

Vote with the League: YES on City of Alameda Measure AA

The Alameda City Council is asking voters to approve changes to the City Charter. The Charter was adopted in 1937 and describes the form and structure of Alameda's municipal government. In our Council Manager structure, the City Manager is entrusted with all administrative functions and the Council is responsible for establishing policy, passing local ordinances, voting appropriations, and developing an overall vision for the city.

Some sections of the Charter are outdated and need revisions to conform to modern practices and conventions. This ballot measure is in part an effort to clean up Charter language and introduces new authority for the City Attorney's office.

If voters approve Measure AA it will:

- Expand prohibitions against interference by City Council members and the Mayor in the City's administrative functions to include other elected and appointed officials and defines areas of unlawful interference. It requires Council members to work through the City Manager's office on administrative functions and defines the consequences of violations;
- Give authority to the City Attorney's office to prosecute general state law misdemeanors that occur in Alameda;
- Clean up language allowing Council members to be physically away from the office for more than 30 days; remove timing restrictions on appointment to Boards and Commissions; delete references to travel reimbursements; and add gender-neutral pronouns.

The League supports Measure AA. We strongly support the clean-up language; efforts to further define the separation of administrative and council functions; and consequences for violations. We are concerned that the granting of the authority to the City Attorney to prosecute general state law misdemeanors is more than an administrative matter. There has been no public debate about this new function – and it was not one of the six topics discussed at the LWVA public meetings on potential charter changes over a year ago. We would have preferred a public discussion about the change and the implications of a City attorney, hired and fired by the council, exercising prosecutorial discretion for state misdemeanors in addition to violations of city laws.

The League supports measures providing simplicity and transparency in the City Charter through clarification of meaning and elimination of obsolete or inapplicable provisions.

Measure AA deserves a YES vote on 3 November 2020.