the opinion of the Civil Service Board, any of said candidates become ineligible, the Civil Service Board shall strike his name from the list and advise the Department Head or his/her designee of such action.	Does not stipulate	The name of an employee who leaves the employment of the city, except through layoff, shall be removed from any promotional eligible list. An eligible, at any time, may request in writing that his or her name be withdrawn temporarily from the eligible list and placed on inactive status. Upon approval of the executive director of human resources such request shall be granted, and likewise, upon written	Charter does not yet have an established removal process. Section 100.





STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
					request of the eligible, his or her name may be reinstated to active status during the life of the list. (Article V, Section 9-60 & 9-61)	
Section 2520: Suspension	Appointing authorities can suspend a member for cause, without pay, up to 60 workdays at a time, not exceeding 90 workdays annually. Suspensions require written charges, the accused may file a demand for investigation within 10 days, and the Commission may investigate to assess if the suspension is justified.	N/A	The Department Head, or his/her designee, may suspend from duty for cause for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days in any one instance, any officer or employee affected by this amendment. Any officer or employee suspended shall receive no salary or wages for such suspension period. (Section 218)	The city council shall also by resolution or ordinance determine the terms and conditions of employment of such persons, including... all other matters related to their employment. (Article VII, Section 93)	The right to discipline and dismiss employees is given to city officers with appointment powers, with different procedures for probationary and non-probationary employees (Article V, Section 9-118)	Charter does not yet have an established suspension process. Section 100.
Section 2521: Demotion	Employees cannot be demoted without cause. Demotions require written accusations from the appointing officer and recommendations from the department's Chief. If the Commission finds demotion unjust, it may order reinstatement with possible retroactive benefits. The Commission can also modify the demotion to a suspension without pay.	Relies on disciplinary policy	See below	N/A "[Board will] Hear appeals, upon written request from any employee in any city department in the classified service, who may be suspended without pay, demoted, dismissed, or otherwise disciplined by the appointing authority." (Article VII, Section 92)		Charter does not yet have an established demotion process. Section 100.



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
Section 2522: Removal or Discharge	Employees cannot be removed or discharged without cause. Removals or discharges require written accusations from the appointing officer and recommendations from the department's Chief. The Commission can modify the removal by directing a suspension without pay, subsequent restoration, or demotion.	Relies on disciplinary policy	The Department Head, or his/her designee, may suspend from duty for cause for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days in any one instance, any officer or employee affected by this amendment. Any officer or employee suspended shall receive no salary or wages for such suspension period. No officer or employee who has successfully completed the applicable period of probation shall be removed or discharged from the service of the City of Bakersfield except for cause, upon written charges, and after an opportunity to be heard in his own defense. (Section 216)	"The city manager or other official or board in whom is vested disciplinary or removal power shall be allowed full freedom in his or its action on such matters, it being the intent and spirit of this article to provide a fair and honest approach to municipal employment" (Article VII, Section 91)		Charter does not yet have an established removal or discharge process. Section 100.
Section 2523: Official Roster	The appointing authority must promptly report each appointment, suspension, or other changes in employment to the Commission. The Commission maintains an official roster of all civil service positions. The Commission certifies this information to the city's legislative body. No city	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate reports of appointment, suspension, or changes



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
	officer or employee can authorize salary payments to a person not certified by the Commission.					
Section 2524: Duty of All Officials and Employees to Assist the Commission	All city officials and employees must support and cooperate with the Civil Service Act and follow the rules set by the Commission.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate civil service
Section 2525: Reports by the Commission	The Commission will annually investigate and report to the city's legislative body about the civil service (administrative needs, personnel, positions, compensation, exams, appointments, service ratings and removals, etc.)	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate civil service investigations
Section 2527: Period of Duty	Regular working hours for Fire Department members (excluding the Chief and Deputy Chief) should not exceed an average of 56 hours per week over a twelve-week period. The Fire Suppression work shift starts at 8 am.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Employees assigned to a twenty-four (24) hour work schedule in fire suppression shall work one-hundred and ninety-two (192) hours every twenty-four (24) day duty cycle. The duty cycle shall be scheduled as follows: (MOU page 60)	Does not stipulate	The regular workweek for employees in the classified service in classifications listed in Appendix "B", with the exception of certain designated personnel, shall be fifty-six (56) hours. (AFA MOU, page 9)



