

Process for CFDC Recommendation

Mayor & City Council

2026 Election Cycle

Adopted by the City of Fairfax Democratic Committee, June 4, 2026

Section I — Purpose and Scope

This document establishes the official process by which the City of Fairfax Democratic Committee (hereinafter "the Committee" or "CFDC") evaluates candidates for Mayor and City Council and issues formal recommendations in connection with the 2026 City of Fairfax municipal elections.

A CFDC Recommendation is an expression of the Committee's support for a candidate's fitness for office, based on a structured evaluation of that candidate's publicly stated positions, record in office (where applicable), responsiveness to the Committee's questionnaire, and overall alignment with Democratic values. A recommendation does not constitute an endorsement by any individual member acting in a personal capacity, nor does it bind any member to provide financial or volunteer support.

This process is designed to be transparent, consistent, and fair to all candidates while ensuring that the Committee's limited resources and public support are directed toward candidates who share the Committee's Democratic Party values.

Note: This process document should be read in conjunction with the CFDC Candidate Evaluation Rubric (2026 Edition), which governs the scoring methodology used by the Select Committee. References to scoring criteria, thresholds, and category definitions in this document refer to that Rubric unless otherwise specified.

Section II — Definitions

As used in this document, the following terms shall have the meanings set forth below:

Term	Definition
CFDC / the Committee	The City of Fairfax Democratic Committee, a local political committee operating within the City of Fairfax, Virginia.
Candidate	Any individual who has filed or intends to file for Mayor or City Council of the City of Fairfax for the 2026 election cycle.
Applicant	A Candidate who has voluntarily submitted a Candidate Application Form to initiate the recommendation process under Section IV.A.
Nominated Candidate	A Candidate who has been nominated for consideration by two or more active CFDC members under Section IV.B, without having submitted a Candidate Application Form.
Select Committee	The CFDC 2026 Select Committee on Recommendation, as defined and constituted under Section V of this document.

The Rubric	The CFDC Candidate Evaluation Rubric (2026 Edition), which establishes the 10-category scoring framework used to evaluate candidates. Maximum base score: 30 points. Bonus points may be available as described in Section VII.B.
Active Member in Good Standing	A CFDC member who (1) has paid current dues for the 2026 calendar year and (2) has submitted a candidate for CFDC membership declaration form. The Chair shall maintain and make available a current roster of active members in good standing.
Recommendation	A formal expression of CFDC support for a candidate, issued following the process set forth in Section VIII of this document. A recommendation may be issued to more than one candidate for the same office.
Objection	A formal written notice submitted by an active CFDC member challenging a scoring determination or recommendation outcome, as governed by Section VIII.D and Section VIII.E.
Special Meeting	A meeting of the full CFDC membership convened for a specific purpose, subject to the notice requirements set forth in Section X.B.
Scoring Deadline	The date by which the Select Committee must complete and distribute score sheets for a given candidate, as established by the timeline in Section VI.
Round 1	The first evaluation window, covering candidates who apply or are nominated on or before June 20, 2026.
Round 2	The second evaluation window, covering candidates who apply or are nominated between June 21 and July 31, 2026.
Incumbent	A candidate who currently holds the office for which they are seeking election or re-election.

Section III — General Principles

III.A — Non-Exclusivity

The Committee may issue recommendations to more than one candidate for the same office if each independently meets the applicable threshold and process requirements. A recommendation to one candidate does not preclude a simultaneous recommendation to another candidate for the same seat.

III.B — No Obligation to Recommend

The Committee is under no obligation to issue a recommendation for any race or any candidate. A candidate's participation in the process does not guarantee a recommendation, and the absence of a recommendation shall not be construed as opposition.

III.C — Consistency

All candidates shall be evaluated using the same Rubric and the same procedural process, without deviation based on incumbency or prior relationship with the Committee. Any variation in the stated process requires a majority vote of the full membership.

III.D — Confidentiality of Deliberations

Select Committee deliberations, including individual member scores prior to finalization, shall remain confidential. Completed and finalized score sheets shall be made available to CFDC members as specified in Section VI but shall not be shared publicly without a majority vote of the full membership.

