

The background features a large, faint, circular seal of the State of California. The seal contains the text "STATE OF CALIFORNIA" around the perimeter and a central emblem depicting a grizzly bear, a miner, a miner's pickaxe, and a miner's shovel.

# Charter City Comparison and Process

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March 4, 2025



## Overview

- Two kinds of municipal governance:  
General Law or Charter City
- 121 of 482 California cities have charters



## General Law Cities

- Governed by CA Government Code
- Municipal affairs (zoning, elections, personnel, taxation) bound by rules established by state



## Charter Cities

- Governed by a city charter
- Can set local regulations on municipal matters that do not conflict with state constitution (zoning, elections, personnel, taxation)



# Benefits

General Law	Charter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simplified governance</li><li>• Predictability</li><li>• Lower legal costs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More local control</li><li>• Can establish local taxes</li><li>• Economic advantage – local preference policies, alternative bidding processes</li></ul>



# Challenges

General Law	Charter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited autonomy</li><li>• Restricted revenue options</li><li>• One-size-fits-all state policies may not address local needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complex governance</li><li>• Potential legal conflicts</li></ul>



# Process

## Initiation

- City Council
- City Council-formed Charter Committee
- Citizen Initiative (15% registered voters)
- Elected Charter Commission

## Election

- Ballot measure adopted by simple majority



## Action

Staff requests approval to further investigate a charter city proposal