

FORMS OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

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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

Spokesperson

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

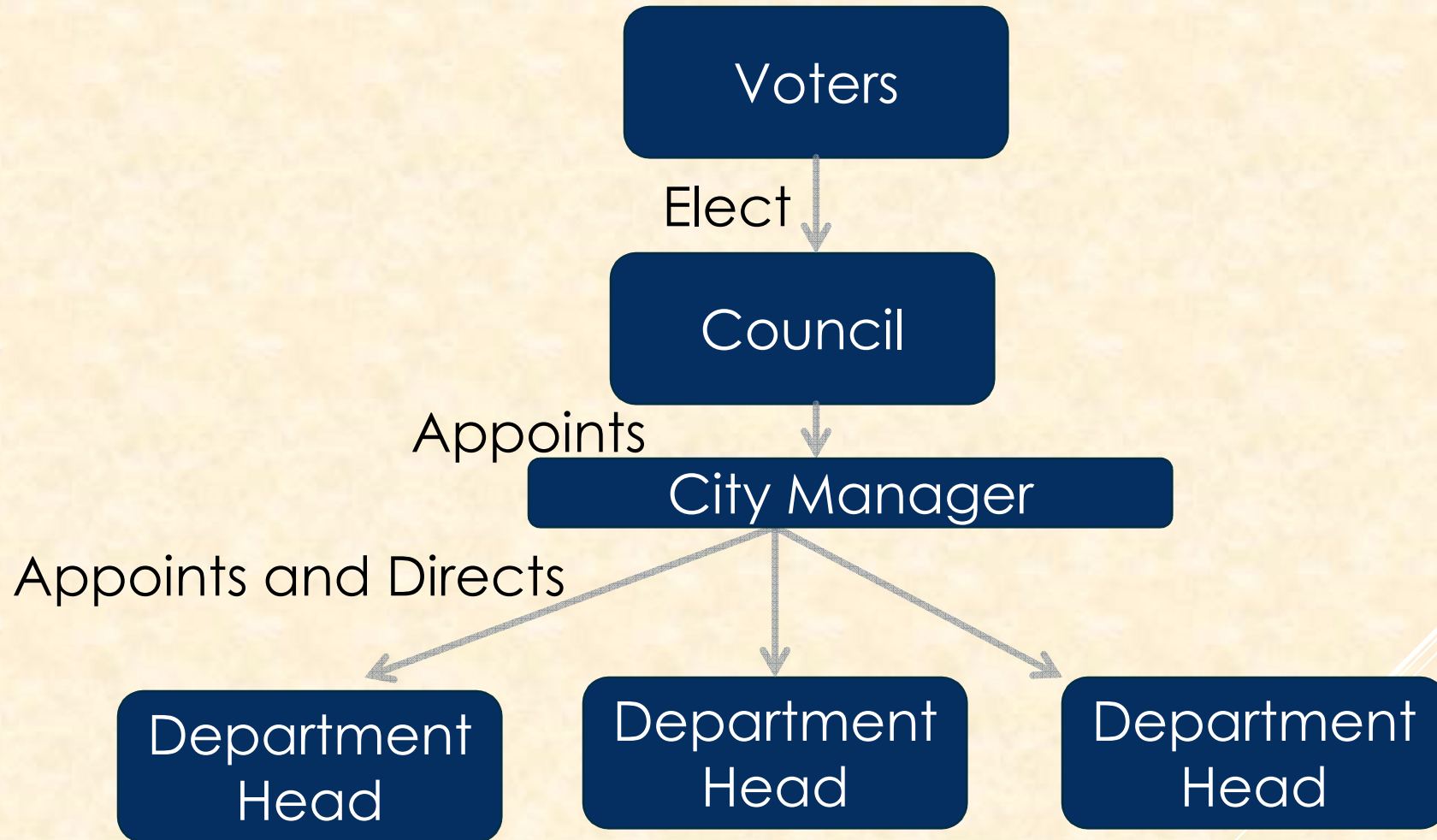
LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

Adopts budgets, ballot
proposals and city
code/ordinances

Directs executive to
provide reporting

COUNCIL-MANAGER PLAN

(YAKIMA AND RICHLAND BY CHARTER)



