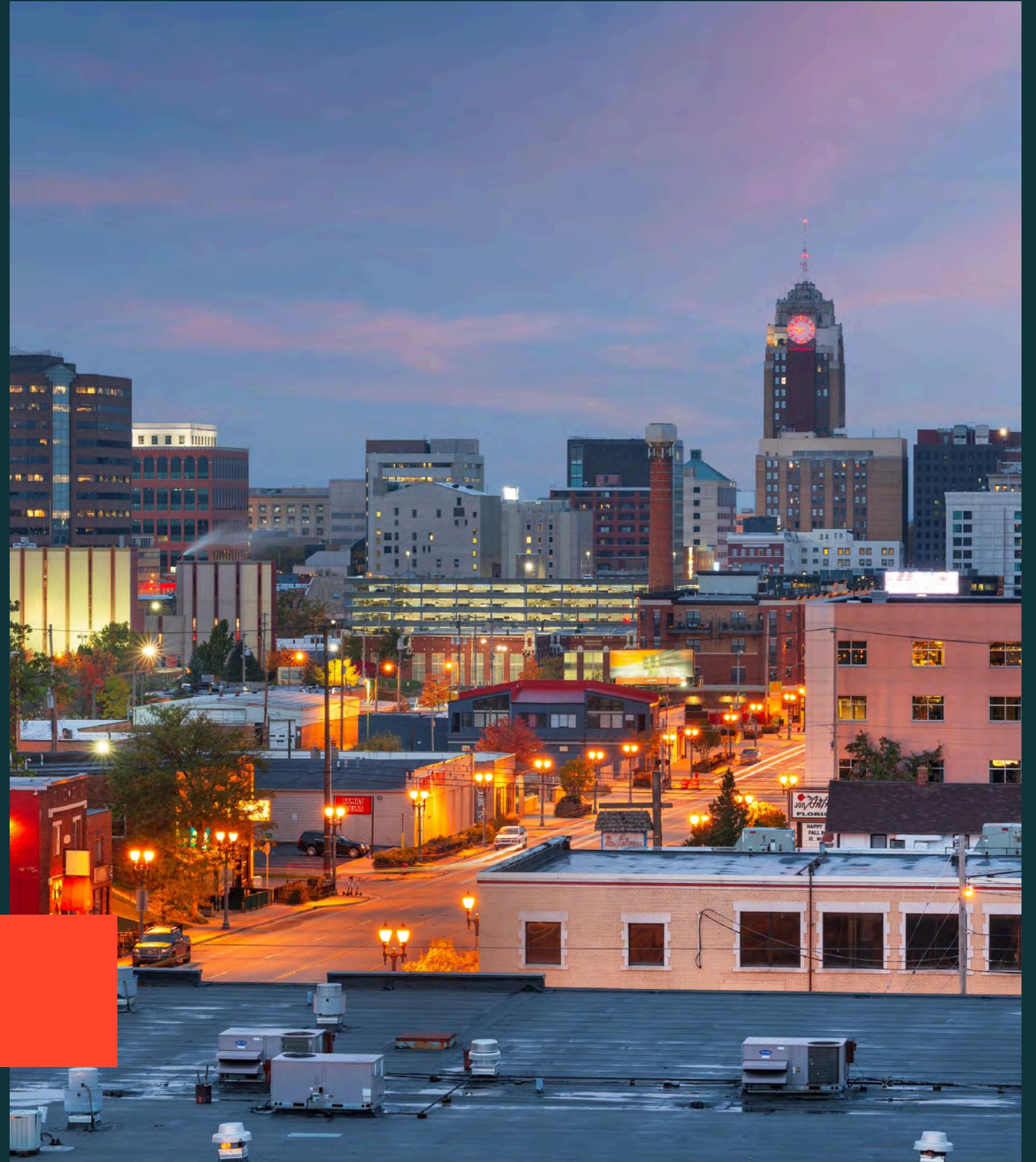


# Your Charter. Your Choice!

A Community Presentation on Proposed Charter  
Revisions for the City of Lansing



# Introduction

The city's Charter Commission, which includes nine elected residents, has spent over a year listening, researching, and drafting an updated City Charter.



