



City Council AGENDA REPORT

DATE: 03/25/2026

AGENDA OF: 04/14/2026

DEPARTMENT: City Clerk

SUBJECT: Proposed City Charter Amendments (CC)
LOCATION: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION: Conduct the first of two public hearings required by Government Code Section 34458 to consider proposed amendments to the City Charter.

Motion to direct staff to prepare a second public hearing.

BACKGROUND: The City's Charter was established and approved on March 11, 1876 by the Act to Reincorporate the City of Santa Cruz. Per Government Code 34458, the Council may submit proposed amendments to the Charter to the voters at a Statewide General Election.

DISCUSSION: In order to meet the deadline for placing a measure on the November 3, 2026 ballot, the City Council must approve the proposed changes to the Charter by June 23rd, due to the July recess. Prior to taking that final action, the Council must hold two public hearings at least thirty (30) days apart from each other. The meeting at which the Council votes to place the amendments on the ballot must take place at least twenty-one (21) days after the second hearing.

The proposed timeline is below:

PROPOSED TIMELINE		
April 14, 2026	First Public Hearing	Consider amendments
May 26, 2026	Second Public Hearing	Consider amendments
June 23, 2026	Public Meeting	Adopt a resolution to place on the November 2026 ballot

The proposed changes to the Charter are attached.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) DETERMINATION: This action is not a project under the CEQA because it will not "cause a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. (Public Resources Code § 21065.)

HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES (HiAP): The City’s Charter plays an important role in the governance of the City of Santa Cruz and supports the City’s HiAP goals, ranging from promoting civic engagement, sustainability, and transparency.

FISCAL IMPACT:

- 1. The recommendation in this report impacts the General Fund: No
- 2. This recommendation requires a budget adjustment: No
- 3. The recommendation creates an on-going expenditure commitment: No

FISCAL IMPACT DESCRIPTION: There is no fiscal impact associated with this public hearing, aside from the cost of the public hearing noticing.

Prepared By:
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City Clerk

Submitted By:
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Approved By:
Matt Huffaker
City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. SUMMARY OF CHANGES.DOCX
- 2. CHARTER AMENDMENT - TRACK CHANGES.DOCX
- 3. CHARTER AMENDMENT - CLEAN.DOCX