Typical Authority Distribution: Council – Manager Form



EXECUTIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

No veto power

Spokesperson for city

Makes proposals to the
Council

Proposes budgets

Administers day to day
operations of the city

Appoints and dismisses
employees

LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

Sets Policy agenda and priorities

Mayor/Chair is elected from Council

Council appoints City Manager

Appoints Boards and Commissions

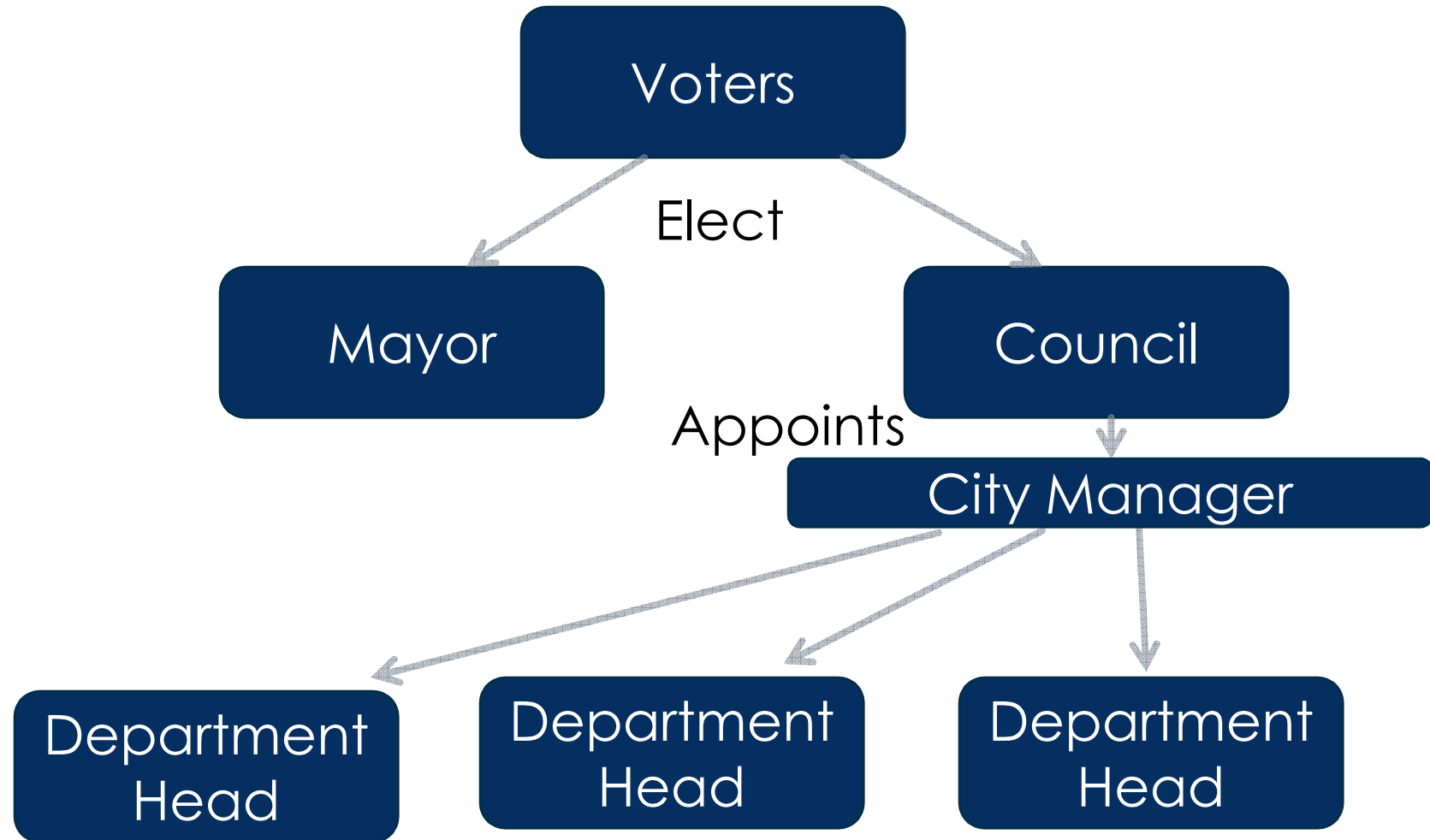
Sets Contracting and spending authority

Adopts policy measures, budgets, contracts,
ballot proposals and city code/ordinances