**Now it's your turn  
to decide if these  
changes move  
Lansing forward.**



# What is a City Charter?

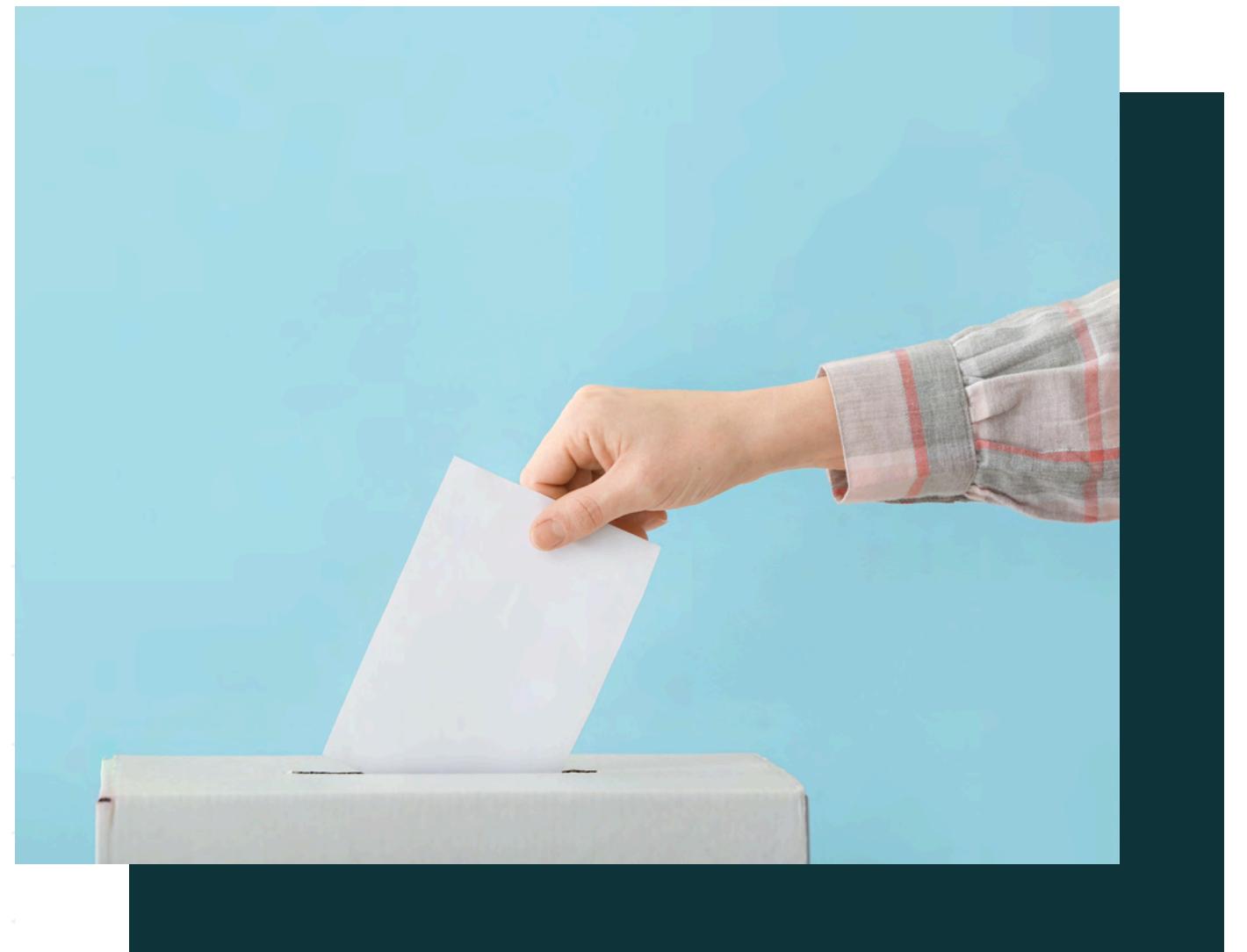
The City Charter is like Lansing's constitution, the foundational document that sets the structure, powers, and rules for city government, along with the rights of citizens.

# Why a Charter Revision?

- In November 2023, Lansing voters approved revisiting the Charter.
- Thirty-six residents ran, and nine were elected to the Charter Commission.

## Why Now?

- The current City Charter, adopted in 1978, contains outdated provisions, compliance issues, and inefficiencies.
- The revision is an opportunity to address representation, transparency, responsiveness, and accountability.



