

FORMS OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

City of Tacoma, May 31, 2024



Presenter



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Form of Government Choice

 Choosing the form of government is **not** a matter of **how much** legislative and/or administrative authority the city will have.

 The most significant differences stem from the **distribution of authority** between the legislative and executive officials.

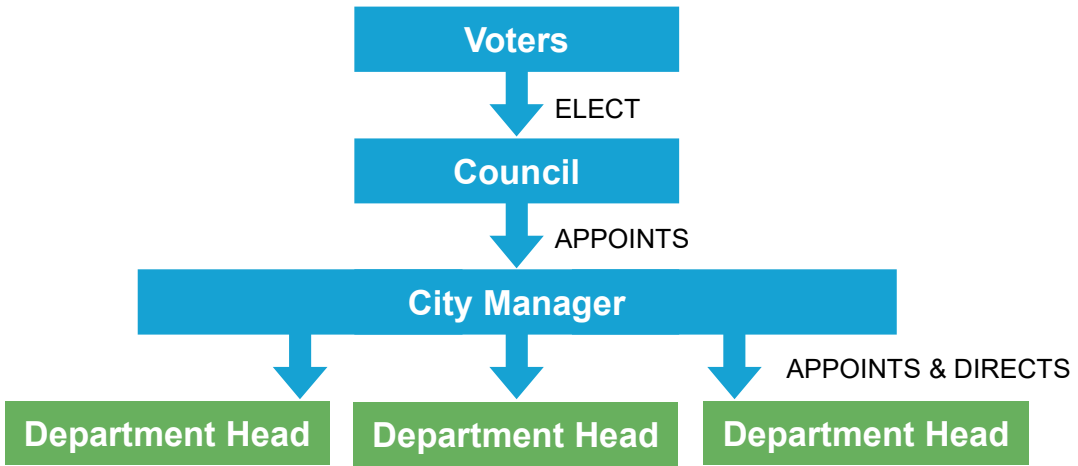
Authority Distribution Between Forms

- EXECUTIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY**
- Makes proposals to the Council
 - Proposes budgets
 - Administers day to day operations
 - Appoints and dismisses employees

- POWERS AND AUTHORITY THAT VARY BY FORM**
- Setting of policy agenda
 - Chair of Council
 - Selection of chief administrative officer
 - Executive veto power
 - Appointments to Boards and Commissions
 - Confirmation of key appointed positions
 - Contracting and spending authority

- LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY**
- Adopts budgets, ballot proposals and city code/ordinances
 - Directs executive to provide reporting

Council-Manager Plan

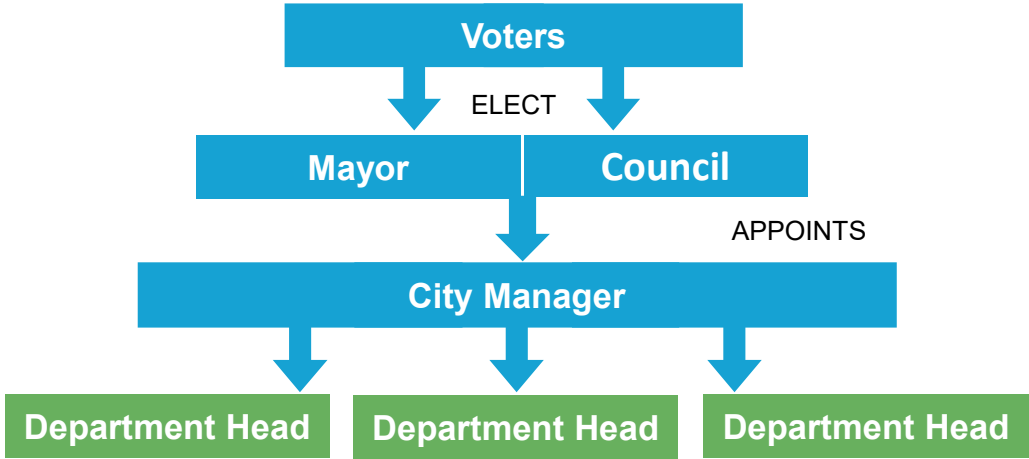



Typical Authority Distribution: Council – Manager Form



EXECUTIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY	POWERS AND AUTHORITY THAT VARY BY FORM	LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY
Spokesperson	Setting of policy agenda	Adopts budgets, ballot proposals and city code/ordinances
Makes proposals to the Council	Chair of Council	Directs executive to provide reporting
Proposes budgets	Selection of chief administrative officer	
Administers day to day operations	No Executive veto power	
Appoints and dismisses employees	Appointments to Boards and Commissions	
	Confirmation of key appointed positions	
	Contracting and spending authority	

