

TO: Charter Chair and Board
FROM: Kate Thunstrom, City Administrator
SUBJECT: Charter – Changes to Section 3.09 When Ordinances take effect
DATE: February 9, 2026

OVERVIEW:

Updates to the City Charter can be necessary as the city makes changes through budget, policy or through changes in state law. The following item has been identified in the current city charter.

3.09 When Ordinances and Resolutions Take Effect.

Current language: Every other Ordinance shall take effect **30 days** after the date of publication or at such later date as fixed therein. If during the **30 days** after the publication or before such later date if a later date is fixed in the Ordinance, a petition be made for Referendum by such percentage of the electors of the City...

Proposed language: Every other Ordinance shall take effect **7 days** after the date of publication or at such later date as fixed therein. If during the **7 days** after the date of publication or before such later date if a later date is fixed in the Ordinance, a petition be made for Referendum by such percentage of the electors of the City...

Current process for non-emergency ordinances requires that Council hear the ordinance through two readings, at the end of the week after the second reading, a notice goes into the newspaper for a 30-day comment period. Total time allowed to process an ordinance is now roughly 60 days from the first reading to the end of the 30-day comment period.

If a resident or business is requesting an ordinance change or update, including the deadline of the application, this is a minimum of 12 to 14 weeks from application submission to effective.

Recently a local and long-time business was delayed on leasing space for three months due to the full process.

This process delays ordinances that impact, or are requested by, residents, development and businesses. Staff is proposing a 7-day comment period. By this time the item has been addressed potentially at a planning meeting and at a minimum of two separate council meetings.

Current	Proposed
1 st Reading	1 st Reading
2 nd Reading	2 nd Reading
Following Friday Publication	Following Friday Publication
30-day comment period	7-day comment period

Process to Amend Charter Language – for information purposes

Option A. City Council may propose an amendment to the Charter.

1. Council submits the ordinance proposing an amendment to the Charter Commission
2. Charter has 60 days for review (which may be extended by the commission an additional 90 days by filing a resolution determining that additional time is necessary with the City Clerk)
3. After the review, Commission returns any amendments or its own substitute amendment to the council.
4. The Council then submits to the voters either the amendment or originally proposed amendment.

Option B. Charter Commission may recommend the Council amend the Charter by Ordinance

1. Within one month of receiving the recommendation, City must public notice of a public hearing of the proposal.
2. Public hearing must be held at least two weeks but not more than one month after the notice is published.
3. Within one month of the public hearing, Council must vote on the proposed amendment.
4. The vote must be unanimous.
5. If adopted, the ordinance becomes effective 90 days after passage and publication unless a later date is provided in the ordinance.

Residents have the right to Petition if not placed on a ballot

1. *Within 60 days after passage and publication, a petition signed by registered voters equal in number to at least 5% of the registered voters in the city or 2,000 whichever is less, may be submitted to force a referendum on the amendment.*
2. *If a petition is filed, the city will submit the question to a general or special election.*

State Statute 410.12, subd.6 Amendments, cities of the fourth class

Cities of a fourth class, having less than 10,000 residents, having a home rule charter may propose amendments by ordinance without submission to the Charter commission.

1. *Such ordinance if enacted, shall be adopted by at least four-fifths vote of all its members*
2. *Vote shall be after a public hearing upon two weeks published notice containing the text of the amendment.*
3. *No sooner than three months after the passage of the ordinance, council shall submit the amendment to the people*
4. *The Council shall submit the proposed amendment to the people at a general or special election (subd.4 Election)*
5. *If 51% of the votes are in favor, it shall take effect 30 days from the date of the election or at such other time as fixed in the amendment.*

Requested Charter Action:

Motion, Second to (recommend / not recommend) to the City Council to adjust the language to replace the length of comment period from 30 days to 7 days after the second reading.