

Navalny to Present an Alternative Program for Moscow

By [Ivan Nechepurenko](#)

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Navalny says that due to Moscow's huge population, the way it is governed needs to be changed.

Correction appended.

Despite numerous hurdles facing opposition leader Alexei Navalny, including the six criminal cases against him and campaign conditions skewed in favor of the incumbent mayor, Navalny pledged to fiercely campaign his own program at Moscow's mayoral elections on Sept. 8.

"Moscow is not developing quickly enough; its development paradigm is stuck in the 1960s," Navalny said at a meeting with the council of municipal deputies on Thursday. "We need to change this situation so that Moscow can become at least as attractive or even better than the best European and American cities."

According to Navalny, Moscow's daytime population has already reached 15 million people, making the city too big to be governed centrally.

"Today, Moscow is ruled from one office, whereas the most advanced government systems delegate authority and financial resources to the municipal level — this is where the Muscovites live, go shopping and take their children to kindergartens," he said.

Another two candidates who presented their campaign platforms with Navalny also noted decentralization as priority tasks.

Alyona Popova said she would give to municipalities half of Moscow's budget, which in 2013 amounts to \$524 billion and is the third-biggest city budget in the world, while Gleb Fetisov of the Green Alliance party promised to hold a referendum on the unification of Moscow city and the Moscow region.

Navalny is set to publish his expanded program on July 1st, but if he wants to fully realize it he still has to register as a full-fledged candidate, a path that has many obstacles.

One such barrier is that Navalny is currently facing six criminal cases, including an ongoing trial on charges of large-scale theft of timber from a state-owned company.

The other is the so-called municipal filter, which requires potential candidates to collect signatures of at least six percent of candidates in 110 of the 146 municipalities.

Navalny has not disclosed how many signatures he has already collected, saying only that he has to call "60 municipal deputies every day." He also said "deputies are being pressured not to sign up for certain candidates; there are no threats, but there are insistent recommendations."

Unlike Navalny, who has been nominated by the RPR-Parnas liberal opposition party, incumbent mayor Sergei Sobyenin is running as an independent candidate, which adds the additional prerequisite of collecting signatures of 73,000 citizens of Moscow.

According to his campaign website, Sobyenin has already collected almost half of the required amount and has also accumulated 250 municipal deputies' signatures, an accomplishment Navalny has attributed to the administrative advantage that Sobyenin enjoys as Moscow's acting mayor.

The meeting ended with a glimpse of the pull-no-punches sort of attitude to expect from Navalny if he becomes mayor. A journalist from Izvestia newspaper asked him about his "political conditions and code of ethics," and he replied that he "does not consider Izvestia independent enough to call it true journalistic media," thereby refusing to answer the question.

Correction: Due to a reporting error, a story headlined "Navalny Presents Alternative Platform" on page 3 of Friday's newspaper incorrectly cited the number of signatures self-nominated Moscow mayoral candidates need to collect as 120,000, instead of 73,000.

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