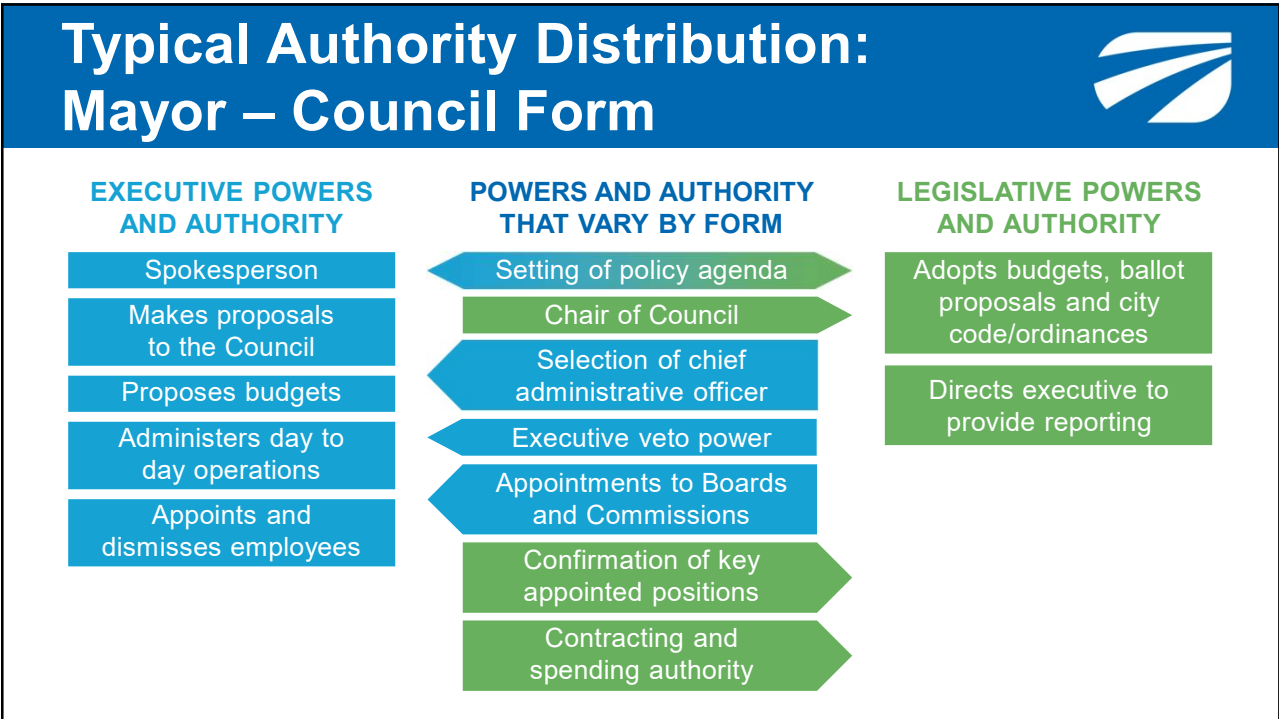
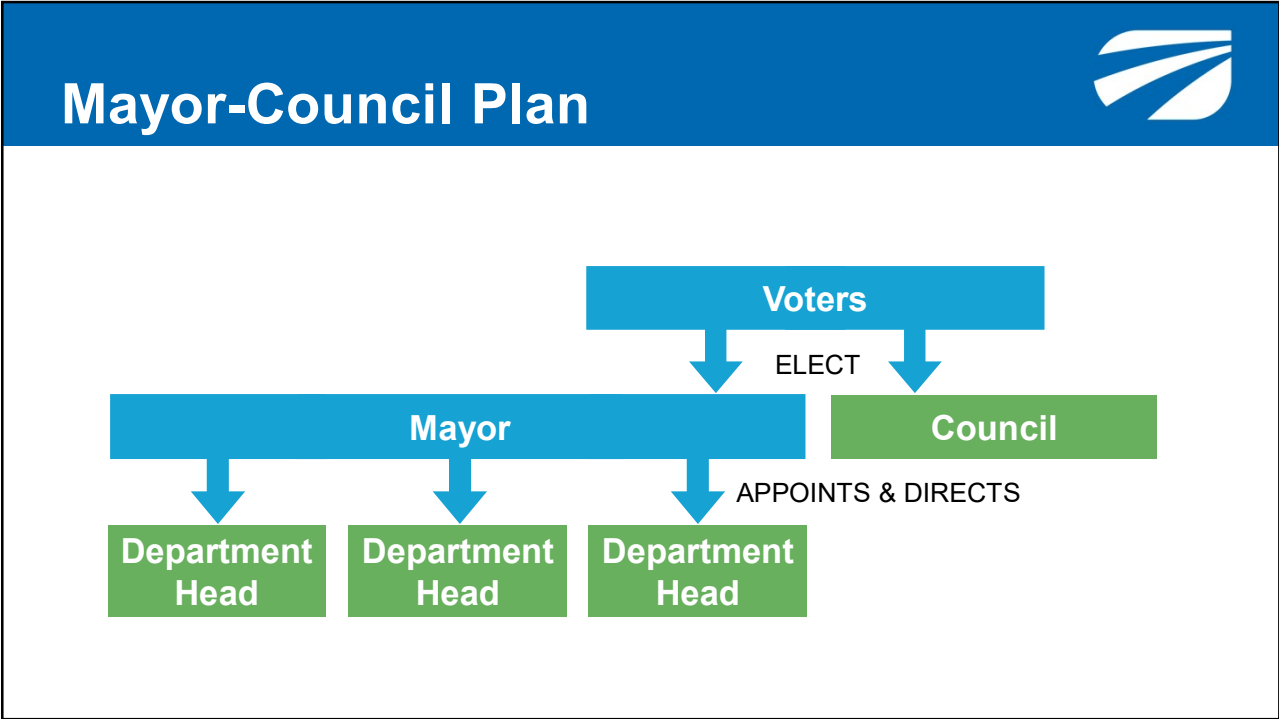
Council-Manager Plan With Directly Elected Mayor