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
Section 2531: Rewards and Compensation	Fire and Police Department officers or members cannot accept additional compensation without City administrative head approval. The City can reward them for heroic or meritorious conduct, up to one month's salary, based on recommendations from the Department Chief. The City may allocate funds for these rewards.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate additional rewards and compensation
Section 2533: Discrimination	No person shall be appointed, promoted, demoted, suspended or discharged, or in any way favored or discriminated against because of political opinions or affiliations, or because of religious belief.	Standard Equal Employment Opportunity statement City-wide	No person who has successfully completed probation will be removed, demoted, etc. except for cause and after due process	"No person in the classified service shall be appointed, promoted, demoted or discharged or in any way favored or discriminated against because of political opinions or affiliations or because of race, color or religious belief." (Article VII, Section 87)	No officer or employee of the City shall in any way favor or discriminate against any employee of the City or any applicant for employment with the City because of the employee's Membership in a protected class under state or federal law.	There shall be no discrimination on any basis prohibited by law
Section 2534: Probationary Period	Fire Department probation is not to exceed 18 months, during which they can be discharged. Successive temporary appointments not allowed.	12 months for Fire classified positions	Fire: Six months	Appointment or promotion to a classified service position is not finalized until a probationary period has passed. The Civil Service Board sets probationary periods for each class in the classified service through rules. During probation, an employee can be discharged or demoted	The probationary work test period shall be twelve (12) consecutive months from the date of appointment from a reappointment, promotional, or open eligible list.	Charter does not stipulate length of probation



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
				without recourse to appeal (Article VII, Section 89)		
Section 2534: Probationary Period	Police Department probation is not to exceed 18 months, during which they can be discharged. Successive temporary appointments not allowed.	18 months for Police, 12 months if lateral, six months for Detective	Police: Period to be determined by Commission, not more than one year (non-sworn six months)	The Civil Service Board shall by rule establish a probationary period for each class in the classified service. (Article VII, Section 89)	The probationary work test period shall be twelve (12) consecutive months from the date of appointment from a reappointment, promotional, or open eligible list.	Charter does not stipulate length of probation
Section 2535: Appropriations	The City Council must support the Civil Service Commission by providing necessary resources. The costs of conducting examinations will be covered by the city's general fund, and the City Council will pay these certified costs.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate appropriations
Section 2536: Provisions	The legislative body shall enact suitable ordinances to carry into effect penalties and punishment of people who violate any of the provisions of this act.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate provisions
Section 2537: Classified Service	The City Council has the authority to include additional city employees under civil service rules. The Civil Service Commission will establish rules for examinations, appointments, promotions,	N/A	Does not stipulate	Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Charter, in the event that the service area of the City is increased by reason of a consolidation, merger, incorporation, annexation or contract, the city council	Does not stipulate	Classified service includes all positions except those that are specifically marked as exempt or by a decision from the HR Director based on a particular regulation



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
	and other employment matters for these employees. This provision is separate from the civil service rules for the Fire and Police Departments but falls under the oversight of the same Civil Service Commission.			may, by resolution, provide that some or all employees or special districts encompassed by the increased service area shall be deemed regular employees of the City of Sacramento, to serve for such limited periods of time as the city council determines appropriate under the circumstances. (Article VII, Section 93)		
Section 2538: Interpretation of Act	The rules in this article should be interpreted broadly. This applies specifically to operating both the Fire and Police Department under the civil service rules outlined here. Additionally, the term “Police Officer” includes members of the Police Department’s classified service.	N/A	Does not stipulate	The Civil Service Board will interpret administration of ordinances affecting personnel, when instructed to do so by city Council (Article VII, Section 92)	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate interpretation
Section 2539: Constitutionality of Act	If any part of this act is found unconstitutional, it won’t affect the validity of the remaining portions of the act.		Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate un-constitutionality. Anaheim Code of Ordinances says if any part of the chapter is deemed unconstitutional, the rest of the chapter remains valid. The City Council asserts that they would have still passed the chapter, even if



STOCKTON		PEER SUMMARY				
Section	Description	Riverside <sup>5</sup>	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
						some parts were found unconstitutional.
Section 2540: Repeal of Conflicting Acts	This statement means that any conflicting provisions in the city ordinances and the city charter of Stockton, along with its amendments, are now explicitly repealed.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate conflicting provisions
Section 2541: Emergency Provisions	The City Council can temporarily set aside the rules in this Article during an emergency. This authority lasts for a maximum of 90 days or until the emergency ends, whichever is shorter.	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	If the City Council decides that an ordinance is urgently needed and they explain why, they can introduce and pass it at the same meeting. To do this, at least four-fifths of the total members of the City Council need to vote in favor of it.
Section 2542: Appointments from Classified Service to Unclassified Service	If a city employee moves from a Classified Civil Service position to an Unclassified Service role and later leaves, they have the right to be re-employed in a Classified position without loss of rights or privileges	N/A	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Does not stipulate	Charter does not stipulate changing classifications