Directs City Manager to provide reporting

COUNCIL - MANAGER PLAN WITH DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYOR

(TACOMA, VANCOUVER, ABERDEEN CHARTER CITIES)



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



EXECUTIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

No veto power

Spokesperson role
shared with Mayor

Makes proposals to the
Council

Proposes budgets

Administers day to day
operations of the city

Appoints and dismisses
employees

LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

**Sets policy agenda – Mayor may have
independent policy agenda**

Elected Mayor chairs council and votes

Appoints City Manager

Appoints Boards and Commissions

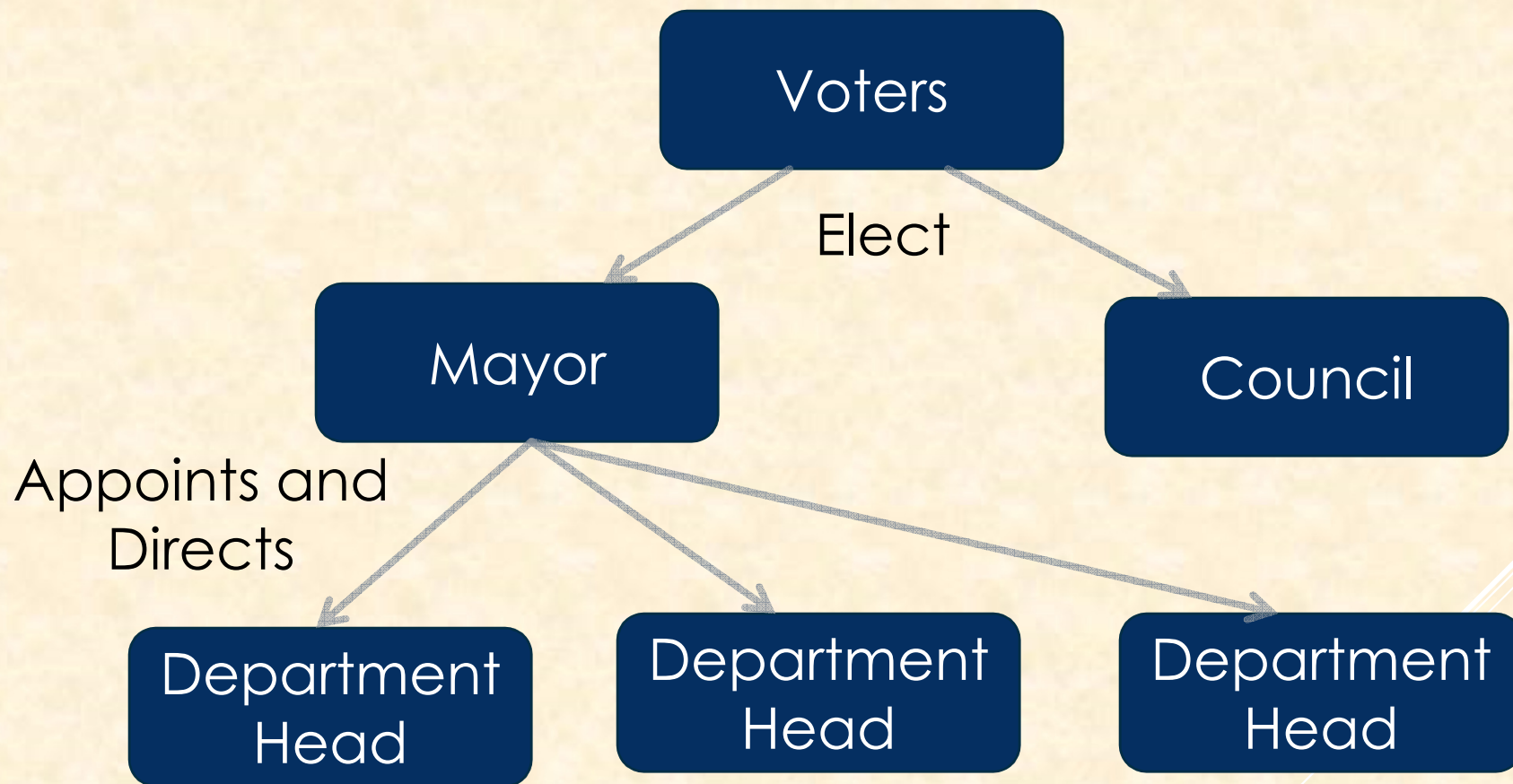
Sets Contracting and spending authority

Adopts budgets, contracts, ballot proposals
and city code/ordinances

Directs Executive to provide reporting

MAYOR-COUNCIL PLAN

(BREMERTON, BELLINGHAM CHARTER CITIES)



