



# **Final Recommendations to the Coral Gables City Commission**

City of Coral Gables  
Charter Review Committee

Chairperson Donald D. Slesnick, II.  
Vice Chairperson Raul Valdes-Fauli  
Board Member Annie Betancourt  
Board Member Eve Boutsis  
Board Member Nestor Menendez  
Board Member Jane Moscovitz  
Board Member Felix Pardo

## **Executive Summary**

The Charter Review Committee was convened in Resolution No. 2023-267 in September of 2023. As requested by the City Commission, the Charter Review Committee held two town hall meetings where it heard the public's suggestions for Charter revisions. In addition, the City Commission and Charter Review Committee held a joint meeting where the City Commission provided its guidance. The City also provided all comments received via email and the City website for the Committee's consideration. Following the two town halls, the Charter Review Committee held five meetings to discuss proposed changes to the Charter and to review the existing provisions. The Charter Review Committee worked methodically through the City Charter and suggestions from the public and Commission. In May of 2025, the City Commission adopted Resolution No. 2025-89 revising the membership of the Charter Review Committee to add two additional members. Since then, the Charter Review Committee has met four additional times.

In January of 2026, the Charter Review Committee presented interim recommendations to the City Commission. That report included recommendations to the City Commission on potential amendments to the City Charter and also included the Committee's feedback on the ballot items scheduled for the April 2026 special election.

Following the April 2026 special mail ballot election, where voters adopted six amendments to the City Charter, the Charter Review Committee met two additional times to discuss the Committee's final recommendations to the City Commission. This report includes those official recommendations of the Charter Review Committee as well as a separate memorandum summarizing the Committees' discussion of certain topics during its final meeting on June 4, 2026 where no official recommendations were made due to a lack of quorum. That additional memorandum also includes research that the members present at the June 4, 2026 meeting of the Charter Review Committee would like the City Commission to review.

## I. QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICE

At the City Attorney's Office suggestion, the Charter Review Committee reviewed the residency requirement for qualification for running for office in the City. Given recent legal disputes in neighboring municipalities regarding interpretations of residency requirements, the City Attorney's Office suggested amending the City Charter to reflect the City's longstanding interpretation of the residency requirement. Currently, Section 3 of the City Charter provides that "To be a candidate for Mayor or Commissioner, an individual must: be a U.S. Citizen and have resided in the City of Coral Gables for at least one year prior to the election for which he or she seeks office." The City Attorney's Office's suggestion was to propose a question to amend the City Charter to clearly reflect the City's interpretation that the one year prior to the election, is the one year "immediately" prior to the election in which the candidate seeks office. The Charter Review Committee considered this suggestion and found that this amendment would provide additional clarity regarding the City's interpretation of this provision. This recommendation was adopted by a 5-0 vote of the Charter Review Committee.

Subsequently, on December 4, 2025 the Charter Review Committee reviewed this recommendation and approved a motion by a 7-0 vote to re-adopt the recommendation with the suggestion that the language be changed to "one year prior to **the end of the qualifying period** for the election for which he or she seeks office." This would result in a requirement that a candidate be a resident earlier in the election cycle than currently called for in the current Charter section.

As the City's elections have transition to November, should this proposal be adopted by the voters, any candidate for office would be required to be a resident of the City for one year prior to the end of the qualifying period for the election they are seeking office in. This would result in a residency requirement of at least one year immediately prior to June 12, 2026, for this year's planned election.

## II. INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

The power of referendum is the power of the voters to, within thirty days after the Commission adopts an ordinance, request that such ordinance, or a part thereof, be repealed or submitted to a vote of the electors. The power of initiative is the power of the voters to propose ordinances and to have them be adopted by the voters. The City Commission can act on initiated ordinances prior to submission of the proposed ordinance to a vote of the electors.

