

City of Lansing Charter Commission

Regular Meeting Agenda



Tony Benavides Lansing City Council Chambers
Lansing City Hall, 10th floor
124 W. Michigan Avenue

October 8, 2024 at 6:30 PM

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Adopt the Agenda

4. Public Comment

- A. People wishing to share public comment virtually may do so. The deadline to register to comment this way is 6PM, 30 minutes before the start of the meeting. Sign up at this link: <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/dfc57964-cddd-4e9c-8659-e1e810098eba@87509dec-095b-4ff8-ba5a-0035cdfc715d>

5. Approval of Minutes

- A. September 24, 2024

6. Officer Reports

- A. Chair
Update on Meeting with Lansing School District Junior School Board
- B. Vice-Chair
- C. Clerk

7. Presentations

- A. Mayor Schor
- B. Former Lansing City Council President Carol Wood,
[see attached remarks]
- C. Future Presentation for Oct. 22, 2024 from MSU Professor Mark Skidmore
[see attached Summary Report for the Lansing Charter Commission: Literature Review on Forms and Efficiency of Municipal Government]

8. Old Business

- A. Form of Government - Discussion

9. New Business

10. Commissioner Remarks

11. Public Comment

12. Adjournment

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation to fully participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at (517) 483-4131 (TTY 711). 24 hour notice may be needed for certain accommodations. An attempt will be made to grant all reasonable accommodation request.

Minutes for the City of Lansing Charter Commission

Regular Meeting | Tuesday, September 24, 2024, 6:30 PM

Tony Benavides City Council Chambers,
Lansing City Hall, 10th floor, 124 W. Michigan Ave.

Present: Commissioners Adams Simon, Anderson, Bauer, Boyd, Dowd, Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Washington

Absent: none

Staff Present: City Clerk Swope, Deputy Clerk Drever

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jeffries at 6:30 PM.

Roll Call

Clerk Swope called the roll of the Commission. A quorum was present.

Adopt the Agenda

Moved by Commissioner Dowd to adopt the agenda as presented.

Motion Carried.

Approval of Minutes

A. Moved by Commissioner Boyd to approve the September 7, 2024, minutes as presented.

Motion Carried.

B. Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to approve the September 10, 2024, minutes as presented.

Motion Carried.

Public Comment

Michael Siracuse spoke about limiting the power of the Board of Water and Light.

Fred McLaughlin spoke about planning, zoning, and affordable housing.

Anna Martinez-Hume spoke about adding an ethical investment clause to the City Charter and drafting from a community perspective, not a template.

Officer Reports

Chair

No Report

Vice-Chair

No Report

Clerk

Clerk Swope provided a budget update for the Commission. He also acknowledged the written communications in the packet, and that the Commission is streaming on Facebook.

Presentations

A. CMDA

Kristen Rewa, from Cummings, McClorey, Davis, and Acho, PLC (CMDA) presented on the process of charter revisions, highlighting structure and scope of the document, the government, and the work.

New Business

A. Form of Government – Discussion

Commissioner Washington spoke in favor of a strong mayor form for checks and balances and accountability.

Commissioner Boyd spoke in favor of a strong mayor form for accountability.

Commissioner Qawwee spoke in favor of a strong mayor form of government.

Vice-Chair Adams Simon spoke in agreement with the previous commissioners, for reasons of accountability, leadership, and visibility.

Commissioner Dowd spoke in agreement with the previous commissioners and asked about ways to define the relationship between the mayor and city council.

Commissioner Anderson spoke about mayoral accountability and hearing that the people want more transparency in City leadership.

Commissioner Washington spoke about potential term limits for the mayor and council and that they don't always need to get along.

Commissioner Boyd spoke against term limits.

Commissioner Bauer spoke about how the people want the power to vote mayor in or out and that the mayor's executive staff should be people who understand governmental operations.

Commissioner Anderson asked Commissioner Boyd why she is against term limits.

Commissioner Boyd answered that the people are empowered to choose whom they want to fill an elective office.

Commissioner Lopez spoke about looking to other cities' forms of government. Then, he spoke about inserting language for general job description for the mayor and their chief of staff.

Commissioner Dowd spoke about defining the role of the mayor, specifically at City Council meetings and encouraging any counterpoints to be voiced.

Commissioner Washington expressed agreement about term limits relative to finishing tasks in office. Then, she spoke about defining department head jobs, bolstering the mayor's chief of staff position to eliminate the need for a deputy mayor.

Commissioner Qawwee spoke about anticipating community members in favor of a city manager form to express their views.

Commissioner Washington agreed with Commissioner Qawwee and emphasized the importance of City Council having a space distinctive from the mayor to conduct business.

The Commissioners discussed their plans for future decision making, including scheduling discussions about the make-up of the City Council, and the Board of Water and Light.