Typical Authority Distribution: Mayor – Council Form



EXECUTIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

Veto power

Sets policy agenda

**Appoints Boards and
Commissions**

Spokesperson for city

Makes proposals to the Council

Proposes budgets

Administers day to day affairs of
the city

Appoints and dismisses
employees

LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

Negotiates policy agenda with Mayor

**Council elects member as chair OR Mayor
sits as chair and does not typically vote**

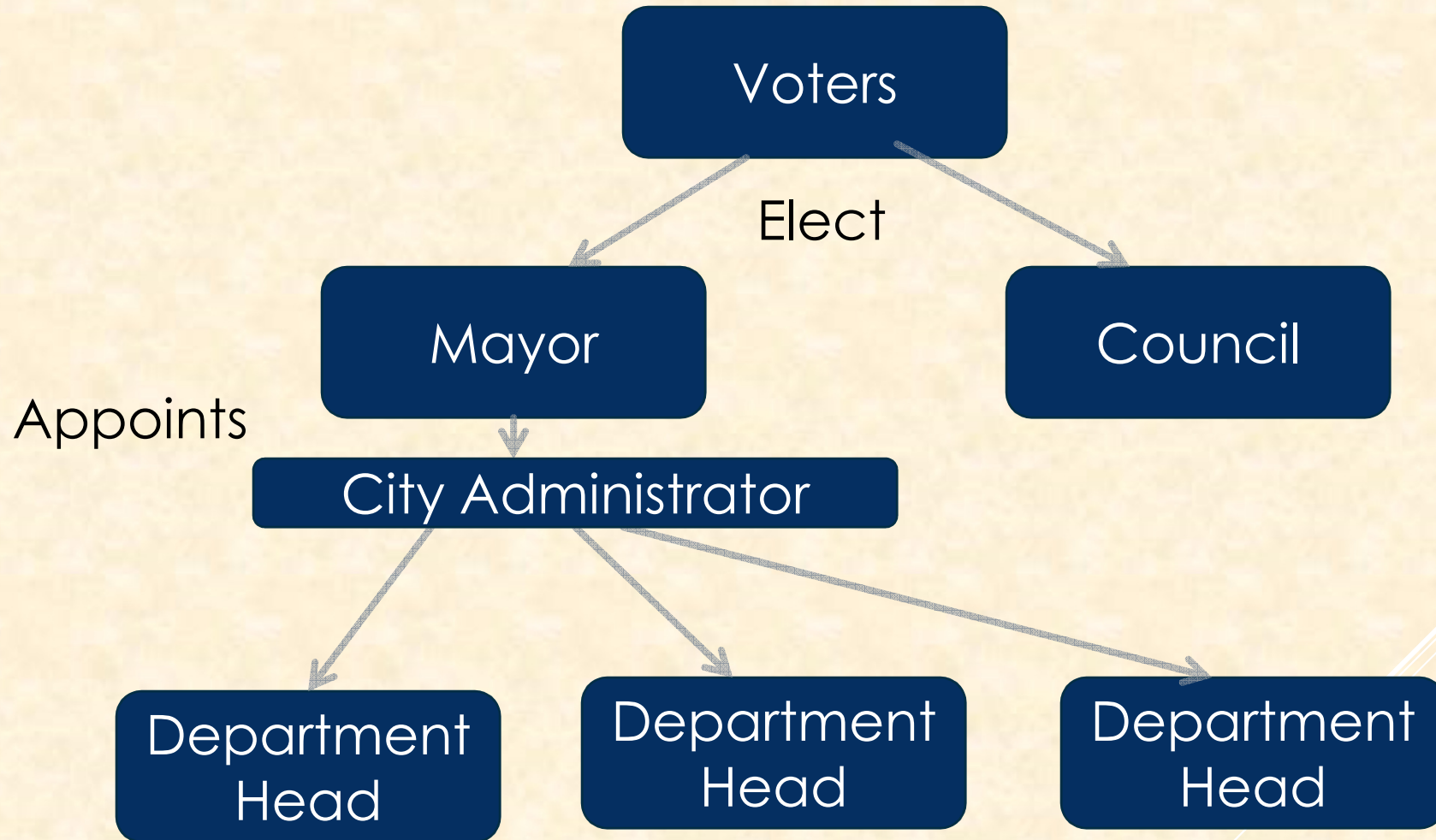
Sets contracting and spending authority

Adopts budgets, contracts, ballot proposals
and city code/ordinances

Directs Executive to provide reporting

MAYOR COUNCIL PLAN WITH CITY ADMINISTRATOR

(SPOKANE, EVERETT, SEATTLE CHARTER CITIES)



Typical Authority Distribution: Mayor-Council Form with City Administrator



EXECUTIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

Mayor appoints City Administrator

Veto power

Policy agenda/priorities

**Appointments to Boards and
Commissions**

Spokesperson for city

Make proposals to the Council and
provide reports

Propose operating and capital
budgets

Administer day to day affairs of the
city

Appoint and dismiss employees

LEGISLATIVE POWERS AND AUTHORITY

Negotiates policy agenda with Mayor

Council elects member as chair

**Elected mayor and/or administrator
attends council meetings with
recommendations**

Sets Contracting and spending authority

Adopts budgets, contracts, ballot proposals
and city code/ordinances

Direct Executive to provide reporting



Choice of Form of Government

Considerations:

- **Capacity to determine and implement vision and direction for the community**
- **Responsiveness and accountability**
- **Appropriate role of politics in administration**
- **Professional management and stability**
- **Facilitation of civic engagement**
- **Effectiveness and efficiency**
- **Political harmony**



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

COMPARISON OF SIMILAR SIZE CITIES



CITY	POPULATION	COUNTY	FORM OF GOVERNMENT	CITY MANAGER/ ADMINISTRATOR POSITION