# The Charter Commission



**Brian Jeffries (Chair)**



**Lori Adams Simon (Vice Chair)**



**Jazmin Anderson**



**Joan Bauer**



**Liz Boyd**



**Ben Dowd**



**Muhammad Qawwee II**



**Guillermo Lopez**

Commissioner Not Pictured: Jody Washington

# The Commission's Work

- Held thirty-six public meetings and four community meetings (one per ward), each with two opportunities for public comment.
- Received community feedback via Commissioner emails and a dedicated Comment Submission Form.
- Heard presentations from numerous community stakeholders, city departments, the Mayor's Office, and City Council.
- Conducted reviews of the City Charter, including both a general overview and a line-by-line review.
- Voted on each issue during the line-by-line review. Commissioners could reconsider prior votes or bring forward new issues.
- Approved final version to send to city voters.

# Key Dates



- Commission drafts updated Charter
- Governor & Attorney General review
- Voter decision: **November 4, 2025**
- If passed: Effective January 1, 2026
- If rejected: Commission will reconvene to determine next steps

# Major Charter Changes

Understanding the Proposed Charter Revisions

A single light-colored wooden block with the number '1' printed in black on its top surface, positioned on a dark background.A single light-colored wooden block with the number '2' printed in black on its top surface, positioned on a dark background.A single light-colored wooden block with the number '3' printed in black on its top surface, positioned on a dark background.

- 1. Retain a Strong Mayor Model of Government**
- 2. City Council Expansion: Add an additional Council Member and create a 5th Ward**
- 3. Realign City Election Cycle**

# Strong Mayor

- Lansing would retain a strong mayoral system while establishing new guidelines to improve accountability and transparency.
- The mayor would continue to run city operations, appoint department heads, propose budgets, and enforce laws.
- The new City Charter would require the mayor to publicly present a strategic plan for their term of office.
- The new Charter would also establish an independent internal auditor to improve accountability.
- The Charter would strengthen Council's checks on the Mayor to prevent any branch of government from becoming too powerful.



# NEW: Mayor's Strategic Plan Requirement

- The mayor must publicly present a three-year strategic plan that includes comprehensive data on Lansing's current situation, high-level goals, detailed strategies, and a system for regularly measuring and reviewing progress.
- Provides residents with a clear, written roadmap of priorities.
- Creates measurable benchmarks to evaluate progress and improve accountability.



# City Council Expansion

- Expand Lansing City Council from eight to nine members and add a 5th Ward.
- Each City Council Member would represent fewer residents, helping to improve responsiveness and increase representation in local government.
- An odd number of members prevents tie votes, enabling decisive outcomes without procedural delays.



# Realign City Election Cycle

- Elections consolidated every four years, in the year after the presidential election.
- Improves public participation by aligning city elections with high-turnout cycles.
- With higher voter turnout, elected city officials must answer to a broader share of the community.
- Saves Lansing taxpayers the cost of one election.



# Other Notable Changes

Understanding the Proposed Charter Revisions





**1. Tax and Debt Financial Dashboard**

**2. City Attorney Accountability**

**3. Public Service Eligibility & Inclusion**

**4. Board of Water and Light**

**5. Independent Internal Auditor**

**6. Procurement Reform**

# City Financial Dashboard

- Creates an online Tax and Debt Dashboard for citizens to access the city's financial records and see how tax dollars are being spent.
- Easy-to-access information keeps the public informed and engaged.



# City Attorney

- Either the Mayor or Council may remove the City Attorney (currently only the Mayor can).
- Clarifies the City Attorney's role as advisor to both branches.
- Enhances accountability and prevents control by one branch of city government.
- Allows City Council, under certain circumstances, to hire its own independent attorney.



# Independent Internal Auditor

- Mayor and City Council cannot direct, supervise, or interfere with internal auditor operations.
- Serves as an objective watchdog; annual priority reviews.
- All auditor reports shared publicly to improve transparency.



# Board of Water and Light

- Requires two public hearings when a rate increase is considered, (current Charter specifies one).
- Provides more opportunities for resident participation and feedback on a possible rate change.
- Requires the General Manager or their designee to meet at least four times a year with the public on issues related to Board operations and services.