Public Comment

Fred McLaughlin spoke about envisioning a definition of our community.

Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Anderson acknowledged those watching live on Facebook.

Commissioner Lopez spoke about an organizational chart for the City.

Chair Jeffries spoke about the attorney attending remotely.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Jeffries at 7:31 PM.

Lansing City Charter Commission Comment Submission Form

09/23/2024 12:04 PM (EDT)

Lansing City Charter Commission Comment Submission Form

Purpose

Use this form to submit your comment to the Lansing Charter Commission about the Lansing City Charter.

Context

The Lansing Charter Commission is reviewing our city's charter, the document that outlines how our local government works.

After revisions are made to the charter, the proposed charter, will go back to the voters of Lansing, who will then determine whether to accept or reject the new charter.

The Charter Commission will have a duration of up to 3 years and may present a new charter to the electorate up to 3 times. If no new charter is accepted by the voters during that time, the charter will remain unchanged.

Citizen Involvement

In addition to speaking during the public comment sections of Charter Commission Meetings and Hearings, you can submit comments through this form. The commissioners want to hear from you!

Links

[Charter Commission Web Page](#)

[Current City of Lansing Charter](#)

Lansing City Charter Commission Comment Submission Form

First Name Michael

Last Name Siracuse

(Optional) Contact information is optional, but providing it will make it easier for potential follow up.

Email mickeysirc@gmail.com

Street Address 212 N. Chestnut St

City Lansing

State	MI
Zip Code	48933

Lansing City Charter Commission Comment Submission Form

Topic	Strike/Bold revisions for changes to BWL structure
Comment	I have reviewed the Charter and have recommendations for changes to transition BWL from an administrative board to an advisory board, attached.
(Optional) Additional materials to be sent with your comment	 revisions.docx

REVISIONS NECESSARY TO BRING BWL UNDER CITY (PUBLIC) CONTROL

- 4-301.5: To the extent permitted by law, the City may, by ordinance, establish, abolish, and reorganize departments, other than the Fire Department, **and the Police Department and the Board of Water and Light.**
- 5-102.1: ~~The Board of Water and Light is an administrative board and has been delegated executive and policymaking responsibilities necessary to the proper operation of the agency.~~
- 5-103.8: Each Board established by this Charter shall be composed of ~~eight~~ **six** members. ~~Four~~ **Two** members shall be from the City at-large and one member shall be appointed from each of the four wards of the City in the following patter:...
- 5-108.1: ~~The Board of Water and Light shall exercise administrative, executive and policy-making authority over the operation of those City utility services assigned to it in accordance with the provisions of this Charter.~~
- 5-108.2: No ~~other~~ board, commission or committee shall exercise any administrative, appointive or policy making authority except as permitted by this Charter or required by State law.
- 5-201: **Subject to approval of the City Council,** ~~¶~~the Board of Water and Light, hereinafter known as the Board, shall have the full and exclusive management of the water, heat, steam and electric services and such additional utility services of the City of Lansing as may be agreed upon by the ~~Board and~~ City Council. The board shall be responsible to the Mayor and the City Council for the provision of these services in a manner consistent with the best practices.
- 5-202.2: ~~The Board~~ **City Council** shall appoint an Internal Auditor **for the Board** who shall report directly to the ~~Board~~ **City Council**. The Internal Auditor shall serve at the pleasure of the ~~Board~~ **City Council**.
- 5-203.1: **Subject to approval of the City Council,** ~~¶~~the Board shall make all contracts pertaining to the conduct of the Board of Water and Light business ~~and shall have the authority to settle litigation involving the Board of Water and Light.~~
- 5-203.2: **Subject to approval of the City Council,** ~~¶~~the Board shall have the power to acquire property, both real and personal, and interests in property in the name of the City for purposes of the Board of Water and Light.
- 5-203.5: **Subject to approval of the City Council,** ~~¶~~the Board shall prepare ~~and adopt~~ its annual budget by ~~June~~ **May** 1 of each year, and implement it with whatever modifications the **City Council** ~~Board~~ may adopt from time to time. The budget and any amendments shall be filed with the City Clerk within 10 days after adoption **by the City Council.**
- 5-203.9: The Board ~~may conduct whatever audits of the activities it deems appropriate and shall compensate the City for the cost of that portion of the annual audit of the City which covers the Board of Water and Light.~~
- 5-203.10: **Subject to approval of the City Council,** ~~¶~~the Board may provide for the pensioning of any employee of the Board of Water and Light or the surviving spouse or dependent of any deceased employee.

