

Brookings, South Dakota Draft Charter Revision Process National Civic League

Our Understanding of the Request

Brookings, South Dakota requests the services of the National Civic League to assist with their City Charter revision process. This assistance includes but is not limited to providing:

- Guidance and support with the Charter revision process and its design.
- Facilitation of Charter Commission and Community Engagement meetings; and
- Content expertise regarding the subject of City Charters.

The result of the National Civic League's assistance will be an updated Charter for the City of Brookings, to be put in front of voters in 2025.

Process Framework:

The Brookings City Charter revision process will include two phases: a Pre-Charter Initiating Phase and the Outreach and Revision Process.

The Pre-Charter Initiating Phase I will focus on the process and logistics of the revision process and the training/orientation of the appointed Charter Commission. This will include information-gathering, community outreach and engagement preparation, and setting up the digital outreach tool.

The digital outreach tool will be an electronic survey that can be conducted in real time during targeted outreach meetings and separately through the city's website. We anticipate utilizing the tool to help identify topic areas for revision early in the process and to gauge support for the changes toward the end. NCL will train charter commission members and city staff on how to use the tool during the outreach efforts.

The Outreach and Revision Process Phase II will focus on community outreach/engagement, identification of key areas for consideration of revisions, and updating the Charter itself with the City Charter Commission. Our thought here is that the outreach would be targeted to meet with the members of 5-10 community organizations, e.g., Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, neighborhood associations, etc.

Phase I: Pre-Charter Initiating Steps

This draft process with scheduled months is based on the charter commission meeting every three weeks.

Step 1 (April 2024): Interview Council Members

Approach and Purpose:

- NCL to conduct brief interviews of each member, with the following purposes:

- Inform members of process framework
- Gather input toward identifying community outreach targets.
- Identify preliminary charter areas for change, addition, deletion.

Step 2: Public Meeting (April)

Purpose: Hold an open public meeting, facilitated by NCL, for Brookings residents to attend. We will share information about the charter revision process and participants will learn the basics about city charters: what it is/isn't, its purpose, and why periodic revisions are important. Participants will also be given the opportunity to provide input on areas they feel should be updated.

Holding an open meeting of this type will ensure all residents have had the opportunity to provide input and avoid any claims of exclusion in this process.

Step 3: Mayor/Council Appoint Charter Commission (April)

Purpose:

- Provide advice to help ensure representation from the community.
- Advise the recruitment and appointment of Charter Commission members.

Step 4: Charter Commission Meeting 1: Orientation and Training (April/May)

Purpose: Prepare the Charter Commission for success on their charge.

- Orient Charter Commission members so that they understand their role and responsibilities, asking members to commit to fully participate in the revision process and to helping lead the targeted outreach process.
- (Important note: This proposal's budget is based on the expectation that charter commission members will staff the majority of the targeted outreach efforts. NCL will train and support members in this area.)
- Partly by using national experts on video conferences, NCL will help Charter Commission members to learn:
 - What a Charter is/isn't
 - Role of Charter Commission
 - How to run targeted outreach meetings
 - How to use the digital outreach tool

Step 5: Work with City staff to Set Up Digital Outreach Platform (April-May)

Approach and Purpose:

- NCL work with City staff to create a digital tool, which is both an online survey and link for use by participants in community meetings.
- Train Charter Commission members on how to use the tool.
- Work with city to periodically aggregate information.

Phase II: Outreach and Revision Process

Commission Meeting 2 (May)

Work with Charter Commission to refine outreach process and identify key Charter issue areas for consideration, and plan community meetings.

- Add, change, outreach target list for outreach.
- Identify key Charter issue areas.

Community Outreach Meetings with Target Groups (June/July)

Individual Charter Commission members or NCL staff meet with key community groups, using our digital tool to gather input from groups regarding both charter issues and broader governance issues that should be considered by the City for policies or ordinances outside the Charter.

- Charter Commission will use the information gathered to:
 - o Confirm preliminary key Charter issue areas for update (the process below assumes that eight such areas are identified).
 - o Organize input on key areas.
 - o Place outreach input into Charter and Policy/Ordinance form.

Commission Meeting 3: Discussion of key Charter issue areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 (July/August)

- Review why the change is recommended.
- Review the alternative language and what it does to achieve the desired change.
- Discuss and refine.
- Approve

Commission Meeting 4: Revision of Topics 5, 6, 7 and 8 (August/Sept)

- Review why the change is recommended.
- Review the alternative language and what it does to achieve the desired change.
- Discuss and refine.
- Approve

Commission Meeting 5: Development of Draft Charter Revisions & Other Policy Recommendations (Sept/Oct)

- Review draft alternative language for key Charter issues and intended outcomes.
- Review any other changes to be recommended for policies and ordinances.
- Approve package of draft changes

Outreach Follow-up to Target Groups (Online): (October)

Purpose: To inform target communities on how the information from the previous outreach was used and gather feedback on proposed changes. NCL will reach out to the contacts collected through the earlier outreach to the target community groups

- Share online with contacts from the target groups:
 - o Review the input from the previous outreach meetings.
 - Share information about those topics used in the charter revision process.
 - Share information (the why) about those topics not included in the charter revision process and more appropriately potentially addressed by municipal code.

- Share the revisions made by the Charter Commission and any policy/ordinance recommendations.
- Gather feedback using the Digital Tool
- NCL analyzes/aggregates info; prepares it for use by the Charter Commission in Meeting 6

Meeting 6: Wrap Up (Oct/Nov 2024)

- Adjust the Charter revisions based on feedback from the targeted outreach.
- Tie up any loose ends.
- Ensure clarity on next steps.
- NCL and Charter Commission works with City Attorney on incorporating changes into the charter and the next steps with the ballot.

Meeting 7: Fallback Meeting (if necessary) (Nov/Dec 2024)

- Extra meeting scheduled to be used only if necessary.

Work To Be Completed in Between Charter Commission Meetings

- NCL will research other cities from around the country for relevant articles and sections that can be models to replicate.
- NCL will write draft articles and sections to act as a starting point for discussion with the charter commission.
- NCL will work with Brookings legal counsel and/or retained legal consultant to resolve any legalities that may be associated with the proposed charter change.
- NCL will prepare agendas and notes for every Charter Commission meeting.
- NCL will work with the city of Brookings IT staff on the Digital Outreach Tool.
- NCL will aggregate the data collected from the Digital Outreach Tool and format it for use by the Charter Commission and city of Brookings.

Brookings City Charter Revision Project Draft Budget

Note: This budget is subject to change (increase or decrease) based on the finalized process design.

Staffing: **\$ 68,947.75**

Staffing costs includes all digital tool work, preparation, onsite work, travel time, NCL team meetings, follow-up, and research/writing.

Derek Okubo
Doug Linkhart
Matt Leighninger

Travel (15 trips total) **\$ 15,069.00**

Travel costs includes airfare, hotel, ground transportation, airport parking, mileage, and meals.

Derek Okubo (12)
Doug Linkhart (2)
Matt Leighninger (1)

Total: **\$ 84,566.75**