



City Council Form of Government, Referendum, Terms, Election Dates, and Council Size San Antonio Peer City Comparison

City	Form of Government	City Charters (Referendum requirements)	Term Length	Term Limit	Staggered Election	Election Date	Council Size (Including Mayor)	Population *	Target Population per Single Member District	2016 ACS 5-Year Estimate
San Antonio	Council/Manager	The electors shall have power to initiate any ordinance, except ordinances appropriating money, levying a tax, granting a franchise, or fixing public utility rates. 10% of the electors can initiate an ordinance submitted to the council by a petition signed by qualified electors.	2 years	4 terms	No	May, Odd # years	11	1,327,407	132,741	1,439,358
Austin	Council/Manager	The people reserve the right to petition an ordinance which is enacted for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety which contains a statement of its urgency, and which is adopted by the favorable votes of five or more of the council members. Prior to the effective date of any ordinance which is subject to the referendum, a petition signed by qualified voters of the city equal in number to the number of signatures required by the state to initiate the amendment to the charter, this must be certified as sufficient by the city clerk. The number of qualified signatures required by state law is equal to at least 5% of the number of qualified voters or 20,000 voters, or whichever is less.	4 years	2 terms	Yes (started 2014)	November, Even # years	11	790,390	79,039	907,779
Dallas	Council/Manager	A committee of at least five registered voters of the City of Dallas must make an application to the city secretary and file an intention to circulate the petition, giving the date of the proposed ordinance to be circulated. The filed petition with the required number of signatures must be received within 60 days from this date, or it will not be received for any purpose. The petition must include 10% of the qualified voters of the City of Dallas as appears from the latest available county voter registration list.	2 years (mayor 4 years)	4 terms (mayor 2 terms)	No	May, Odd # years	15	1,197,816	85,558	1,278,433
El Paso	Council/Manager	Whenever the number of registered voters reaches at least 5% of the voters who voted in the last general City election, sign a petition setting forth the precise content of an ordinance desired by the signers, the council must place that ordinance on the agenda of a Council meeting to be held within 30 working days of the receipt by the City Clerk. If the ordinance proposed by such a petition not be enacted by the council, or should it be enacted in an amended form, a second petition signed by at least 5% if the voters who voted in the last general city council election, may be submitted to the city clerk and that official shall have 20 working days in which to authenticate the signatures and thereafter must place the repurposed ordinance on the ballot at the next general election specified in state law, if the proposal received the favorable vote of a majority of those voting in that election it shall thereupon become a new city ordinance.	4 years	10 years (lifetime limit)	Yes (started 2015)	May, Odd # Years (finishing 2017) November, even # years (starting 2018)	9	649,121	81,140	678,058
Fort Worth	Council/Manager	A petition must be signed by 20% of the registered voters. The council will then submit the ordinance proposed by the vote the next election. The petition must be submitted to the city council within 30 days of the ordinance being passed. If public interest demands it, the city council must provide for the election to be held at an earlier date than that of the next ensuing election.	2 years	None	No	May, Odd # years	9 (11 starting 2023)	741,206	92,650	815,930
Houston	Mayor/Council	Prior to the date when an ordinance shall take effect, or within 30 days after the publication, whichever is later a petition may be signed and verified. The petition must include at least ten % of the total vote cast, thus must be filed with the city secretary. The city council may then reconsider an ordinance or resolution, if it does not entirely repeal the same shall submit it to the next general election. The majority of the voters shall therefore vote in favor of the amendment.	4 years (started 2016)	2 terms (started 2016)	No	November, odd# years	17**	2,099,451	190,859	2,240,582
Phoenix	Council/Manager		4 years	3 terms (mayor 2 terms)	Yes	August, Odd # years	9	1,445,632	180,704	1,555,324
San Jose, CA	Council/Manager		4 years	2 terms	Yes	June, Even # years	11	945,942	94,594	1,009,363
San Diego, CA	Mayor/Council		4 years	2 terms	Yes	June, Even # years	10	1,307,402	145,867	1,374,812
Texas General Law Cities	approx. 1,214 cities	Texas State Statue reads: 5% of the number of qualified voters of the municipality or 20,000 voters or, whichever is smaller can initiate an ordinance. The city council may submit a prosed charter amendment to the city's qualified voters for their approval at an election. The election should be held by the first authorized election date prescribed by the election code, on the earliest next general election or presidential election. The election date must allow for sufficient time to comply with other requirements of law and must occur after the 30th day after the date the ordinance is adopted. The election should be published in a newspaper of general circulation published in the municipality. This must include: 1) A substantial copy of the proposed amendment 2) an estimate of the anticipated fiscal impact to the city if the proposed amendment is approved at the election 3) Be published on the same day for two successive weeks, with the first publication occurring on the 14th day before the date of the election.								
Texas Home Rule Cities	approx. 320 cities	Refer to respective City Charters								

Conclusion: The overwhelming majority of Texas Cities have a Power of REFERENDUM tool similar to Proposition A. Proposition A will restore the best tool for more government accountability that existed for 45 years in San Antonio, from 1951 – 1996.



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