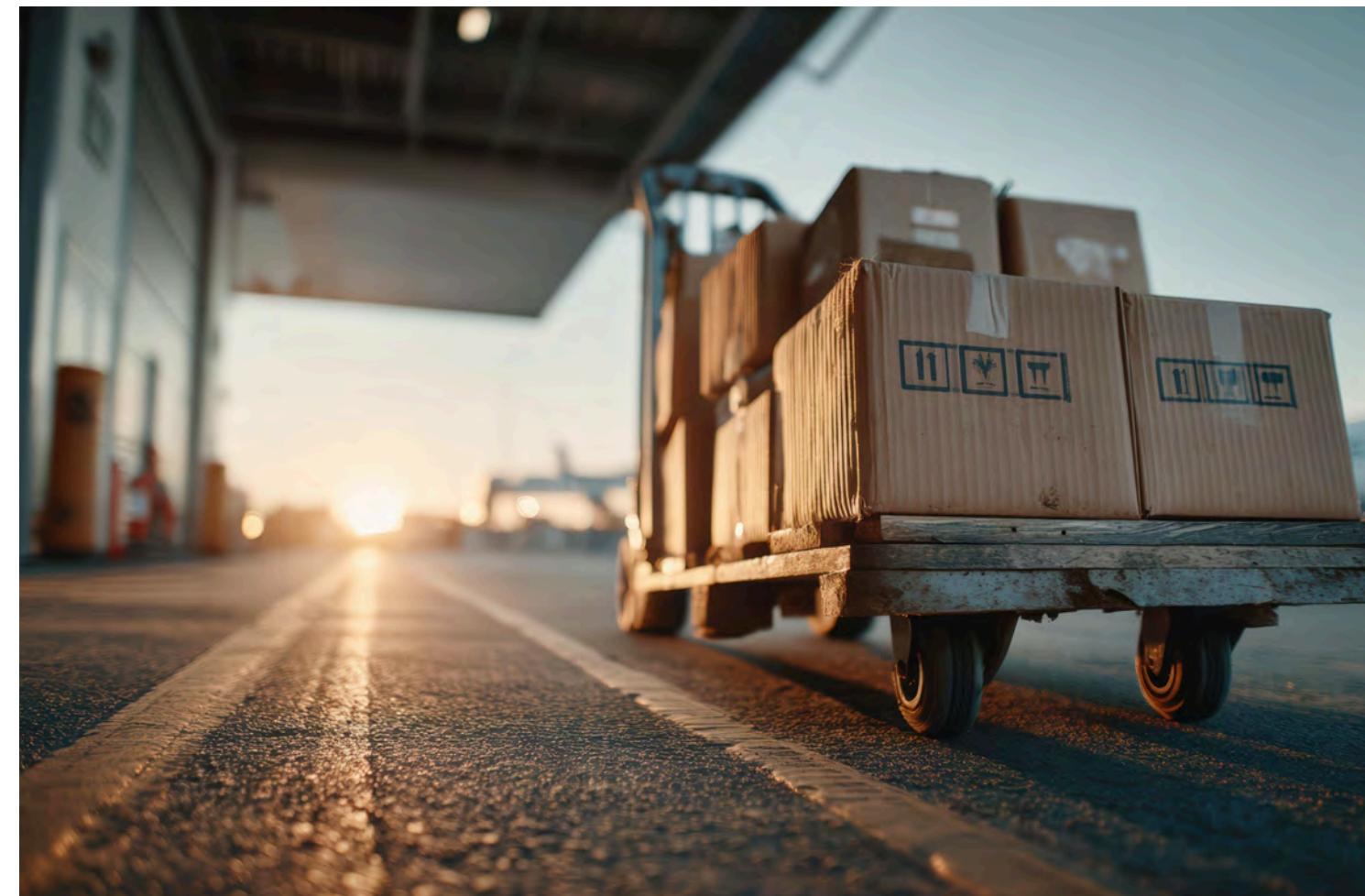
# Eligibility & Inclusion



- Aligns candidacy rules with Michigan's constitution.
- Updates felony eligibility, modernizes inclusive language, and clarifies Council eligibility rules.
- Bars those who violate public trust from running for office, while broadening access for others.

# Procurement Reform

- Allows 'best value' contracts, not only 'lowest bidder' contracts.
- Clearer criteria for contract awards improve transparency.
- Focuses on vendor performance and reliability.



# What happens if the Charter Revision is rejected by the voters this fall?



- The Commission has three attempts in three years to pass a revised Charter.
- If it fails this fall, other opportunities will be available in 2026.
- The Commission has brought the updated Charter forward because they believe it is ready for a vote.

