Issues 8 & 9 VOTER GUIDE

October 2026

INTRODUCTION

In November 2026, Columbus voters will have an opportunity to decide if they want to change the structure of Columbus City Council. In the last 10 years, there were attempts at reform focused on who should elect council members. There are two proposals on the November 2026 ballot, Issue 8 and Issue 9.

COUNCIL STRUCTURES

- At-large council members are elected city-wide and any voter in the city can vote for any council candidate. Each council member represents the entire city. Proponents of this structure believe it supports addressing broad community issues. Critics assert it reduces accountability to neighborhood concerns and it's more expensive to run for a city-wide election.

- District council members live in and represent a specific geographical area. Only people who reside in the district can elect them. Supporters believe this model promotes responsiveness to area issues and it's less expensive to get elected in a district council election. Opponents of this structure believe district council members are too focused on their own area and are less willing to collaborate to tackle city-wide matters.

- Hybrid council is a mix of at-large and district council members. This is a newer remodel that strives to increase the benefits and decrease the disadvantages of the other structure .

CURRENT CITY COUNCIL STRUCTURE

Since 2018, Columbus City Council has been structured as a unique residential at-large council. There are 9 council members who must live in one of the geographic districts. Members are elected in city-wide elections which allows any Columbus voter to elect any member to council on the ballot.

2026 BALLOT INITIATIVES AND THEIR IMPACT

Issue 8 was initiated by Our City Our Say, a coalition of residents who collected signatures from 23,000 citizens to ballot.[1] The proposal would change the current Columbus City Council 9 residential district to traditional districts. If passed, residents would only vote for council candidates where they live.[2]

Issue 9 is the proposal Columbus City Council voted to put on the ballot. [3] Their plan would change the structure of council to a hybrid model and increase council from 9 to 13 members. The current 9 residential districts would become traditional districts and then, 4 at-large council members would be phased in by 2030.[4,5]

The future of Columbus City Council will be determined by four possible outcomes combinations(TABLE 1):

A) No on Issue 8; No on Issue 9,
B) Yes on Issue 8; No on Issue 9,
C) No on Issue 8; Yes on Issue 9, and
D) Yes on Issue 8; Yes on Issue 9

[1] "Group aiming to reform Columbus council system nets 23,000 signatures", Jordan Laird and Cole Behrens, Columbus Dispatch. July 16, 2026. https://tinyurl.com/2z2w8jhy accessed on October 1, 2026.
[2] Franklin County Board of Elections, https://tinyurl.com/y5d5tvha accessed October 1, 2026
[3] Franklin County Board of Elections, https://tinyurl.com/2h2s934k accessed October 1, 2026
[4] "Two charter amendments overhauling Columbus City Council head to voters", Jordan Laird, Columbus Dispatch. August 24, 2026. https://tinyurl.com/yckavuw6 accessed on October 1, 2026.
[5] Other changes in Issue 9 that are absent in Issue 8 are focused on growing Council from 9 to 13 members. Read the full ballot language for operational changes on quorum, voting minimums and recalls.

When Columbus City Council members voted to send both proposals to the ballot, they decided that the main provisions of Issue 8 and Issue 9 were "complementary" and "non-conflicting".6 Thus, voting for the outcomes D and C will result in the same council structure change.

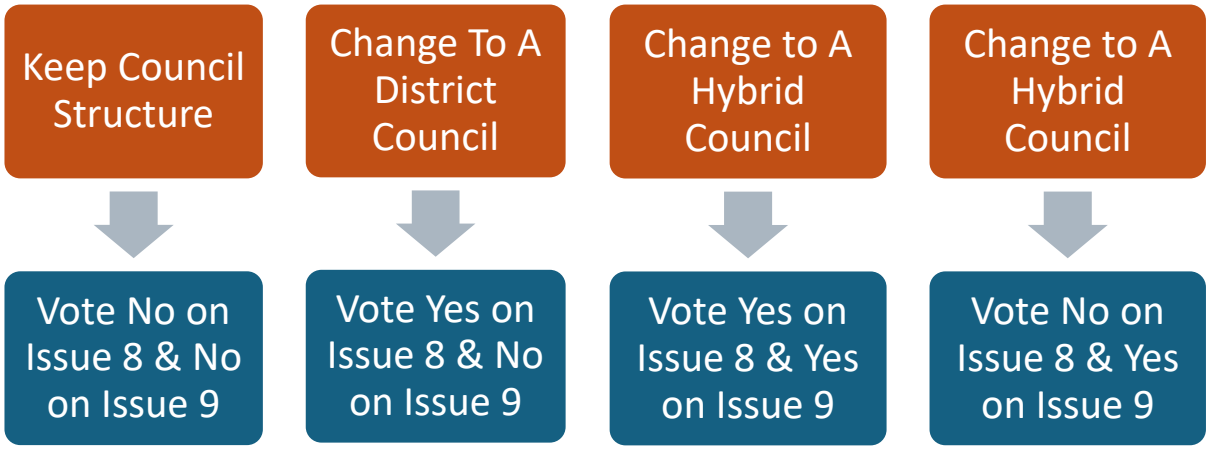
TABLE 1: Comparing the Possible Voting Outcomes of Columbus Issues 8 & 9

	No on 8, No on 9, Current Structure Remains	Yes on 8, No on 9	No on 8, Yes on 9	Yes on 8, Yes on 9
Number of Council members	9	9	11 – 1/1/2028, 13 – 1/1/2030	11 – 1/1/2028, 13 – 1/1/2030
Number of Council Members Elected By District	0	9	9	9
Number of Council Members Elected At-Large	9	0	2 – 1/1/2028, 4 – 1/1/2030	2 – 1/1/2028, 4 – 1/1/2030
Requirement for New District Maps to be Re-drawn	2031	2031	2027 and 2031	2027 and 2031
Election of Council candidates	Columbus voters may vote for any council candidate on the ballot	Columbus voters may only vote for council candidates in the district in which they live	Columbus voters may vote for any at-large council candidate on the ballot AND only the district candidates for the district in which they live	Columbus voters may vote for any at-large council candidate on the ballot AND only the district candidates for the district in which they live

Table: Columbus Policy Institute • Source: Charter of the City of Columbus and Issue 8 and Issue 9 proposed City Charter Amendment language from Franklin County Board of Elections. Does not include list of all changes. • Created with Datawrapper

UNDERSTANDING YOUR VOTING CHOICES ON ISSUES 8 AND 9

The flowchart below is a nonpartisan educational resource that begins with a voter's preferred structure for Columbus City Council and illustrates how voting outcomes on Issues 8 and 9 relate to that preference, without advocating for a particular vote.



[6] The City of Columbus Charter Section 42-13 states that if there are two questions on the ballot, City Council can vote to determine if they are competing issues. On August 18, 2026, City Council voted to affirm the primary provisions for Issue 9 were complementary to Issue 8.