

*CITY ATTORNEY - PREPARED
IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS*

A LONG BEACH CHARTER AMENDMENT TO
MODIFY THE NUMBER OF CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS,
THE METHOD OF ELECTION OF COUNCILMEMBERS,
TERM LIMITS, REDISTRICTING AND THE MAYORAL
VETO POWER

Council Districts and Method of Election of Councilmembers

The proposed ballot measure would affect current Long Beach City Charter sections governing the number of city council districts, and the method of nominating and electing members from those districts. Existing law divides the City into nine council districts, with one councilmember nominated and elected solely by the voters in each individual district. Commencing in 2010, the proposed Charter amendment would create six council districts with one councilmember nominated and elected solely by the voters in each of these districts, and would create three at-large councilmember seats, which would be nominated and elected by all voters of the City. An ad hoc redistricting committee consisting of nine Long Beach registered voters would be created by the Mayor, City Attorney, City Auditor and City Prosecutor to establish the boundaries of the new districts.

Term Limits

The present two term limit applicable to city councilmembers would remain in effect. However, the district seats and the at-large seats would be deemed different

offices for purposes of the two term limit.

Redistricting

The proposed ballot measure would affect current Charter sections governing the method of establishing city council district boundaries. Presently, the Charter provides that the City Council sets the boundaries of the city council districts by ordinance every five years, if it is determined that the districts have become unequal in number of inhabitants. The proposed Charter amendment would create a Redistricting Commission, which would consist of seven members who would be required to be representative of the racial, ethnic, religious, labor, business, age, gender, sexual orientation and disabled members of the general public. Except for the chairperson, no commission member would be permitted to reside in the same council district, and no commission member could concurrently serve (or within the last ten years have served) in any Long Beach municipal office. The commission members would be collectively appointed by the Mayor, City Attorney, City Auditor and City Prosecutor.

Under the proposed Charter amendment, the Redistricting Commission would modify and establish the boundaries of the council districts, provided that the council districts meet certain criteria for equality of population, geographical compactness, and the maintenance of neighborhood integrity, communities of interest and visible geographic features of the City.

Mayoral Veto

Finally, the proposed Charter amendment would modify the ability of the Mayor to veto actions of the City Council. Presently, the Mayor may veto actions of the City Council, but this veto may be overridden by a vote of five or more city councilmembers (with the exception of certain decisions relating to the City's budget, which requires a six vote override). The proposed ballot measure would require that the Mayor's veto could be overridden only by a two-thirds vote of the city councilmembers.