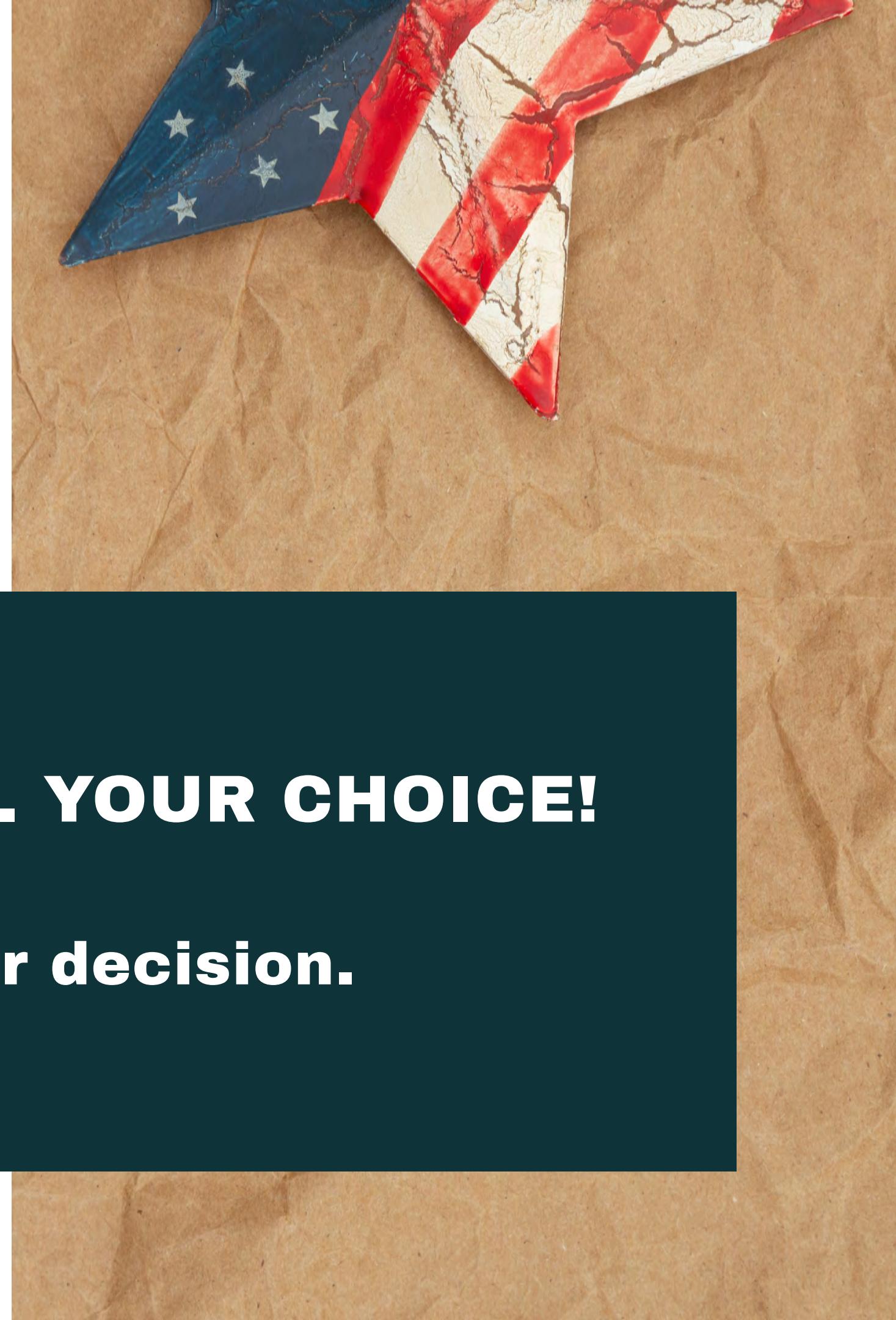
# If revisions are passed, how will changes be implemented?



- Most changes take effect January 1, 2026.
- Ward redistricting will be complete in time for the 2029 elections.
- The realignment of all City Office elections would occur in 2029.

# Community Q&A





**YOUR CHARTER. YOUR CHOICE!**

**This is your decision.**

# Community Presentations

- Wednesday, September 3, 7 PM Eastside Neighborhood Foster Community Center, Room 210, 200 N. Foster Ave
- Wednesday, September 10, 6 PM Scott Woods Neighborhood, Sycamore Creek Church, 1919 S. Pennsylvania Ave
- Tuesday, September 23, 6 PM – Colonial Village Neighborhood, Alfreda Schmidt Southside Community Center, Auditorium, 5825 Wise Rd
- Wednesday, September 24, 6:30 PM – Westside Neighborhood Association, Letts Community Center, Community Room, 1220 W. Kalamazoo St



# Learn More

[www.LansingVotes.gov/YourCharter](http://www.LansingVotes.gov/YourCharter)

Full City Charter with Proposed Revisions is Available Online!



**Thank You!**