## APPENDIX B: PIO ANALYSIS

Topic	STOCKTON	PEERS				
	Source/Section	Riverside Charter	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
What Charters Say About PIO	SECTION 1151. Public Information Officer. The Public Information Office shall be administered by a Public Information Officer appointed by the Mayor who shall serve at his or her pleasure. The Public Information Officer shall be under the direction and supervision of the Mayor.  SECTION 1152. Functions and Duties. The Public Information Officer shall gather and disseminate to the public and to the news media, in a timely manner, accurate and complete information concerning the policies of the Council and other information regarding the City and the general region in which it is located.	Does not mention	Does not mention	Does not mention	Does not mention	Does not mention
Appointment of Officers (Charter)	The PIO is appointed by the Mayor.	N/A other than City Attorney and City Clerk	Appointed by City Manager (Charter Section 38)	Appointed by City Council (Charter Article VI.70)	N/A	N/A other than City Attorney and City Clerk
Is There a Public Information Office?	Public information is coordinated through the Mayor's Office, with support from the CMO.	Yes, within CMO	Yes, but called the "Public Communications Office"	Yes, but called "Media and Communications", which is in the CMO	No, public information and media relations is handled through the CMO	Yes, but called "Communications"
Is There a Public Information Officer?	Yes, there is a PIO in the Mayor's Office, and a Community Relations Officer in the CMO who also performs some PIO-related duties.	Yes, leads the Public Information Office	Yes, leads the Public Communications Office	No, there is a Media and Communications Manager in the CMO. There is also a Communications Director who handles press for the Mayor.	Yes, Public Affairs Information Officer	Closest match is Chief Communications Officer





	STOCKTON	PEERS				
Topic	Source/Section	Riverside Charter	Bakersfield Charter	Sacramento Charter	Santa Ana Charter	Anaheim Charter
Who Does PIO Report To?	The PIO shall be under the direction and supervision of the Mayor.	City Manager	City Manager	Equivalent reports to City Manager	City Manager	Communications Department reports to Deputy City Manager
Organizational Chart Comparison	Public information is coordinated through the Mayor's Office and CMO.	Stands alone, but next to Office of Communications in chart (also reports to CMO)	Organized with Executive Staff (Administrative Analysts and Management Assistant)	Does not list PIO in organization chart, but lists news media contacts for many departments that are linked elsewhere as PIOs	Per the website, the Public Affairs Information Officer is in the CMO	N/A
PIO Job Descriptions	The PIO shall gather and disseminate to the public and to the news media, in a timely manner, accurate and complete information concerning the policies of the Council and other information regarding the City and the general region in which it is located.	Serves as a liaison between the City and the media, works to inform public on City issues, works with City Charter Officers, and responds to all media requests except Fire and Police.	Manages media inquiries, media relations, and public information.  Does not handle media requests for elected officials.	The City's Office of Media and Communications facilitates communication with citizens, businesses, elected officials, and the City Manager's Office regarding City services and projects. In case of an emergency, the Media and Communications Manager helps disseminate and coordinate vital information to ensure public safety.  The City of Sacramento handles media inquiries and public affairs and outreach, as well as informational requests and social media needs.	Responsible for coordinating the City's community engagement activities and is the main contact person for all official City communications.	The Communications office informs residents, businesses, and visitors about the City of Anaheim through media relations, publications, social media, and video operations. The Communications Office ensures Anaheim residents stay up to date with City news regarding programs, services, policy actions, and events. In addition, the Office encourages residents to use a variety of communication tools that easily connect residents with the City of Anaheim 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from any location.



	STOCKTON	PEERS				
Topic	Source/Section	<u>Riverside Charter</u>	<u>Bakersfield Charter</u>	<u>Sacramento Charter</u>	<u>Santa Ana Charter</u>	<u>Anaheim Charter</u>
Who Officially Responds to Public Records Requests?	The Stockton website indicates that the City Clerk assists in responding to public records requests. In practice, the City Clerk, along with other City departments, can accept public records requests, and the CMO and City Attorney's Office coordinate to fulfill requests. The City Charter does not indicate who should manage public records requests.	The City website indicates the City Clerk, but does not include details on how the City assembles its response.	The City website indicates the City Clerk, but does not include details on how the City assembles its response.	The City website indicates the City Clerk, but does not include details on how the City assembles its response.	The City website indicates the City Clerk, but does not include details on how the City assembles its response.	The City website indicates the City Clerk, but does not include details on how the City assembles its response.



## APPENDIX C: CHARTER REVIEW BEST PRACTICES

This section provides a summary of best practices related to the charter review process, including roles and responsibilities, scope management, public outreach, and community messaging. Unless otherwise cited, the information throughout this section is from the Municipal Research and Services Center's [Guide to Charter Commissions](#), and is sometimes directly quoted.

