

# Introduction to the Mount Vernon Charter Review Commission

Presented to the Mount Vernon School Board

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# What is a Charter Revision Commission?

- ▶ A **Charter Revision Commission** is a body appointed to review and suggest changes to the City of Mount Vernon's charter (the city's constitution).
- ▶ **Its purpose** is to ensure the city's governing structure remains effective, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the community.
- ▶ A **charter review** helps modernize the city's governance framework and addresses issues like:
  - Organizational structure.
  - Electoral processes.
  - City department functions.
  - Citizen engagement and participation.

# Mount Vernon's 2024 Commission

## ► **Fifteen People:**

- Seven chosen by the mayor.
- Seven chosen by the council.
- The 15<sup>th</sup> chosen by the first 14.

## ► **Eight Advisory Board** members chosen by the Commission Chair.

- Help expand the Commission's knowledge and expertise.

# Areas Being Discussed by Commission Sub-Committees

## ► **Form of Government:**

- Whether the city should have a City Manager or Chief Administrative Officer.
- Whether the Comptroller should remain an elected position.

## ► **Electoral Processes:**

- Whether council members should be elected by wards, rather than at-large.
- Whether the city should have non-partisan elections.

## ► **Budget Process:**

- Whether tax increases beyond the state tax cap go to referendum, where voters get to decide.

## ► **Departmental Powers:**

- Whether the Planning Dept should have input into decisions about land use and re-zoning.

# Process for Reviewing and Proposing Changes

The Charter Review Commission will:

1. **Review** the current city charter.
2. **Consult** with city officials, legal advisors, and community stakeholders.
3. **Educate** the public about the process and considerations.
4. **Draft** proposed changes that consider public input.
5. **Hold Public Hearings** to gather feedback on specific proposals.
6. **Finalize** proposals and submit them to the voters for approval at the general election to be held on November 25, 2025.

# How Can the School Board Contribute?

- ▶ **Provide Expertise:** Share insight on how changes to the city's governance may impact schools.
- ▶ **Engage Stakeholders:** Encourage community and school staff participation in the Charter review process.
- ▶ **Advocate for Education:** Ensure issues that impact education are brought to the Commission's attention.
- ▶ **Provide** space for Commission outreach efforts and upcoming Community Conversations.

# Next Steps for the School Board

- ▶ **Attend public hearings** and Community Conversations to ensure the voice of the school district is heard.
- ▶ **Monitor progress** of the Charter Review Commission to stay informed on proposed changes.
- ▶ **Collaborate with** Commission members to ensure alignment with related goals.
- ▶ **Prepare a formal position or recommendation** on proposed charter amendments, if necessary.

# Closing Remarks

- ▶ Although the City and School Board are separate legal entities, our fates are intertwined.
- ▶ School Board members are also Mount Vernon residents, so changes to the Charter will directly impacts your lives.
- ▶ Changing the Charter is not a magic pill - problems won't magically disappear, but making thoughtful, impactful adjustments is a good start.



# SURVEY TIME!

- ▶ <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8109130/Mount-Vernon-Charter-Review>

# QUESTIONS

