



OPEN Compare the Amendment vs Now

Frequently Asked Questions

Who? You and other city residents who want to ensure even better government in Pittsburgh.

What? A vote of YES on the Open Government referendum question will amend the Pittsburgh City Charter, creating more transparency, notification, & public participation. Your support – financial, in-kind, or as a volunteer – can assure it happens.

Where? In the City of Pittsburgh, but you can live anywhere and still help. The amendment is also intended to be a model for other municipalities and other levels of government, but we must do it here first.

When? Your help between now and election day, November 8th, can make all the difference. Let us know now that you'll help.

Why? This is a bottom-up approach to the way we practice democracy. It depends upon you and others pitching in to make sure it happens.

How? Use our website to contact us, or call us at (412) 532-8338. We'll help you coordinate your efforts with other Pittsburghers to make the Open Government Amendment happen.


***Vote YES to approve the
Open Government
Amendment
on Election Day, November 8th!***

Open Government equals Better Government!

The Open Government Amendment:

- ✓ find publicly accessible City records online
- ✓ watch proceedings; **participate & comment** in public meetings via the Internet
- ✓ **be told** what your government is planning to do before they do it
- ✓ sign up to **be notified** about pending city actions affecting matters of concern to you
- ✓ A real opportunity for citizens to **investigate, discuss, and make comment** on city matters
- ✓ **includes** a proven public participation process:
 - Open membership *Citizen Advisory Panel*; join anytime to begin having a say
 - Proposed laws must be explained & questions answered before going to Council
 - Can investigate issues, hold hearings, develop proposals & make presentations which Council and the Mayor must attend
 - Can educate & inform the general public about City affairs and public concerns

Full text & more information online or call:



(412) 532-8338
OpenPittsburgh.Org



Know more about what's going on in your community



Be told before the City does anything affecting you or your interests



Have City officials hear your concerns before decisions are made



**The
Open
Government
Amendment
to the
Pittsburgh City Charter**

Status Quo vs. Open Government

Currently

Under the Amendment

✗ Pittsburgh's Open Data Ordinance is a start but more still needs to be made accessible	→	✓ Makes more usable information available online & through the local library
✗ Many meetings can be virtually unattendable because of time, location, or unseen notices	→	✓ All meetings which are "public" by law must be webcast with public comment online
✗ Public notice is given for limited items and often buried in the legal notices	→	✓ More public notice; all notices posted online; notice sent to individuals who request it
✗ Administrative matters often put into effect without public knowledge or input	→	✓ Advance notice of administrative matters put online and sent to those who request it
✗ Proposed legislation often hidden behind obscure or misleading titles and "captions"	→	✓ All legislation must be explained & citizen questions answered before it is introduced
✗ Claim of "proprietary information" often used to hide information from the public	→	✓ Eliminates numerous loopholes and makes it extremely difficult to hide information
✗ Information often unavailable for hearings	→	✓ Full disclosure of information when hearings are first scheduled and advertised
✗ Public comment limited to 3 minutes	→	✓ Full organized presentations possible
✗ Council hearings and public comment can be poorly attended by Council members	→	✓ A quorum (majority) of Council must attend its hearings, comment, presentations to it, etc.
✗ No effective means for proactive public participation in the City's governance	→	✓ A public participation body is established to facilitate active citizen involvement
✗ Practically impossible for individuals and citizen groups to uncover back room deals and/or disclose what's really going on	→	✓ Strong framework for citizen access to the inside workings of City government; ability to review matters and inform the public
✗ New candidates for public office come from the party machine; incumbent politicians buy favor using their office as an election tool	→	✓ Average citizens can learn how government operates, prove their proficiency with the issues, and build support to run for office
✗ Large campaign contributors and politically connected individuals get special access; citizen input often gets short shrift	→	✓ Council and the administration are held accountable and must give their full attention to hear and consider citizen input

OpenPittsburgh.Org

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Referendum Ballot Question: *

Shall Pittsburgh's Charter be amended to delete Article 6: Community Advisory Boards (voided, Dec. 31, 2000) and substitute Article 6: Open Government, providing greater public disclosure; requiring public information, notices, and meetings be Internet accessible; setting applicable standards; creating a selectable notification process; and establishing an open membership Citizen Advisory Panel to which pending legislative and administrative actions must be explained and through which citizens can develop and provide information and comment before final approval?

* A print copy of the full amendment is available upon request. The full text is also online at: OpenPgh.Org

3 Things you can do

- Tell us you'll vote in November** to approve the Amendment.

Go online to: OpenPgh.Org

Call or text: (412) 532-8338

- Volunteer** – Spread the word, put up a yard sign, or help in other ways.

- Donate** – Each contribution makes it possible for us to reach more people.

Make payable to: OpenPittsburgh.Org

Mail to: OpenPittsburgh.Org
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