



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Foley

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 02/15/2022

Approved

Date 02/15/2022

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED BALLOT MEASURE FOR THE JUNE 7, 2022,
ELECTION TO AMEND THE CITY CHARTER TO MOVE THE
MAYORAL ELECTION TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
CYCLE**

RECOMMENDATION

1. Accept the resolution dated January 18, 2022, with one amendment to Section 2
(changes in bold):

To increase voter participation, shall the City Charter be amended to: (1) move the election for the Office of Mayor to the same year as presidential elections beginning in 2024, and (2) limit the person elected to the Office of Mayor in 2022 to a two-year term with the option to run for and serve as Mayor for two additional successive four-year terms?

BACKGROUND

In its recommendation to the City Council, the City's Charter Review Commission stated:

“Moving San Jose’s mayoral elections to presidential years would position the city as a leader behind statewide efforts designed to increase voter participation in our local elections. It would help signal that San Jose values a larger, more racially and ethnically inclusive electorate that reflects the city’s demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The change would give greater voice to people too often left out of our city’s politics and political discourse. It would strengthen our democracy in ways that match the city’s 21st century ideals.”

As the Commission stated in their October 21 letter, this potential change to the City Charter could have an enormous impact on voter turnout, increasing participation in the selection of future Mayor's by 28-33%, giving roughly 150,000-170,000 additional San Jose voters a say in choosing their future leader and ensuring the electorate better reflects the diversity of San Jose, by moving the election to a time when underrepresented groups including communities of color, women and young people are more likely to vote.

Political scientists, including Charter Review Commissioner Dr. Garrick Percival, have clearly stated the benefits of moving the Mayoral election to voter participation.

For these reasons, it makes sense to modify the proposed ballot language in the ballot measure to reflect the reason for putting this Charter Change before the voters.