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## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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September 8, 2025

Mayor Denise Simmons  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

***Re: City Voter Guide for Ballot Questions – Proponent Argument for Proposed City Charter***

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In accordance with Chapter 603 of the Acts of 1989, the Board of Election Commissioners submits to the voters of Cambridge a voter guide with the text of proposed ballot questions which will appear as questions on the November 4, 2025 Municipal Election ballot. The Special Act requires that each question is followed by a summary of the proposal and the arguments written by the proponents and opponents of the question. As the party that voted for the home rule petition, the City Council is the proponent of the ballot question and, by extension, presents the proponent argument position in the guide.

To assist the City Council, the Law Department has prepared a draft “pro” position for the voter guide for the City Council’s consideration. If the City Council wishes to revise or amend the proposed statement, please note that all statements must be limited to 250 words maximum. The statement must be provided to the Board of Election Commissioners as soon as possible for preparations for printing. We recommend that the Council vote to adopt this “pro” position, or a revised version, and forward it to the Election Commission.

Very Truly Yours,

  
Megan B. Bayer  
City Solicitor

Enc.

## ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSED CHARTER

A charter is the most important legal document in a city, defining the structure and organization of its local government. Cambridge has not reviewed its charter since the Plan E form of government was adopted in 1940, 85 years ago. Our charter has remained static while the city and the world have changed dramatically.

A YES vote on the ballot question would have the City adopt a new charter, developed from the deliberations of the City's Charter Review Committee and City Council over the past two years. The new charter clarifies and modernizes its language with better organization, gender neutral language, and new definitions to make it easier to understand and more accessible to the public. The new charter maintains the City's current City Council/City Manager form of government and codifies new oversight and accountability procedures. The new charter maintains the City's current School Committee but now has its chair chosen from amongst its members. The new charter codifies new budget procedures and policies that promote better fiscal planning and transparency. The new charter codifies the City's ranked choice proportional representation election system for its municipal elections, while giving it the ability to adopt new regulations for modern counting methods, surplus vote transfers, and other procedures.

The new charter modernizes Cambridge's government while furthering our commitment to the City's guiding values of equality, justice, diversity, community engagement, and inclusivity. A YES vote will ensure that the City's governing structure and values carry forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



# City of Cambridge

Agenda Item No. **x**  
**IN CITY COUNCIL**  
September 8, 2025

**ORDERED:** That the City Council adopt the proponent argument for the proposed City Charter ballot question and forward it to the Board of Election Commissioners for inclusion in the voter guide.