### General Best Practices

The first steps for a charter review process are to understand the circumstances surrounding the charter review and whether desired changes should be pursued through the charter. To determine how best to address the areas of concern, the City should ask itself:

- Can this problem be solved by the passage of an ordinance?
- Can this problem be addressed with an administrative measure (such as amending an existing departmental or city-wide administrative policy or procedure)?
- Does the Mayor or City Manager already have the authority to make changes that might address this problem?
- Should a solution to this problem be sought by getting new officials in office?
- Might state legislation address this problem more effectively than a change to the local charter?

If the answer is “yes” to any of the above questions, the alternative should be tried first. It is also important that the City and the selected charter review commission understand what charter changes can and cannot accomplish:

Charter Change CAN	Charter Change CANNOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alter a form of government so the new form is better aligned with citizens' preferences</li> <li>• Restrict or increase options available to governmental leaders</li> <li>• Alter electoral representation</li> <li>• Clarify ambiguity or confusion caused by existing charter language</li> <li>• Redistribute powers among elected officials, appointed officials, and governing bodies as well as between city officials and citizens</li> <li>• Set the stage for governmental leaders to achieve desired changes</li> <li>• Convert elected governmental positions to appointed positions or vice versa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatically increase the quality of governmental products and services</li> <li>• Eliminate political infighting and make elected officials achieve consensus (although governmental form can affect the likelihood of conflict)</li> <li>• Expand the scope of municipal powers in states without home rule</li> <li>• Jumpstart the local economy</li> <li>• Decrease local crime</li> <li>• Improve the school system</li> <li>• Stop a controversial public project</li> <li>• Change or eliminate state-mandated activities</li> </ul>



## Roles and Responsibilities

The California Constitution states that a city charter may be revised or amended by majority vote of its electors.<sup>6</sup> An amendment to a city charter may be submitted to the voters at an established statewide general election by an initiative petition, a charter commission, or a city's governing body.<sup>7</sup> A charter review commission is a body authorized by law and exists for the sole purpose of drafting a newly created local government charter or revisions to the existing charter and ultimately submitting these revisions to voters. Although a charter commission is not required by law, the steps detailed below can apply to any group tasked with submitting charter revisions to voters. Best practices suggest that any chart review should involve active resident engagement, since residents have both a responsibility and a right to help inform their local government.

The charter review commission, typically consisting of 15 to 20 registered voters, closely examines the government and its present charter, studies the experience of other cities or counties under their respective charters and forms of government, determines the best principles of local government to build into proposed charter changes, and then drafts a new charter, charter amendments, or a presumably improved charter. There is typically a time constraint placed on the commission.

Two key players are important to include in this process:

- The Chairperson: A good chair will run well-conducted meetings, bring sincere passion for the work, motivate commission members, and facilitate meaningful discussions.
- A Legal Expert: Every charter commission should have access to sound legal counsel that helps the group avoid potential conflicts with state provisions.

## Scope Management

The charter commission's task is to prepare and present to the voters the most straightforward, clear, and forward-looking charter it can. Many times, the specific "charge" for the commission's work comes from the City Council. In particular, a commission may be authorized and empowered to do the following:

1. Examine the existing local government charter.
2. Conduct a comprehensive or limited study of various aspects of the local government.
3. Examine the procedures and interrelations of the different parts of the government to determine the role the charter plays in the current state of affairs.
4. Research the experiences of other cities or counties under their respective charters and forms of government, to discover better governmental arrangements and practices.
5. Determine from independent study and investigation the principles of local government that should be built into the proposed charter or proposed charter changes.
6. Draft the proposed charter or charter amendments in a clear, logical, and consistent way.
7. Conduct its affairs in such a manner as to win the respect of local residents.

---

<sup>6</sup> [California Constitution](#), Article XI, Section 3 (b)

<sup>7</sup> [California Elections Code](#), Section 9255 (a)



8. Educate citizens about the process and progress of the commission and encourage adoption of the charter or its amendments.

Holding a kickoff meeting and clearly setting expectations for the commission, laying out who the commission is accountable to, and addressing any concerns can help unite the commission and create a shared understanding for the work ahead.

### **Public Outreach and Community Messaging**

A process of actively and effectively engaging citizens should be at the heart of charter revision, beginning with identifying a group of individuals who may be willing to serve on the charter commission. When the commission is composed of community residents who are not involved in day-to-day governmental operations, the commission is able to be detached, objective, and impartial.

Of course, voters need to approve the charter amendments that the commission decides on. Therefore, a concerted effort to win public understanding and acceptance should begin the day that the charter commission is selected and continue until the day the vote is taken on proposed amendments. This may mean a small work group is charged with this task.

The most common and long-standing approach to achieving positive publicity and voter education is through public hearings, but neighborhood-based meetings and specially designed dialogue sessions tend to be better attended.



MOSSADAMS