III.E — Incumbent Evaluation Standard

Incumbents shall be evaluated on the totality of their record in office in addition to their publicly stated campaign positions. Where a publicly stated position conflicts with a demonstrable voting record or public action, the record shall take precedence in scoring. Score sheets for incumbents shall document the specific votes or actions that informed any scoring determination.

III.G — Candidates Subject to Legal Restrictions on Partisan Participation

The Committee recognizes that some candidates for Mayor or City Council may be legally prohibited from voluntarily participating in a partisan recommendation process by virtue of their employment. This includes, but is not limited to, federal employees subject to the federal Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 7321–7326), as well as state and local government employees subject to analogous restrictions under Virginia law or applicable municipal policy. The existence of such a restriction shall have no bearing on a candidate's eligibility to receive a CFDC Recommendation, and no adverse inference shall be drawn from a candidate's inability to apply, respond to questions, or otherwise engage with the Committee's process. The evaluation procedures applicable to legally restricted candidates are set forth in Section VII.E.

Section IV — Initiation of the Recommendation Process

A candidate may enter the recommendation process through one of two pathways: a voluntary Candidate Application (Section IV.A) or a Member Nomination (Section IV.B). Both pathways lead to evaluation by the Select Committee under the same Rubric; however, they differ in the method and depth of information available to the Select Committee.

IV.A — Pathway 1: Candidate Application

Any candidate for Mayor or City Council may apply directly for a CFDC Recommendation by submitting a completed Candidate Application Form. By submitting a Candidate Application Form, the candidate acknowledges that:

- They are aware that CFDC is conducting a formal evaluation process;
- They consent to being scored on the Rubric based on their written responses and any follow-up questions;
- They agree to make a good-faith effort to respond to written follow-up questions from the Select Committee within the timeframes specified in this document; and
- They understand that a recommendation is not guaranteed and that their score and a summary of their responses may be shared with CFDC members.

Application Deadlines:

- Round 1: Applications must be received by 7:00 PM on June 17, 2026 — 24 hours after the close of the official candidate filing period.
- Round 2: Applications must be received by 11:59 PM on July 31, 2026.

Upon submission of an application, the Committee shall acknowledge receipt in writing within 48 hours and provide the candidate with a copy of the Rubric and an explanation of the scoring process.

IV.B — Pathway 2: Member Nomination

Any candidate may also be brought into the recommendation process through a formal Member Nomination, without the candidate having applied on their own behalf. This pathway is intended to allow the Committee to evaluate candidates of interest to its membership even when those candidates have not sought a recommendation.

A valid Member Nomination requires:

- Completed nomination form submitted by at least two (2) active CFDC members in good standing (see Section II for definition);
- The nominating members must use the official Member Nomination Form;
- The nomination must be received by 11:59 PM on July 31, 2026.

Notification of Nominated Candidates:

Upon receipt of a valid Member Nomination, the Chair or designee shall notify the nominated candidate in writing within 48 hours that they have been nominated for consideration. The notification shall:

- Explain the recommendation process and the candidate's rights under it;
- Provide a copy of the Rubric;
- Inform the candidate that they will be evaluated using publicly available information and that they have the right to submit a written statement or answers to rubric questions voluntarily within 5 business days of the notification; and
- Make clear that declining to participate will not preclude the Committee from completing an evaluation based on publicly available information.

 *Note: Candidates who are nominated but have not applied will be treated with the same procedural fairness as applicants. The Committee should make a genuine effort to give nominated candidates an opportunity to present their positions before scoring is finalized.*

IV.C — Distinction Between Pathways for Scoring Purposes

Where a candidate has applied (Pathway 1), the Select Committee shall score them primarily on their written questionnaire responses, supplemented by public record. Where a candidate has been nominated but not applied (Pathway 2), the Select Committee shall score them based on:

- Publicly stated positions (campaign website, public statements, press coverage);
- Voting record and official conduct, for incumbents;
- Any voluntary written responses submitted by the candidate following notification under Section IV.B; and
- Responses to written follow-up questions, if the candidate has agreed to respond.

In all cases, the Select Committee shall document the sources used for each scoring determination.

