

1. Redistricting:

a. Background:

- i. Council President Mosby and Councilmembers Cohen/Dorsey have put forward legislation related to redistricting.
 1. Mosby: [24-0473](#)
 2. Cohen/Dorsey: [24-0487](#) and corresponding ordinance [24-0492](#)
 - a. Mirrors the ideas in Commissioner Willis' proposal (his proposal used language from the Seattle)
- ii. Certified write-on petition (screenshot on page 4):
 1. Changes the number of council districts to 8
 2. Adds provisions for how redistricting happens IF the number of council districts is changes in the future

b. *Committee Recommendation:*

- i. The Committee recommends moving forward with 24-0487 (Cohen's). The Committee recognizes that the role of the Charter Commission is to address charter changes and the Committee's support, therefore, is specifically of the charter amendment. The corresponding Ordinance would embody many of the details, and that is the proper place for those details rather than in a charter amendment. The Committee would note that staffing and budget details are not included in the ordinance.

2. Number of City Council Districts:

a. Background:

- i. As noted in (a)(ii) above, the certified write-on petition would change the number of council districts to 8. Statistically in Baltimore, once a provision is on the ballot, it passes.
- ii. 14 Districts = roughly 40,000 residents in each district
- iii. 8 districts = roughly 70,000 residents in each district
 1. Increase of 30,000
- iv. 12 Districts = roughly 46,666 residents in each district
 1. Increase of 6,666

b. *Committee Recommendation:*

Article III – City Council
§ 2 Members.

[Subsections (a), (c), (d), and (e) remain unchanged and are thus omitted; new language in bold caps and deleted language in brackets]

(b) Number.

The Council shall consist of [fourteen] **TWELVE** members in addition to the President. There shall be [fourteen] **TWELVE** districts with one member elected from each district.

3. Department of Legislative Reference:

- a. Background: Commissioner Ellis proposed changing the setup for the Department of Legislative Reference including how the Director can be fired, how the supervising Board is constituted, and requiring that all legislation go through the department before being considered. In short, a repeal of question G from 2018. In Councilwoman Ramos' presentation, she discussed plans to submit a charter amendment of the same nature.
- b. *Committee Recommendation:*
 - i. The Baltimore City Charter Review Commission believes that the Charter should be amended to clarify the role of the Department of Legislative Reference. We understand members of the council are working on this and we recommend that any change should:
 1. Provide more independence for the department; and
 2. Focus it's missions, as a professional organization that drafts, publishes, and archives all law, regulation, and policy for the Baltimore City Government.

4. Referendum:

- a. Background: all of the other Charter Counties have the ability for voters to put council passed legislation to a referendum vote before it takes effect.
 - i. Commissioner Ellis compiled background materials [here](#).
- b. *Committee Recommendation:* Unless prohibited by state law, the Committee recommends a Charter amendment to allow referendums by voters.

5. Charter Commission Representation:

- a. Background: For other city commissions, the Charter requires that there be commission seats given to minority political parties. Such a requirement does not exist for the Charter Review Commission.
 - i. Article IV, §8: Minority Party Representation
Except as otherwise provided in the Charter or by other law, at least 1 member, in the case of commissions or boards composed of not more than 5 members, and at least 2 members, in the case of commissions or boards composed of more than 5 members, shall be registered voters in Baltimore City who are not registered as members of the majority party.
- b. *Committee Recommendation:*
 - i. The Committee recommends that the full Commission debate the merits of this proposal.

6. Timing of Charter Review Commission:

- a. Background: The Charter Review Commission is currently required to meet every 10 years. There is a provision for interim Commissioners, but the only requirement is every 10 years.
- b. *Committee Recommendation:*

- i. The Committee recommends updating the requirement to every Presidential Election.

Article XI Charter Review Commission

§ 1. Commission Established.

(a) In general.

A Charter Review Commission shall be established [decennially] in accordance with this article by resolution of the Mayor and City Council no later than May 1 [in the first odd-numbered year of each decade] **IN ANY YEAR THAT PRECEDES A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.**

Certified Write On Petition:

Article III – City Council

§ 2. Members.

[Subsections (a), (c), (d), and (e) remain unchanged and thus are omitted; new language in bold caps and deleted language in brackets]

(b) *Number.*

The Council shall consist of **EIGHT** [fourteen] members in addition to the President. There shall be **EIGHT** [fourteen] districts with one member elected from each district.

§ 7. Council districts.

[Subsections (a), (c), (d), and (e) remain unchanged and thus are omitted; new language in bold caps]

(b) *Redistricting plan.*

Following each census of the United States the Mayor shall prepare a plan for council redistricting. The Mayor shall present the plan to the City Council not later than the first day of February of the first municipal election year following the census.

IF THE NUMBER OF COUNCIL DISTRICTS IS MODIFIED BY AN APPROVED CHARTER AMENDMENT, THE MAYOR SHALL PREPARE A PLAN FOR COUNCIL REDISTRICTING BASED ON THE MOST RECENT CENSUS. THE MAYOR SHALL PRESENT THE PLAN TO THE CITY COUNCIL NOT LATER THAN THE FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY OF THE FIRST MUNICIPAL ELECTION YEAR FOLLOWING THE APPROVAL OF THE CHARTER AMENDMENT.

After the Mayor's plan is presented to the City Council, the Council may adopt it or amend it or the City Council may adopt another plan. If no plan has been adopted by the City Council within sixty days after the Mayor's plan is presented, the Mayor's plan shall take effect as the redistricting ordinance.