On March 18, 2025, the Charter Review Committee adopted a recommendation that the City Commission put forth a ballot question on whether to amend the City Charter to revise the calculation for the number of signatures required for the initiative process in the City. The

proposed change would require the signatures of twenty percent of the average number of voters who voted in the last three regular local elections, rather than the current requirement of twenty percent of registered voters. That recommendation was adopted 3-2. A similar recommendation to amend the calculation for the referendum process failed 2-3.

On December 4, 2025, the Charter Review Committee revisited this recommendation, and, after discussing the inconsistency between the initiative and referendum processes resulting from that prior recommendation, the Charter Review Committee had an extensive discussion regarding the process in neighboring municipalities, the number of registered voters in the City, and the parallel process at the State for constitutional amendments.

Ultimately, the Charter Review Committee voted 7-0 to rescind the previous recommendation regarding the calculation of required signatures in the initiative process.

The Charter Review Committee requested that the City Attorney's office provide additional research regarding the initiative and referendum processes in neighboring municipalities and provide the Committee with the City Attorney's office's suggested clean up to the section. This information was provided to the Committee prior to the June 4, 2026 Committee meeting.

Ultimately, due to lack of quorum in the final meeting, the Charter Review Committee makes no official recommendation to the City Commission regarding the initiative and referendum provision of the City Charter but submits the attached memorandum summarizing the discussions held by the Committee during the June 4, 2026 Charter Review Committee meeting for the Commission's review and consideration.

### **III. ESTIMATED REVENUES**

The Charter Review Committee previously reviewed Section 18 of the City Charter which discussed budget estimates. Then- Board Member Tom Wells proposed an amendment to Section 18 which would clarify that the budget estimate include an itemization of anticipated revenues together with corresponding expenses for those non-tax income sources. The current Charter provision only required an itemization of anticipated revenues from other sources, not corresponding expenses. The Charter Review Committee ultimately adopted, by a 5-0 vote, a recommendation to the City Commission to include a question on the ballot on whether or not to amend the Charter to state that the budget estimate include estimated expenses as well as estimated revenues from non-tax sources.

On December 4, 2025 the Charter Review Committee reviewed the prior recommendation and revised the recommendation to recommend instead that the City Code be amended to incorporate the proposed requirement, rather than send a question to the voters on whether the requirement should be included in the City Charter.

As such, the Charter Review Commission recommended in a 7-0 vote that the City Commission adopt an ordinance including this requirement to itemize non-tax anticipated revenues and expenses in the estimated budget in the City Code rather than amend the City Charter to include this requirement.

#### **IV. PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS**

The City Charter currently states that all contracts for the performance of public works projects or improvements over \$25,000 shall be awarded to the lowest and most responsive bidder, after public advertising and receipt of bids as may be prescribed by ordinance. This results in most public works projects complying with the City's formal solicitation procedure requirements as few public works projects are estimated to cost under \$25,000 in today's economic climate. The then-City Manager suggested increasing this to \$100,000. The Charter Review Committee adopted this recommendation in a 5-0 vote.

On December 4, 2025, the Charter Review Committee revisited this recommendation. Based on discussions with City staff regarding the application of relevant state statutes, the Charter Review Committee amended their recommendation to amend the Charter to only require formal solicitation for those projects over \$300,000 (or as amended by relevant provision of Florida Statutes). F.S. 255.20 addresses this directly and provides that the threshold amount of \$300,000 for construction be adjusted by the percentage change in the Engineering News-Record's Building Cost Index from January 1, 2009, to January 1 of the year in which the project is scheduled to begin.

The Charter Review Committee voted 7-0 to recommend that the City Commission send a question to the voters amending Section 24 of the Charter to require all contracts for the performance of public works projects or improvements valued at more than \$300,000 (or as amended by state law) to be awarded the lowest and most responsive bidder after public advertising and receipt of bids. According to state law, that \$300,000 amount, as adjusted pursuant to the Engineering News-Record, is now approximately \$450,000.