



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Sylvia Arenas

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** July 27, 2020

---

Approved *Sylvia Arenas*

Date *7/27/20*

---

**SUBJECT: POTENTIAL BALLOT MEASURE TO AMEND THE CITY CHARTER**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) Adopt item 3 from the Mayor's memo and item 3 from Councilmember Carrasco and Esparza's memo to align the Mayoral election with the presidential election, to expand the number and diversity of voices heard at the ballot box.
- 2) In the 2022 election cycle, hold either a) an election for a six-year term or b) a special two-year Mayoral term that would not count against term limits.
- 3) Adopt both items from Vice Mayor Jones's memo regarding the composition and scope of work for the Blue Ribbon Charter Commission.
- 4) Direct staff to refer the proposed campaign finance reforms, commission reforms, and lobbyist restrictions to San Jose's Board of Fair Campaign and Political Practices for consideration and recommendation. Bring back their recommendations for appropriate council action.
- 5) Direct staff to revise the Redistricting charter amendment to allow it to address potential future situations involving census delays, and bring the revised charter amendment forward with the planning commission item and the IPA reforms – not combining them with the mayoral election measure.

## **BACKGROUND**

San Jose voters have made their voices loud and clear in demanding a fair and transparent process for changes to our form of government. Community leaders, neighborhood advocates and concerned residents joined together, and the changing debate at City Hall is the result. It is gratifying to see the voices of San Jose's community reflected in this sweeping change in tune.

This memo seeks to take the best from the memos from Councilmembers Esparza and Carrasco, Vice Mayor Chappie Jones, and from Mayor Liccardo, while adding some additional language to ensure that the community's expectation of a fair and open process is met.

Of particular concern is that the Mayor's memo could be read as pre-determining the scope of the Charter Review Commission so closely that they can only return with the results originally desired by a slim majority of the council.

No Charter Review Commission should ever be a rubber stamp, and we must ensure they are given wide enough latitude to come to an independent conclusion. The Charter Review Commission should take into account real, significant community input and independent research, and bring back their best recommendations on how our city government can be made more effective – including a thorough review of the question of expanding mayoral power.

We should not dictate their outcomes before they have even begun their process, or we will find ourselves in the same situation again down the road.