

Charter Review Telephone Town Hall List of Questions and Comments Received April 17, 2014

Jean from West Tacoma

Why is the Committee considering a change in the form of government?

In concrete, specific terms, please explain how the form of government you are considering would be better for the citizens of Tacoma. For example, rather than saying it will result in a more democratic process, explain...using specific examples...how the democratic process would be different/better.

Please give specific examples that demonstrate that the current form of government is detrimental to the citizens and/or to the democratic process and accountability.

Also, using concrete numbers, what is the expected fiscal impact of a change in government? How many additional/new employee positions would be required to support a full time council and what is the cost of those new positions?

Karen Jeffrey from Eastside/Dome District

Current system is the best system, the leader needs to have a business background not a political one.

Jeannie from Tacoma

How long have we had a city manager?

Tom from Tacoma

Against change to move to strong mayor. System as is has been working very well. Tacoma growing. No need for change.

Curt from West Slope

How are they going to avoid the corruption of the 50's and 60's?

Walter from Tacoma

Are the transit buses going to go on strike or not? Will service be provided on Sat. and Sun.?

Lyz from Tacoma

Stick to professional, non-political manager. 5 districts, 3 at large. Thank committee members.

Stephen from Tacoma (via Twitter)

Mr. Miller, what specific problems does the Mayor-CAO-Council model solve, and what new ones does it create?

Ian from Tacoma

Important change requires an important problem. What's wrong that we need to fix?

Sharon from Tacoma

Doesn't this just politicize city government? Too partisan? Unhappy with change.

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Chuck from Tacoma

What problem are you trying to solve by having the Council select the Director of TPU?

Jack from 4002 South D

Why do you want to change control of the Utilities from something that works? Leave the city manager, mayor, and council as is. No one in these offices knows how to operate these services.

Mike from the South End

Financial impact short/long term

Sherri from North Tacoma

Are you considering extending the term limits for any Council Member or considering re-districting?

Clark from Hilltop

Why are you considering changing the form of government?

David from the North Slope

I think the mayor should set policy, not run a city. An administrator who can be fired by the mayor does not fix the problem. This politicizes the administrator position way too much. I don't think you can alleviate my concerns, but please try.

Frank from North End

What is the role of an elected council member? Would they be more independent than they are now?

Maureen from the 6th Avenue District

Supports proposed change. Would like more information about support staff for Council members, will they have at least one staffer?

Joe from Downtown

Mayor or manager? Which would provide less corruption?

Dave from Tacoma

I understand that the City of Spokane is still "transitioning" after 13 years. Has this committee studied this transition and the cost to the City? If so, what conclusion did you find?

Lynn from the North End

Will a change to a Mayor/CAO form of government provide more stability?

Steven from Tacoma (via Twitter)

Will the various changes be presented to voters in one block, or separated by subject matter?

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Comment received from Chuck in Tacoma

I think full time Council members = full time politicians on the Council. I think we are served better by a citizen Council. I think full time staff might be a good idea, but not full time Council members.

Steven from Tacoma (via Twitter)

Can you help me to understand how this CAO role (political) differs from the mayoral role (also political) in this conception

Citizen from Central Tacoma

Why do you feel like a small group of people represent the opinion of the City?

Commented the current Charter Review Committee should be dissolved and should start over.

Janice in North Tacoma

Ken Miller: I have two comments and a question. Comment 1: It is easier to get rid of a bad city manager than it is to get rid of a bad mayor. Comment 2: Politics should be separate from the day-to-day operations of the city. Question: Why did you and the other committee members make those derisive remarks on April 9 about the community leaders who showed up to share their thoughts with you?

Lynn from North End

What other cities in the United States have the same proposed form of government?

Dave from Tacoma

I understand that the City of Spokane needed to change its charter 6 times during its transition. This sounds like a great cost! How does this committee assure the citizens that this expense and diversion of focus will be avoided?

Steven from Tacoma (via twitter)

correlation <> causation @CityofTacoma you basically just implied that B&O and sales taxes are directly related to our form of government.

Gayle from North Tacoma

What would be the cost of the Mayor/CAO form of government proposal versus the cost for the current City Manager form of government?

Eric from Tacoma

Could you announce to the other phone town hall participants that tonight's meeting is being simulcast on TV12?