Section V — The CFDC 2026 Select Committee on Recommendation

V.A — Composition

The Select Committee shall consist of five (5) members:

- The Chair of CFDC (ex officio);
- The Vice Chair of CFDC (ex officio); and
- Three (3) At-Large Members, each of whom must be an active CFDC member in good standing at the time of election and throughout their service on the Select Committee.

The three At-Large Members shall be elected by the full membership at the June 2026 CFDC membership meeting immediately upon approval of the 2026 recommendation process. In the event that fewer than three eligible candidates come forward, the Chair may appoint members to fill remaining positions.

V.B — Quorum and Voting

A quorum of the Select Committee shall consist of four (4) of its five (5) members. No formal vote or scoring determination shall be made without a quorum present. Votes of the Select Committee shall be decided by majority unless this document specifies a higher threshold (e.g., unanimous vote requirements under Section VIII.B and VIII.C).

Select Committee votes may be conducted in person or by written ballot (including electronic ballot), provided that all members have been given adequate notice and an opportunity to participate.

V.C — Recusal and Conflicts of Interest

Select Committee members are expected to exercise independent judgment free of personal conflicts of interest. A Select Committee member shall recuse themselves from scoring and voting on any candidate:

- To whom the member is related by blood, marriage, or domestic partnership;
- With whom the member has a direct financial relationship (e.g., employment, contractor relationship, or shared business interest); or
- With whom the member has a personal relationship of such nature that a reasonable person would question the member's ability to evaluate the candidate impartially.

A recused member shall not participate in scoring, deliberations, or voting on the affected candidate. If a recusal reduces the committee below quorum for a given candidate, the Chair shall appoint a substitute member from the active membership for purposes of that candidate's evaluation only.

Recusals shall be declared in writing to the Chair at the earliest practicable time and shall be noted in the score sheet distributed to members.

V.D — Removal and Replacement

A Select Committee member may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the full membership for cause, including but not limited to breach of confidentiality, failure to participate in the process, or demonstrated bias in scoring. In the event of removal or voluntary resignation, the Chair shall appoint a replacement from the active membership.

Section VI — Evaluation Timeline

The recommendation process operates on two parallel tracks — Round 1 and Round 2 — corresponding to candidates who enter the process at different points in the election calendar. All

deadlines below are firm unless extended by a majority vote of the full membership with at least 48 hours' notice to all members.

Phase	Date(s)	Action(s)
Select Committee Constituted	June 2026 Membership Meeting	Formal approval of recommendation process. Three At-Large members of the Select Committee elected by full membership. Select Committee holds organizational meeting, reviews Rubric, and establishes scoring procedures.
Round 1 Application Deadline	June 17, 2026 7:00 PM	Candidate Application Forms due for Round 1 consideration. 24 hours after the close of the official candidate filing period. Member Nomination Forms are also accepted on this date for Round 1.
Round 1 Nomination Deadline	June 20, 2026 11:59 PM	Final deadline for Member Nominations to be counted in Round 1. Any nominations received after this date will be processed under Round 2.
Round 1 Scoring Deadline	June 25, 2026	Select Committee completes scoring for all Round 1 candidates. Candidates who applied must have received a reasonable opportunity to respond to follow-up questions before this date. Candidates whose responses are insufficient for complete scoring and who have not been given an adequate clarification opportunity are automatically deferred to Round 2.
Round 1 Score Sheet Distribution	June 26, 2026	Finalized score sheets for all Round 1 candidates distributed to all active CFDC members. Score sheets shall include: candidate name, score per category, total score, sources used, any recusals noted. Member objection window opens.
Round 1 Objection Deadline	June 27, 2026 Midnight	Active members must submit any written objections to scoring by midnight. Objections must identify the specific scoring determination being challenged and the basis for the challenge. See Section VIII.D for objection procedures.
Round 1 Deliberation & Vote	June 28 – July 1, 2026	Select Committee meets to discuss any objections and vote on recommendations. If no objections are received, vote may be conducted by electronic ballot. Recommendations may be issued for qualifying candidates upon conclusion of this window.
Round 2 Rolling Evaluation	June 21 – July 31, 2026	Candidates who apply or are nominated during this period are scored on a rolling basis.

