

# Municipal Charters in Florida

Presentation for Sarasota Charter Review  
Board

# Florida's Municipalities

- ▶ 411 municipalities presently; one inactive
- ▶ Florida's Constitution recognizes cities, towns and villages as municipalities
- ▶ Cities 50,000 population and above: 52
- ▶ 60% of FL cities are 10,000 population or less; median in 2008 is 5,700
- ▶ 50% of FL population resides in cities
- ▶ All municipalities in FL have charters

# Forms of Government

- ▶ The four (4) forms seen in FL cities: council-weak mayor; council-strong mayor; council-manager and commission
- ▶ Of the 52 cities in pop. Scale: one is hybrid council-weak mayor/council-strong mayor
- ▶ 9 are council-strong mayor
- ▶ 42 are council-manager
- ▶ Zero are commission

# Council-Manager Form of Government

- ▶ Characteristics: charter identifies key administration position with hire/fire powers; administrative responsibilities for city; presentation of policies and budget to the elected body
- ▶ Separation of legislation and administration is clearly defined

# More on C-M Form

- ▶ Mayor's position in C-M form: may be appointed from within; may rotate; may be elected at-large; may be defined in charter as Tallahassee has done ("leadership mayor")
- ▶ C-M form is celebrating 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary across U.S. between 2008 and 2013 (actually adoption dates vary in cities and counties)

# Trends in C-M Form

- ▶ Most prevalent form in U.S. cities
- ▶ Most prevalent form in FL cities
- ▶ Since 1990, more cities have switched to this form of government in FL than any other form of government
- ▶ Reputation and use of the form is growing internationally

# Notes on FL City Charters

- ▶ Tallahassee and Fort Lauderdale are the largest FL cities with the C-M form

# Resources for the C–M Form

- ▶ Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) [www.fccma.org](http://www.fccma.org)
- ▶ International City/County Management Association (ICMA) [www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org)
- ▶ Model City Charter – endorses C–M form [www.ncl.org](http://www.ncl.org) (Eighth edition)
- ▶ Center for Florida Local Government Excellence at FSU: [www.cflge.org](http://www.cflge.org)

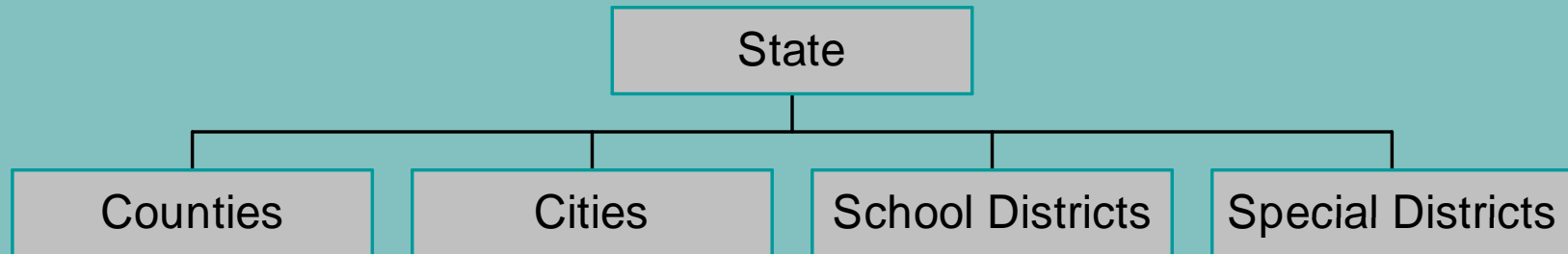


# Forms of Local Government in Florida



# Florida Structure

## Florida Structure





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# Florida's Cities

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- 410 cities, towns and villages
- Charter States the Form of Government
- Charter Identifies Charter Officers  
(Attorney, Clerk, Auditor, Manager if applicable)
- Many Cities Created Using “Model City Charter” Outline, Features