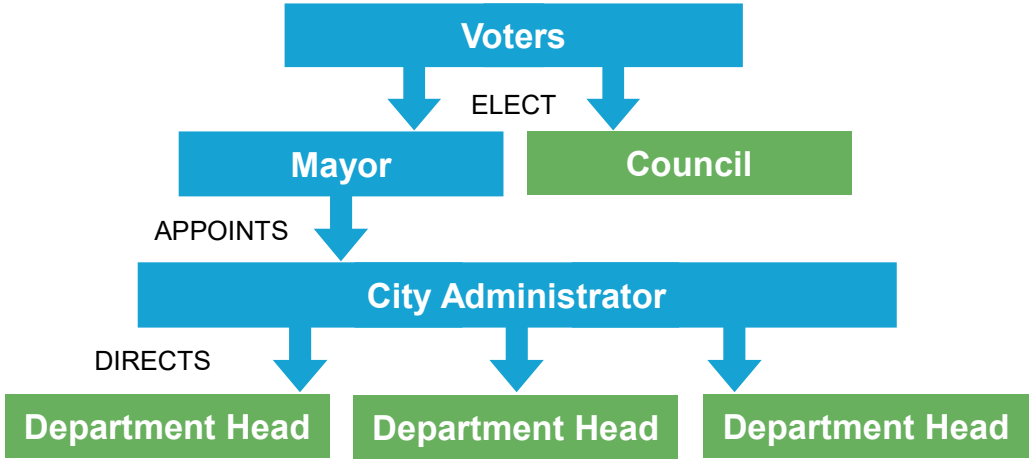
Typical Authority Distribution: Directly Elected Mayor, Council – Manager Form



EXECUTIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY	POWERS AND AUTHORITY THAT VARY BY FORM	LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes proposals to the Council Proposes budgets Administers day to day operations Appoints and dismisses employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting of policy agenda Chair of Council Selection of chief administrative officer No Executive veto power Appointments to Boards and Commissions Confirmation of key appointed positions Contracting and spending authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopts budgets, ballot proposals and city code/ordinances Directs executive to provide reporting