		Score sheets must be completed within 10 business days of the application or nomination deadline (or receipt of adequate candidate responses, whichever is later). Score sheets are distributed to members immediately upon finalization. Members have 24 hours after distribution to submit written objections. Select Committee convenes within 5 business days of the objection deadline to vote on any recommendation.
Final Recommendation Deadline	August 15, 2026	All special membership meetings related to contested recommendations must be held by this date. No new recommendations may be issued after this date without a majority vote of the full membership.

⚠ Note: The 10-business-day scoring SLA for Round 2 begins on the later of: (a) the date the application or nomination is received; or (b) the date the candidate's written responses (if provided) are received, provided responses are submitted within the 5-business-day response window described in Section IV.B.

Section VII — Scoring Process

VII.A — The Rubric

All candidates shall be scored using the CFDC Candidate Evaluation Rubric (2026 Edition), which consists of 10 categories, each scored on a 0 to 3 scale, for a maximum base score of 30 points. Each Select Committee member shall complete an independent score sheet for each candidate assigned to them. Final scores for each category shall be determined by averaging individual member scores and rounding to the nearest half-point.

The categories are as follows:

#	Category	Notes
1	Housing	
2	Diversity & Inclusion	
3	Environment & Stormwater Management	
4	City Employees	
5	Relationship with Local, State & Regional Partners	
6	Growth, Zoning & Development	
7	Transportation	
8	Charter Reform	
9	Responsible Governance & Ethics	

10	City Budget Priorities	
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VII.B — Bonus Points

In addition to the base score, candidates may receive bonus points as follows:

Points	Criterion
+1	Has been an active member of CFDC in the past but is not currently an active dues-paying member.
+3	Has submitted a Candidate Application Form on their own behalf (Pathway 1, Section IV.A).
+3	Is currently an active dues-paying member of CFDC in good standing at the time of evaluation.

Bonus points are additive and are applied to the candidate's base score to produce the final score used for threshold determination under Section VIII. The maximum possible score, including all bonus points, is 37 points (30 base + 7 bonus).

⚠ Note: Bonus point criteria are applied by the Select Committee based on Committee records. A candidate may not self-certify eligibility for bonus points; the Chair shall confirm eligibility based on membership records prior to finalization of the score sheet.

VII.C — Scoring Standards and Documentation

Each category score must be accompanied by written documentation in the score sheet, including:

- The specific sources reviewed (questionnaire responses, public statements, voting record citations, etc.);
- A brief rationale for the score assigned, with reference to the applicable Rubric criteria; and
- Any recusal notation, if applicable.

Score sheets without adequate documentation may be challenged through the objection process in Section VIII.D. The Select Committee Chair is responsible for ensuring that all finalized score sheets meet the documentation standard before distribution to members.

VII.D — Candidate Clarification

If, after reviewing available information, the Select Committee determines that a candidate's positions on one or more categories are insufficiently clear to assign a reliable score, the committee shall:

- Submit written clarification questions to the candidate;
- Allow the candidate a minimum of 3 business days to respond, except in cases where the scoring deadline would be missed without a shorter window (in which case the available time shall be communicated clearly to the candidate); and
- Document the questions asked and any response (or non-response) received in the score sheet.

A candidate's failure to respond to clarification questions shall not be penalized beyond the inability to provide information that would otherwise have improved their score. The Select Committee shall score

based on the information available, noting in the score sheet that clarification was sought but not received.

VII.E — Hatch Act & Other Legally Restricted Candidates

Certain candidates may be prohibited from voluntarily participating in a partisan recommendation process by virtue of federal, state, or local employment law — most commonly the federal Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 7321–7326), which restricts the partisan political activity of many federal employees, or comparable restrictions applicable to state or local government employees.

Where the Select Committee has reason to believe a candidate is subject to such a restriction, the committee shall make effort to limit contact with the candidate for any questions, and the candidate's non-participation shall not be treated as evasiveness or scored negatively under any category.

The Select Committee should apply reasonable benefit of the doubt where a candidate's position on a category cannot be clearly determined from public record alone, provided that such benefit of the doubt is applied consistently and documented in the score sheet.

Section VIII — Determination and Issuance of Recommendations

VIII.A — Score Thresholds

Following the completion of scoring and the member review period described in Section VI, the Select Committee shall determine whether to issue a recommendation using the following thresholds. Thresholds are applied to the candidate's final score, inclusive of bonus points.