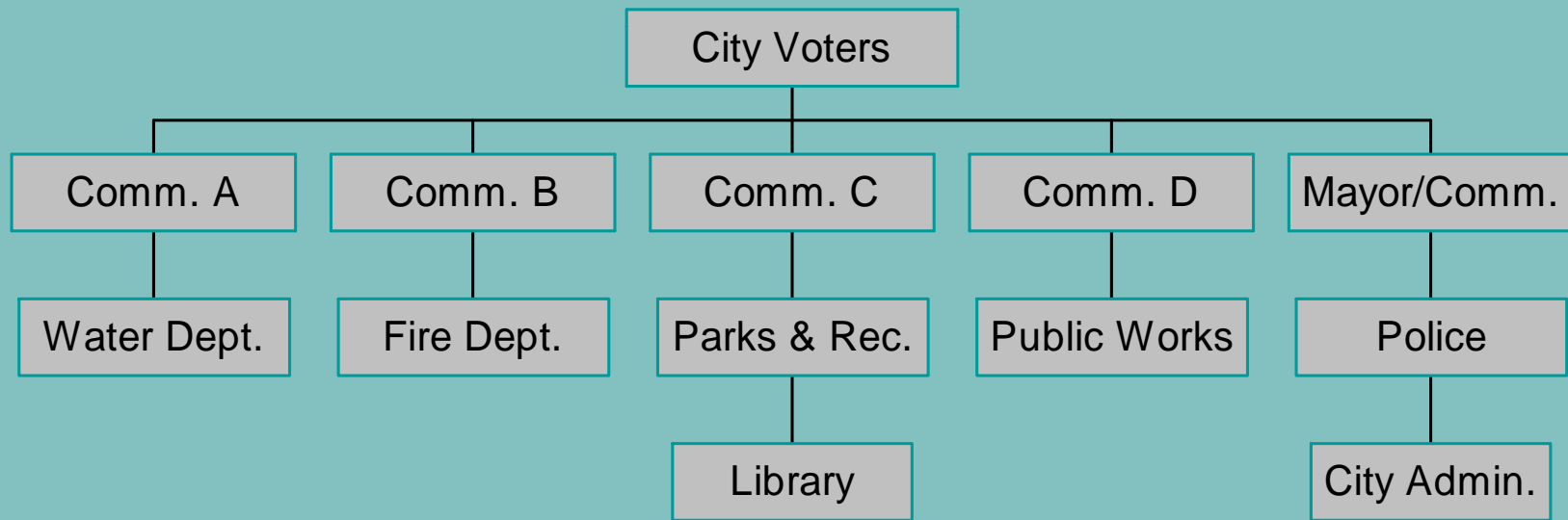
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## ■ More on Florida's Cities

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- Florida City Elected Officials are Called Councils, Commissions or Councillors.
- Positions are Non-Partisan, part-time in most cases.
- Council sizes vary from 3 to 19; five and seven are most common.

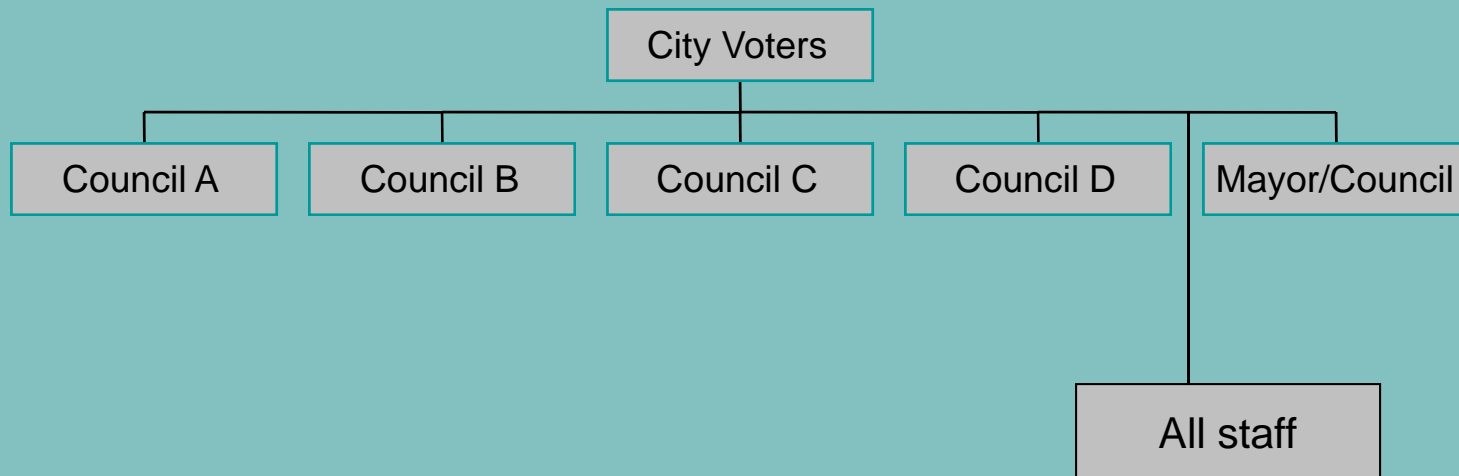
# Commission Form



# ■ Commission Characteristics

- Historically Used in Counties
- Cities Adopted it in 1920s-1950s
- Less Popular Due to Complexity of Government and Services; part-time role
- Commission Appoints Clerk & Attorney
- Less than 5 cities in FL have this today