This was never mentioned... Easier to see the show

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David from Tacoma

I don't think our gov is that much better than others. Why is ours so much more expensive?

Steven from Tacoma (via Twitter)

OK, I believe I understand now. I thought we'd be electing both CAO and Mayor. I was baffled

Dave in Tacoma

What is meant by Mr. Baarsma's use of the word de minimis? Have you studied actual costs to the City of Spokane and please respond with actual numbers?

Marge from Tacoma

How will it work if city atty reports to council, but new CAO reports to Mayor?

Rosa from the South End

We currently have an unstable economy, is this the best time to change the form of government? Will the new form of government bring stability?

Mary from Tacoma

What are the next steps in this process and what is the deadline for this commission?

Steven from Tacoma - twitter

Financial disclosures would help #corruption #charter253 @CityofTacoma

Tom from Central Tacoma - twitter

Respect the role of elected officials, City has 3,000 employees. Different kinds of people, different animals. Council should allow Manager to run day to day affairs. Keep City Manager.

Justin from Tacoma (via Twitter)

@CityofTacoma what is the advantage of an appointed City Attorney over an elected one like Seattle has?

Eric from the North End

Why can't the mayor in the current form of government serve as a leader and visionary. Also how would the manager in the new form function differently from the current form.

Mitch from the North Slope

States: I understand the Charter Review determines arterial streets.

Asks: Is this Charter going to update Tacoma's arterial streets? And when was the last time arterial streets were updated in the Charter?

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Eric from Tacoma

Share with them after this ends... we started with members talking about finite details out of context to someone not wrapped up in the process/without tonight's script and haven't really advanced the debate tonight.

There is no "page 83" on the website... after thirty minutes of looking I have not been able to follow that point of the debate.

Listening, but ready to vote against everything I have heard.

Someone needs to take Ken Miller's microphone away... tying this muddled proposal cluster to basic civil rights reforms and the way he is wrapping this in the flag is disgusting.

Tacoma City government is inefficient at best... we are taxed at the highest rate in the state but the current system underdelivers. Adding a CAO office and staff expenses means less money on basic city services.

If you want to add to staff, start with the hard-working folks in the understaffed Public Works department, not giving staffers to the council.

I also, after twenty-five years in the city, do not understand why we need the extra layer and expense of neighborhood councils when the city fails at delivering basic street maintenance.

Seven council members should be able to adequately represent their own constituents... The neighborhood councils have always struck me as a way the city council takes vociferous squeaky wheels and gives them a shiny toy to play with/be distracted by.

Kit Burns from Hilltop

Section 4.15 – Why a performance audit of selected utilities? Why not all?

Section 4.12 – Why change from annual budget to biennial? Annual has better contemporaneous evaluation.

What is the driving force(s) behind “type 3” organizations in other cities? How long have “S-3” forms been around?

J. from Downtown

Are you looking at the role and responsibilities of Civil Service Board?

Terri from New Tacoma

The National Civic League does not support a Mayor/Council/CAO. Why are you implying that it does? They strongly support and recommend Council/Mayor.

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Ellen Voorhees (via Facebook)

Ken Miller: Can you remarks on your comments April 9 that disparaged the community leaders who took the time to come and share their opposing viewpoints? Why should the public trust anything you have to say? P.S. Ken Miller, it is ironic that your arguments hinge on the facts that this is representative of a democracy when YOU said that this was not a democratic process.

Lisa Spelling (via Facebook)

Baarsma just spoke that the cost to shift the form of government is minimal. When pressed for details and asked if he had studied the actual costs he admitted that he had not. This is an insult to the intelligence of the citizens.

Jessica Chandler (via Facebook)

Is anyone watching this circus? I am offended that the Charter Review Committee has just equated their personal political agendas to the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Suffrage Movement.

Mr. and Ms. Larry Christiansen

We feel there is not a strong enough case for a change of government and are against any proposal to change it.

Julia Mueller

Are you aware that it is Maunday Thursday which limits my ability to participate?

Citizen

Wants to maintain the current form of government.

Citizen

Wants to keep the current form of government, but would like to see a different mayor.

Gail Alexis Ray

She received an automated message last night and wants to participate tonight. She believed the message from Chair Baarsma asked her to call x5505 to participate and would like a confirmation call back.

Sarah Morken from North Tacoma

Get rid of the City Manager.