Score Range	Default Outcome	Override Mechanism	Full Membership Vote Required?
25 – 30+ (High)	Recommendation issued automatically	2 of 5 Select Committee members may object within the objection window	Only if objection is raised (special meeting by Aug. 15)
15 – 24 (Moderate)	Recommendation issued upon unanimous Select Committee vote	Any single member may object, triggering full membership vote	Only if Select Committee is not unanimous (special meeting by Aug. 15)
14 or below (Low)	No recommendation unless Select Committee votes unanimously AND full membership approves	N/A — both thresholds must be met	Yes — mandatory (special meeting by Aug. 15)

VIII.B — High Score Automatic Recommendation (25+)

A candidate whose final score is 25 or higher shall receive a CFDC Recommendation automatically, without requiring a formal Select Committee vote, unless two (2) or more members of the Select Committee file a written objection within the member review window specified in Section VI.

If an objection is filed under this section, the recommendation shall not be automatically issued. Instead, the matter shall be placed before the full CFDC membership at a Special Meeting held no later

than August 15, 2026. At that meeting, a simple majority vote of active members in good standing shall be sufficient to approve or deny the recommendation.

VIII.C — Moderate Score Recommendation (15–24)

A candidate whose final score falls between 15 and 24 (inclusive) shall receive a CFDC Recommendation only upon a unanimous affirmative vote of all non-recused Select Committee members.

If the Select Committee vote is not unanimous — meaning at least one member votes against or abstains — the recommendation shall not be issued by the Select Committee. Instead, the matter shall be placed before the full CFDC membership at a Special Meeting held no later than August 15, 2026. At that meeting, a simple majority vote of active members in good standing shall be required to approve or deny the recommendation.

VIII.D — Low Score Recommendation (14 or below)

A candidate whose final score is 14 or below shall not receive a CFDC Recommendation unless both of the following conditions are independently satisfied:

- The full Select Committee votes unanimously to recommend the candidate; AND
- A simple majority of active CFDC members in good standing vote to approve the recommendation at a Special Meeting held no later than August 15, 2026.

Both conditions must be met. A unanimous Select Committee vote alone is not sufficient; the matter must proceed to the full membership regardless.

VIII.E — Member Objection Process

An objection under this section is a formal written challenge submitted by an active CFDC member in good standing disputing the accuracy or fairness of a scoring determination on a completed score sheet.

To be valid, an objection must:

- Be submitted in writing (electronic submission is acceptable) to the CFDC Chair by the applicable deadline (see Section VI);
- Identify the specific category or categories being challenged;
- State the basis for the challenge, including any evidence or sources the member believes were not adequately considered; and
- Be submitted by an active member in good standing (see Section II).

Upon receipt of a valid objection, the Select Committee shall:

- Acknowledge receipt in writing within 24 hours;
- Review the objection and the relevant scoring documentation;
- Issue a written response to the objecting member and to the full membership explaining whether and how the score was adjusted, or why no adjustment was made; and
- Incorporate any score adjustments into the final score sheet before the recommendation vote.

 *Note: An objection to scoring is distinct from the objection mechanism in Section VIII.B, which allows Select Committee members to block an automatic high-score recommendation. Both mechanisms exist in parallel. A*

member objection under this section challenges the score itself; a Select Committee objection under Section VIII.B challenges the recommendation outcome even after a valid score.

VIII.F — Timing of Recommendation Announcements

Recommendations shall not be publicly announced until after the applicable member review period has closed and any objections have been resolved. The Committee shall communicate recommendations publicly by no later than 48 hours following the conclusion of the relevant vote or the expiration of the objection window, whichever is later.

Public announcements shall include the candidate's name, the office sought, the fact of the recommendation, and, at the Committee's discretion, a brief statement of rationale. Individual scores shall not be publicly disclosed without a majority vote of the full membership.

Section IX — Withdrawal and Rescission of Recommendations

IX.A — Withdrawal from the Race

If a candidate who has received a CFDC Recommendation subsequently withdraws from the race for any reason, the recommendation is automatically rescinded as of the date of the candidate's public withdrawal announcement. No further action by the Committee is required.

