
Charter Change Proposal: Civil Service

Council President Amanda P. Sandoval
Councilwoman Jamie Torres

Leading with Equity

The Charter Review Task Force applied an equity lens throughout its work, supported by training, practice, and process guidance from the Office of Social Equity & Innovation

What is the purpose of an equity lens?

- To guide City programs and policies toward the achievement of racial and social equity and social justice. The City defines equity as a state in which race and social identities can no longer be used to predict life outcomes.

What does it mean to apply an equity lens?

- Using a set of questions to embed equity in the design, execution, and assessment of processes, policies, programs, and budgets.
- An equity lens is not a set of questions that produce tangible results. Instead, it is the perspective that informs one's overall approach to achieving those results.

Engagement Partners

- ❖ Executive Director Gracie Perez, Denver Civil Service Commission (CSC)
- ❖ Executive Director Al Gardner, Department of Safety (DOS)
- ❖ Executive Director Lisabeth Pérez Castle, Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM)
- ❖ Robin Jones, Office of Social Equity and Innovation (OSEI)
- ❖ Chief Desmond Fulton, Denver Fire Department (DFD)
- ❖ Chief Ron Thomas, Denver Police Department (DPD)
- ❖ Chris Ferguson, President of Denver Firefighters Local 858 Union (858)
- ❖ Brian Pacelko, President of the Police Protective Association Union (PPA)

The Problem

Denver's Civil Service (§ 9.3) and Classified Service (§ 9.4) Charter provisions have not kept pace with current operations, legal standards, or administrative needs.

- The Charter provisions have been amended incrementally from 1904 through 2024
- Some Charter requirements no longer align with current department practices
- Certain provisions are outdated, overly prescriptive, or inconsistent
- Disciplinary and suspension timelines do not always reflect operational realities
- Some administrative details contained in the Charter would benefit from the flexibility of ordinance or Civil Service rules

Proposed Solution

Modernize Denver's Civil Service (§ 9.3) and Classified Service (§ 9.4) provisions by referring a Charter amendment to the November 2026 ballot that would:

- Move certain operational details to ordinance or Civil Service Commission rules
- Update Charter with gender-neutral language
- Remove the citizenship requirement
- Move the public safety cadet program to the Manager of Safety section of the Charter
- Extend timelines for disciplinary review and suspension pending investigation
- Allow probationary periods to be extended for approved leave
- Remove command staff caps for fire (§ 9.5.2) and police (§ 9.6.3) divisions to support future staffing needs

Proposed Ballot Question

Shall the Charter of the City and County of Denver be amended to modernize the Civil Service Commission and Department of Safety by removing outdated language, giving City Council the ability to add duties via code, and providing for an extension of probation when required for medical, military, or other approved leave?

Companion Ordinance

A companion ordinance will accompany the Charter amendment moving the operational details out of Charter and into municipal code, where it can be updated legislatively over time.

- Effective December 2026, if approved by voters in the November 2026 election
- Defines ordinance purpose
- Establishes the process for selecting Civil Service Hearing Officers
- Designates pay-grade criteria for police lateral hires
- Details notification procedures for disciplinary and hearing decisions

Engagement Timeline

2025

June 2 Charter Review with OSEI
June 26 Charter Review with OSEI
Sept. 8 Charter Review Task Force
Sept. 19 Charter Review Task Force
Oct. 16 Charter Review Task Force
Nov. 21 Charter Review Task Force

2026

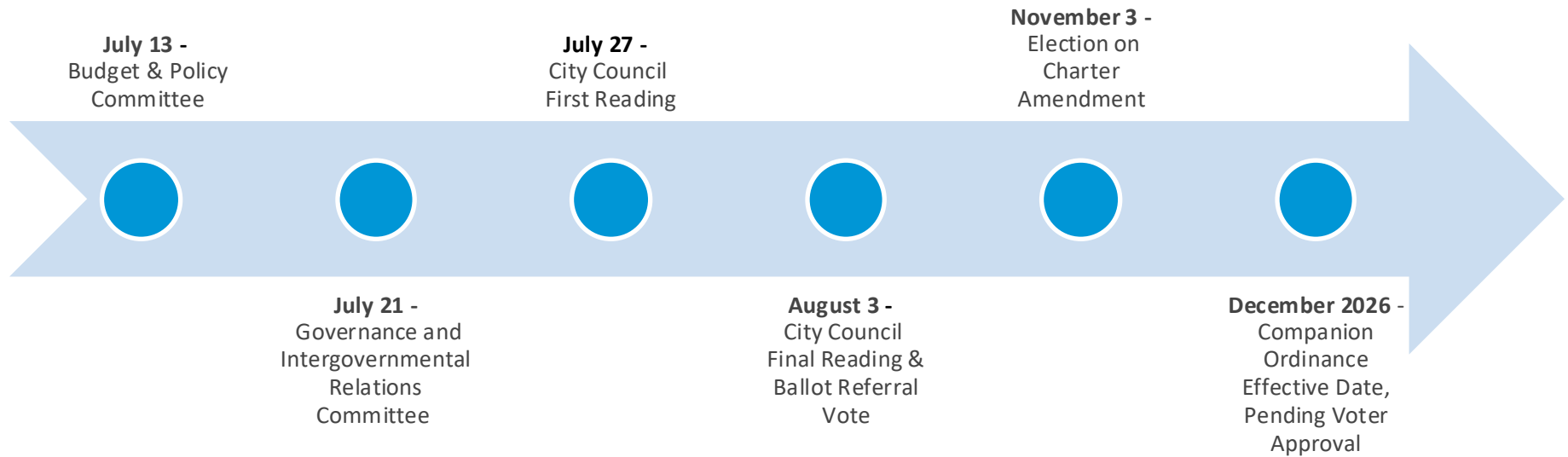
Jan. 28 Charter Review with OSEI
March 3 Charter Review with OSEI
March 17 Charter Review with CAO
March 19 Charter Review with DOS
March 25 Charter Review with CAO
April 1 Charter Review with CSC
April 2 Charter Reviews with DPD and DFD

2026 (cont)

April 7 Meeting with Mayor Johnston
April 16 Charter Review with OIM
April 28 Meetings with Local 858 and PPA
April 29 Charter Review with CAO
May 12 Charter Reviews with DFD and DOS
May 13 Charter Review with DPD
May 19 Charter Reviews with DPD and OIM
May 20 Charter Review with CAO
May 21 Charter Review with CSC
May 26 Charter Review with DOS
June 4-26 Councilmember Briefings
June 29 Meetings with Local 858 and PPA
July 2 Meeting with CAO & CSC
July 14 Meeting with CAO & CSC
July 20 Meeting with PPA



Legislative Timeline



Questions?