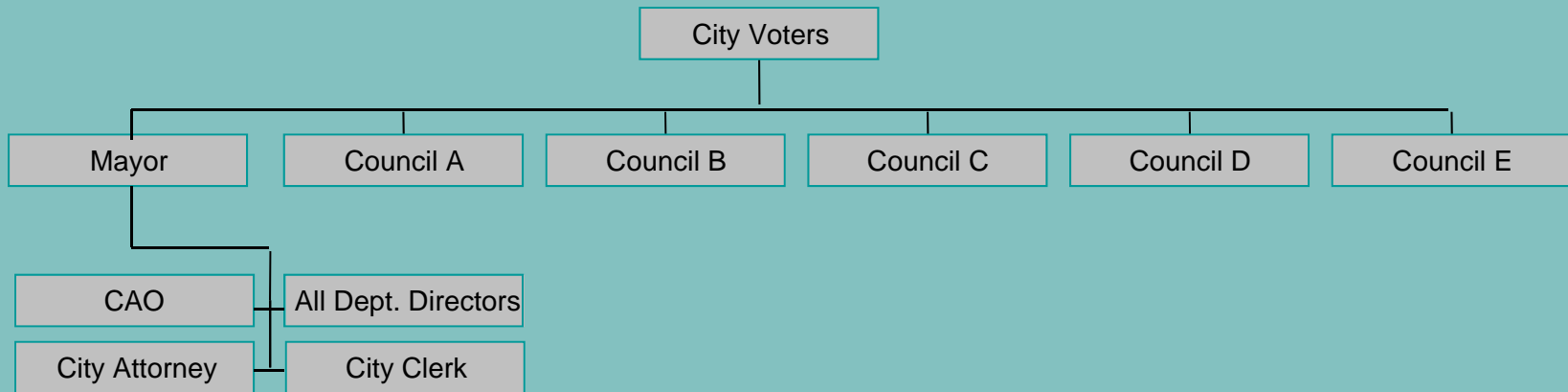
# Council-Weak Mayor



# Council-Weak Mayor Traits

- Council and Mayor have equal powers
- Mayor is ceremonial figure; proclamations
- Council administers city collectively; hires Clerk and Attorney, other staff
- City Clerk's role is often greater in this form
- Approximately 100 FL cities have this form
- Mayor does not always have voting power

# Council-Strong Mayor





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# Council-Strong Mayor

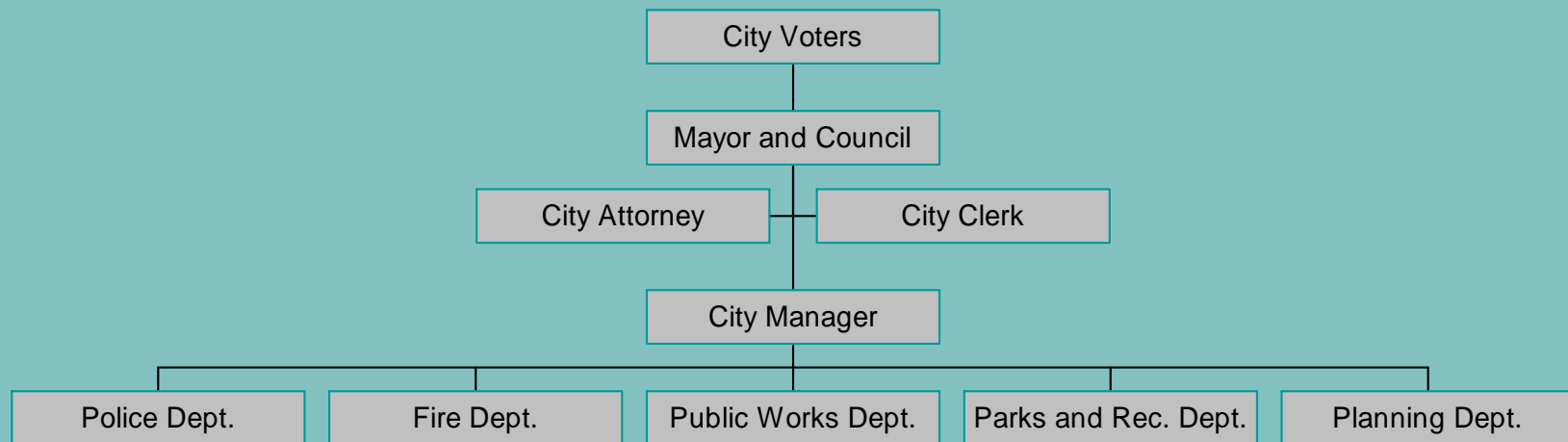
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- Many Variations on this Form
- Mayor is Administrator – paid; full-time
- Mayor May Also Have Council Seat
- Mayor May Have Administrative Staff
- Council is Legislative Only
- About 35 cities in FL have this Form

## ■ More On Council-Strong Mayor

- Many Variations on Mayor's Powers: veto, appointments, agenda, etc.
- In Some Cities, Mayor Votes with Council; in others, Mayor is Administrator Only.
- Varies as to Attorney and Clerk.  
Appointments; Mayor often hires all staff.

# Council-Manager





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# Council-Manager

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- Mayor and Council Appoint Manager Collectively
- Manager serves at Council's Pleasure
- Manager Hires/Fires all Staff
- Manager Prepares and Presents Budget
- Mayor and Council are Legislative Only
- About 270 FL Cities have this form

## ■ More on Council-Manager

- Mayor May be elected by council; by rotation; or by voters (usually at-large)
- Mayor holds ceremonial position (proclamations)
- If Mayor is legislative, may have veto
- Council May Appoint Clerk, Attorney
- Many FL Cities Seek ICMA recognition of form – Criteria Must be Met in Charter



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# Hybrids

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- Each Charter is Unique
- Some Charters are Combinations of CWM-Commission
- Some Charters are Combinations of CWM and C-M
- No Complete Study Has Ever Categorized All FL Cities