



Northwest District Association

January 24, 2022

**Portland Charter Commission
Board of Commissioners**

Via electronic mail

RE: Charter Review Resolution

Dear Commissioners:

As you are aware, the City of Portland's Charter Commission is undertaking its decennial review of the city charter and will recommend changes later this year.

The board of directors of the Northwest District Association ("NWDA") supports changes to the city charter that would result in a more effective executive that can speak with a single voice rather than the city's current commission form of government. In our view, the commission form of government encourages departmental rivalries and the politicization of city administration while discouraging cross-department collaboration and a holistic approach to problem solving.

We are hopeful that the Charter Commission will recommend a strong, centralized mayor or city manager. We believe that a strong executive would have the ability to set city policy more rationally, with less jockeying for power among rivals—which has been the city's experience under the commission form of government. Moreover, a strong executive would have a far greater ability to enforce policy coherently and consistently across city agencies and departments, and would allow the city to respond more flexibly and with a greater ability to act and speak with one voice on both urgent and long-term issues.

In addition, we support a move away from the at-large election of city commissioners toward a system in which commissioners represent geographic districts, as they do in so many other American cities. Geographic representation would provide more effective advocacy for neighborhood issues in terms of both policy and enforcement, and would help ensure neighborhood voices are heard and heeded.

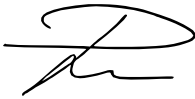
The state of our city is poor. We are facing unprecedented challenges, not the least of which is rebuilding in the wake of COVID, last year's federal incursion, and endemic houselessness. Our current commission-led city government has failed to address effectively these pressing issues (and many others).

the NorthWest District Association is a 501(3)c tax-exempt organization

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For these reasons, the NW District Association endorses the work of the Charter Commission and supports a new city charter with a strong executive and the election of city commissioners based on geographic districts. We believe, however, that the number of District members should be limited to one per district, and the number of districts should be as few as reasonably possible

Best Regards,
Northwest District Association Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Parker McNulty', with a stylized, looped 'P' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Parker McNulty
NW District Association President