Vancouver	185,300	Clark	Council-Manager	City Manager
Bellevue	145,300	King	Council-Manager	City Manager
Kent	129,800	King	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Everett	111,800	Snohomish	Mayor-Council	Deputy Mayor
Renton	104,700	King	Council-Manager	City Manager
Federal Way	97,840	King	Mayor-Council	Mayor
Spokane Valley	96,720	Spokane	Council-Manager	City Manager
Yakima	94,440	Yakima	Council-Manager	City Manager
Bellingham	90,110	Whatcom	Mayor-Council	Deputy Administrator
Kirkland	88,940	King	Council-Manager	City Manager
Kennewick	83,670	Benton	Council-Manager	City Manager
Auburn	81,720	King/Pierce	Mayor-Council	Mayor
Pasco	75,920	Franklin	Council-Manager	City Manager
Marysville	67,820	Snohomish	Mayor-Council	City Administrator
Redmond	65,860	King	Mayor-Council	Deputy Mayor

Of the 14 cities around Yakima's population, 50% have Council Manager and 50% have the Mayor – Council form of government



Changing the Form of Government

- Any city may change its form of government. In Yakima, this requires amending the city charter.
- 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.



Timing of Transition to New Form

By state law, the effective date of a charter amendment is upon certification of the election.

[RCW 35.22.190](#) provides that if a majority of the voters favor the charter amendment, it goes into effect immediately.



Timing of the Charter Amendment

Three opportunities to vote on a Charter amendment in 2020:

- February
- August
- November

Fast Track Scenario

- Amendment approved by voters in February 2020
- Mayoral election scheduled for November 2020 (But, state law sets municipal elections for odd years. The initial Mayoral term of office could be either 1 or 3 years in order to get back on schedule.)



Transition Considerations

- Review of municipal code: roles and responsibilities, references to new form of government
- Impacts on staffing
- Establish the mayor's salary
- Standards for communication between administration and council
- Transfer of administrative tasks