Mayor Council Plan With City Administrator

Typical Authority Distribution: Mayor-Council Form



EXECUTIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY	POWERS AND AUTHORITY THAT VARY BY FORM	LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY
Spokesperson	Setting of policy agenda	Adopts budgets, ballot proposals and city code/ordinances
Makes proposals to the Council	Chair of Council	
Proposes budgets	Selection of chief administrative officer	Directs executive to provide reporting
Administers day to day operations	Executive veto power	
Appoints and dismisses employees	Appointments to Boards and Commissions	
	Confirmation of key appointed positions	
	Contracting and spending authority	

Charter Cities: Forms of Government



	Year Incorporated	Population	Form of Government	Council	Mayor
Aberdeen	1890	17,080	Mayor-council	12 (2 each from 6 wards)	Elected
Bellingham	1903	95,960	Mayor-council	7 (6 wards, 1 at-large)	Elected
Bremerton	1901	44,640	Mayor-council	7 (7 districts)	Elected
Everett	1893	114,200	Mayor-council	7 (5 districts, 2 at-large)	Elected
Richland	1958	63,320	Council-manager	7 at-large	Appointed from council
Seattle	1865	779,200	Mayor-council	9 (7 districts, 2 at-large)	Elected
Spokane	1881	232,700	Mayor-council	7 (3 districts & council president)	Elected
Tacoma	1884	222,400	Council-manager	9 (5 districts, 3 at-large, mayor)	Elected
Vancouver	1857	199,600	Council-manager	7 (6 at-large, mayor)	Elected
Yakima	1886	98,650	Council-manager	7 (7 districts)	Appointed from council

Considerations: Mayor-Council



- Executive (mayor) is accountable to voters
- Mayor is the consistent spokesperson for the city
- Mayor veto power in most cities
- Potential conflict between roles of council and mayor over policy/administration
- Potential disruption in administration due to election cycle
- Potential for decisions to be become highly politicized.

Considerations: Council-Manager



- Professional manager appointed by and accountable to council
- Consistency of executive management – not subject to election cycle
- May be removed by council decision
- Appointed executive not "accountable" to voters
- In a crisis, an elected Mayor may be more effective at quickly making difficult decisions
- Council may not be able to effectively evaluate manager

Transition to Mayor-Council Form – What Shifts?



- Selection of chief executive
- Setting of policy agenda
- Appointment of department heads
- Responsibility for day to day operations
- Development of budget and legislative proposals
- Attending/voting members at council meetings
- Veto authority

Charter Review Committee Proposal



Possible Issues:

Gives the City Council the power of impeachment or removal of the Mayor. (Check Article 5 of the State Constitution and other relevant state law.)

Establishes Mayor elected in 2025 as the Chief Executive Officer of the City and requires the Mayor to manage the City through a Chief Administrative Officer who has oversight of City administration and operation and who reports jointly to the Mayor and Council. The City Council shall annually review the performance of the Chief Administrative Officer and may by majority vote recommend the removal of the Chief Administrative Officer to the Mayor.

Gives the Mayor authority to supervise the Chief Administrative Officer, to appoint department heads, subject to Council confirmation, and to remove department heads without Council approval.

Requires the Mayor and Council to jointly appoint the Chief Administrative Officer and the City Attorney, beginning with the Mayor and Council elected in 2025.

Gives the Mayor the authority to remove the Chief Administrative Officer without Council approval and to remove the City Attorney with Council approval.

Changing the Form of Government



Any city may change its form of government.

Initiated either by a resolution adopted by the city council or by a petition process.

Followed by an election on the issue of reorganizing under a different form of government.

Changing the Form of Government



Timing of vote on change in form is set by city council

Change in form of government is effective upon certification of the election results

The Charter amendments should establish the effective date of the change in form of government, including the timeframe for the election of the new elected officials.

RCW 35.22.190 All offices abolished by the revised charter, shall immediately cease to exist, and any new offices created shall be filled by appointment of the mayor until the next general election subject to such approval by the city council as may be required by the revised charter.

Some Immediate Tasks



- Review and amend municipal code to reflect the new form of government, including powers and responsibilities for newly created officers
- Set salaries of new officers
- Negotiate, amend or terminate the City Manager's contract
- Hold mayoral election
- Educate staff and community members on impact of the change of government

Thank you!