IX.B — Rescission for Cause

The Committee reserves the right to rescind a recommendation that has already been issued if, following issuance, the candidate:

- Makes public statements or takes public actions that are materially inconsistent with the values and priorities reflected in the Committee's Rubric and the basis on which the recommendation was issued;
- Is found to have provided materially false or misleading information in their application or questionnaire responses; or
- Engages in conduct that the Committee determines to be inconsistent with Democratic values or the standards the Committee applies to candidates it supports.

Rescission for cause requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of active CFDC members in good standing at a Special Meeting, with at least 7 days' notice provided to all members. The candidate shall be notified of the proposed rescission in writing at least 5 days before the meeting and shall be given an opportunity to submit a written response for distribution to members prior to the vote.

Section X — Meeting Requirements and Notice

X.A — Select Committee Meetings

The Select Committee shall meet as needed to fulfill its obligations under this document. Meetings may be held in person or remotely. The Chair shall provide at least 12 hours' notice to all Select Committee members for any scheduled meeting. Emergency meetings may be called with shorter notice in extraordinary circumstances, provided all members are notified immediately.

X.B — Special Membership Meetings

Any Special Meeting of the full CFDC membership convened under this process (Sections VIII.B, VIII.C, VIII.D, or IX.C) shall be subject to the following requirements:

- Notice of the Special Meeting, including its purpose, date, time, and location, shall be provided to all active members in good standing at least 3 days in advance of the meeting;
- Notice shall be provided by email and, where practicable, by any other communication channel ordinarily used by the Committee;
- Only active members in good standing as of the date of the meeting may vote; and
- All Special Meetings held under this process must conclude no later than August 15, 2026.
- If the meeting is held in person, there must be an alternative virtual option to attend via Zoom

Section XI — Records and Transparency

XI.A — Record-Keeping

The Select Committee Chair shall maintain a complete record of the recommendation process, including:

- All Candidate Application Forms and Member Nomination Forms received;
- All candidate notifications and correspondence;
- All completed score sheets, including individual member scores and documentation;
- All objections received and the Select Committee's written responses;
- Minutes or notes from all Select Committee meetings; and
- A record of all votes taken, including the result and any recusals.

These records shall be retained by the Committee until at least November 31st, 2026.

XI.B — Member Access

Active CFDC members in good standing may request access to finalized score sheets and process records at any time during and after the process. Requests shall be fulfilled within 5 business days. Pre-decisional deliberative materials (including individual member scores prior to finalization) are exempt from member access requests and shall remain confidential.

Section XII — Amendments to This Process

This document may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of active CFDC members in good standing at a regular or special meeting, provided that at least 7 days' notice of the proposed amendment has been given to all members. No amendment may be made to this process after scoring of a candidate has commenced without the written consent of that candidate.

Appendix A — Process Summary (Quick Reference)

The following is a simplified summary of the recommendation process for reference. In all cases, the full text of the relevant section governs.

Step	Action	Reference
1	Candidate applies (by June 17 / July 31) or is nominated by two members (by June 20 / July 31).	Section IV
2	If nominated without applying, candidate is notified and given 5 business days to submit voluntary responses.	Section IV.B
3	Select Committee (5 members: Chair, Vice Chair, 3 At-Large) constituted at June meeting.	Section V
4	Select Committee scores each candidate using the Rubric. Individual scores averaged per category.	Section VII
5	Clarification questions sent to candidate if needed. Minimum 3 business days to respond.	Section VII.D
6	Finalized score sheets distributed to all active members. Member review window opens.	Section VI
7	Members submit written objections to scoring within the applicable window (Round 1: by midnight June 27; Round 2: 24 hours after distribution).	Section VIII.E
8	Select Committee reviews objections and adjusts scores if warranted. Issues written responses.	Section VIII.E
9	Recommendation determined based on final score using thresholds: 25+ automatic; 15-24 unanimous committee vote; 14 or below unanimous committee + majority membership.	Section VIII.A–VIII.D
10	If Select Committee vote is contested or threshold not met, matter proceeds to Special Meeting of full membership (by Aug. 15).	Sections VIII.B, VIII.C, VIII.D
11	Recommendation publicly announced within 48 hours of conclusion of applicable process.	Section VIII.F
12	Records retained for 4 years.	Section XI.A