



AGENDA REPORT

Mayor's Office

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| DATE: | July 2, 2024 |
| TO: | Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council |
| FROM: | Mayor Martinez |
| Subject: | Placing the Instant Runoff Voting Election Reform Act (IRV) Initiative on the November 5, 2024, General Election Ballot |
| FINANCIAL IMPACT: | The cost of placing the proposed measure on the ballot is determined by the number of pages to be printed in the sample ballot booklet — between \$4,000 and \$10,000. (01141013 400294) |
| PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION: | April 30, 2024 (Item G.2.) |
| STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE: | As per City Council direction, the City Attorney's Office has drafted the documents necessary for the Richmond electorate to consider moving from the plurality voting method to instant runoff voting for municipal elected seats. Because the Instant Runoff Voting Election Reform Act (IRV) Initiative is a Charter Amendment, the Council must place the Initiative on the ballot at the November 5, 2024, General Election, pursuant to California Elections Code section 9255(c)(1). |
| RECOMMENDED ACTION: | ADOPT a resolution to submit to the City of Richmond electorate at the General Municipal Election to be held on November 5, 2024, an initiative to amend the City Charter to replace its current plurality voting method with that of Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) and AUTHORIZE the City Attorney's Office and staff to finalize any necessary documents relating to the ballot measure – Mayor's Office (Mayor Eduardo Martinez 510-620-6503). |

DISCUSSION:

At the April 30, 2024 Council meeting, the City Council received a presentation from the California Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) Institute to hear a report on Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) and to consider drafting a ballot measure for the 2024 General Election that, upon passage, would amend the City Charter to specify an IRV system as the election method for Richmond's municipal elections for the seats of Mayor and City Councilmembers.

At that meeting, the City Council directed staff and the City Attorney's office to draft the necessary documents so that City Council may consider submitting such a measure to the voters for their consideration during the November 5, 2024, General Election.

The proposed Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) Election Reform Act Ballot Measure entails an amendment to the City's Charter, Article V ("Elections"), to authorize the City of Richmond to an IRV system of voting for each City elective office (including City Council Members and Mayor) in each election, including special elections.

The proposed Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) Election Reform Act Ballot Measure, if adopted by the voters, would implement a City of Richmond Charter Amendment to authorize implementation of an IRV system to replace plurality voting. Should the proposed IRV measure pass, IRV implementation will take effect after satisfaction of certain thresholds:

- First, the City Council shall have adopted an "IRV Ordinance" to establish any necessary specific procedures to be utilized in the IRV system to provide clarity and assure the will of the majority of voters prevails.
- Second, the Contra Costa County Registrar of Voters—the agency that generally consolidates and conducts the administration of the City's municipal elections— must have in-place the technology and software needed to conduct IRV vote collection and counts. IRV election technology is becoming increasingly available to replace the more standard "plurality vote" technologies. The City shall commence using IRV systems as soon as practicable after the Contra Costa County Registrar of Voters is able to technically and financially conduct the election on behalf of the City at a reasonable cost.

If the City Council desires to submit the proposed IRV measure to the voters at the November 5, 2024, general municipal elections, then it must adopt the attached resolution by a majority Council vote. The resolution further contains the "ballot question." The ballot question must be fair and impartial and limited to 75 words. The resolution also provides for direct and rebuttal arguments and directs the drafting of an impartial analysis by the City Attorney.

Per the attached Resolution, the ballot question is drafted as follows:

“Shall the City of Richmond Charter be amended to authorize use of instant runoff voting, also known as ranked choice voting, to allow Richmond voters to rank Mayor and City Council election candidates in order of preference on their ballots, which voting system would be implemented once it becomes technically and financially feasible through the Contra Costa County Registrar of Voters and upon adoption of an implementing ordinance by the Richmond City Council?”

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 — Resolution to place the Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) Election Reform Act Charter Amendment Initiative on the November 2024 ballot

Attachment 2 – Proposed Charter Amendment