

BALLOT
QUESTION

SPECIMEN
BALLOT



CAMBRIDGE
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

[Signature]
Election Commissioners

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

To vote on the following question, fill in the oval next to your choice like this using a black pen.

If you spoil this ballot, return it for cancellation to the election officer in charge of the ballots and get another from such officer.

The City Council has proposed adopting a new City Charter, which is the law that prescribes the structure of the Cambridge government. The Charter sets forth the powers of the City Council, the City Manager, and the School Committee.

The City Council voted on April 14, 2025, that the proposed new City Charter shall be submitted to the voters of the City of Cambridge for acceptance at the next biennial election, being held on November 4, 2025, in the form of the following question:

Question 1 Shall an Act Establishing a Charter for the City of Cambridge be accepted?

Summary of proposal: The City Council’s proposed change would replace the City’s current Plan E Charter at General Laws Chapter 43, Section 93 et seq. with a new City Charter.

Under the new City Charter, Cambridge shall continue to be governed under the City Council/City Manager form of government. The City Council, consisting of nine members nominated and elected for two-year terms by the municipal voters at-large by proportional representation, shall exercise the legislative powers of the City. The elected members of the City Council shall, each term, choose from among its members via majority vote a mayor and vice mayor, who shall serve for a 2-year term. Like under the current Plan E Charter, the mayor shall continue to be recognized as the official head of the city for all ceremonial purposes, be the presiding officer of the City Council, be a member of the School Committee, shall have no power of veto, and shall have the same powers as any other members of the council. The City Council shall continue to directly appoint the City Manager, City Auditor, and the City Clerk.

Under the new City Charter, the City Council shall continue to appoint a City Manager, who shall

be the chief executive officer of the city and shall be responsible to the City Council for the proper administration of all city affairs placed under the City Manager’s charge by or under the charter. The City Manager shall be responsible for the implementation of policies established by the City Council, as reflected in the City Council’s votes and resolutions and in ordinances, appropriation orders, and loan authorizations.

Under the new City Charter, Cambridge’s School Committee shall continue to consist of six members who shall be nominated and elected for two-year terms by the municipal voters of the city at large, and the mayor, who shall serve as the seventh member. Under the new City Charter, the School Committee members shall now elect amongst their elected members one to serve as chair and one to serve as vice chair. The School Committee shall continue to have all powers which are conferred on school committees by the Massachusetts General Laws, the charter, and ordinance, including selecting and removing a superintendent of the schools who shall be charged with the administration of the school system, making all reasonable policies, rules, and regulations for the management of the public school system, and adopting and overseeing the administration of an annual operating budget for the school department, subject to appropriation by the City Council.

The new City Charter is organized by articles and uses gender neutral language to make it more understandable and accessible to the public.

The new City Charter establishes new oversight and financial procedures.

The new City Charter codifies the City’s ranked choice proportional representation election system and allows the City’s Board of Election Commissioners to promulgate regulations and make changes to the ranked choice voting ballot and tabulation process if necessary to ensure the integrity and smooth functioning of the City’s municipal elections.

The new City Charter encourages public engagement and codifies public petition measures through initiative and referendum.

YES ☐

NO ☐