- 5-203.11: ~~The Board, except as otherwise provided in the Charter,~~ **The City Council** shall be responsible for and have authority over the compensation, benefits, bonding, conditions of employment, and labor management activities for all employees of the Board of Water and Light.
- 5-204.1: The funds and revenues of the Board of Water and Light shall be deposited in the City Treasury ~~and shall be credited only to the funds and accounts of the Board of Water and Light. They shall not be withdrawn or used for any other purpose whatsoever.~~ **The Board City Council** shall have and exercise full control over all the funds of the Board of Water and Light in the City Treasury.
- 5-204.2: ~~All warrants drawn for the payment of money under the authority of the Board shall be signed by the Secretary of the Board and countersigned by the City Controller.~~
- 5-205.1: **Subject to approval of the City Council**, ~~the~~ Board may fix just and reasonable rates and other charges as it may deem advisable for services furnished by the Board of Water and Light.
- 5-206.1: Upon the request of the Board, the City Council ~~shall~~ **may** provide by ordinance for the collection of unpaid charges...
- 5-206.3: **Subject to approval of the City Council**, ~~the~~ Board shall establish a procedure for the resolution of disputes between the Board of Water and Light and any of its customers concerning services or billing for services furnished in accordance with filed rates, rules and regulations, and established Board policies and procedures. The procedure shall incorporate the designation of an independent hearing officer. The hearing officer shall report to the ~~Board~~ **City Council** and the Mayor the results of each hearing conducted and shall make recommendations to the Board on each unresolved hearing. The Board shall report its final action on any unresolved dispute, together with the hearing officer's report and recommendations to the Mayor and the City Council.
- 5-503.3: The Board of Ethics ~~does not have~~ **has** the authority to reverse or modify a prior action of the Mayor, City Council, or an officer or employee of the City. If the Board finds a prior action of the Mayor, Council, officer, or employee to have been ethically improper, the Board ~~may~~ **shall** advise the appropriate party or parties that the action should be reconsidered. Upon such advice by the Board, the action shall be reconsidered by the appropriate person or public body. If the Board determines, **after a failure to reconsider, an action or** existing City contract to be ethically improper, after such determination and advice from the Board, the ~~City Board~~ **City Board** may void or seek termination of the contract if legally permissible...
- 7-101: On or before the fourth Monday in March of each year, the Mayor shall submit to the City Council a proposal for the annual estimate of all City revenues and annual appropriation of expenditures for all City agencies ~~except the Board of Water and Light,~~ for the next fiscal year beginning on July first.
- 7-103.3: The budget message shall contain detailed estimates with supporting explanations of proposed expenditures of each agency of the City ~~except the Board of Water and Light.~~ All such estimates shall show the actual appropriations and expenditures
- 7-107.2: ~~This section does not apply to funds in the account of the Board of Water and Light.~~

REVISIONS NECESSARY TO BRING BWL UNDER CITY (PUBLIC) CONTROL

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Drever, Emery

From: Anna Stouffer <stoufferhopkins2@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2024 7:34 PM
To: Chartercommission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] City Manager

Dear Charter Commissioners,

I think your meeting tonight was your best so far. It was the most constructive and valuable discussion you have had yet. Keep up the good work.

Now, as far as the mayor goes.

I agree with the majorities consensus that you should keep the strong mayor system, I just wanted to put that out there before everyone who disagrees with you gets in your ears.

Sincerely,

-Anna, a resident

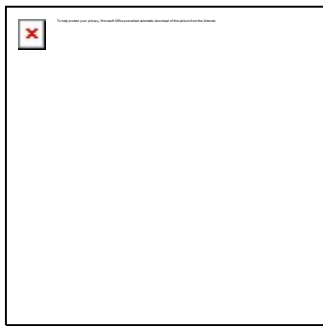
Drever, Emery

From: Fredric Lee McLaughlin <flmcl@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2024 2:46 PM
To: Chartercommission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw: information relevant to Lansing City Charter revision

From: Fredric Lee McLaughlin <flmcl@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 23, 2024 4:32 PM
To: Fredric Lee McLaughlin <flmcl@hotmail.com>
Subject: information relevant to Lansing City Charter revision

FYI.

https://soundcloud.com/apa_planning/arbitrary-lines-author-nolan-gray-on-zoning-reform-and-hitting-plannings-reset-button



'Arbitrary Lines' Author Nolan Gray on Zoning Reform and Hitting Planning's Reset Button

As the old saying goes, "when all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." For decades, zoning has been the hammer swung by cities at a laundry list of challenges. But this blunt tool, dev

soundcloud.com

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvGY3GLT_wE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KP3YZCBvWeA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOVsO2rNjnc>

Drever, Emery

From: Kost, Ryan
Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 2:26 PM
To: Chartercommission
Subject: Organizational chart
Attachments: 2023 to 2024 Fiscal Year Adopted Budget (PDF).PDF

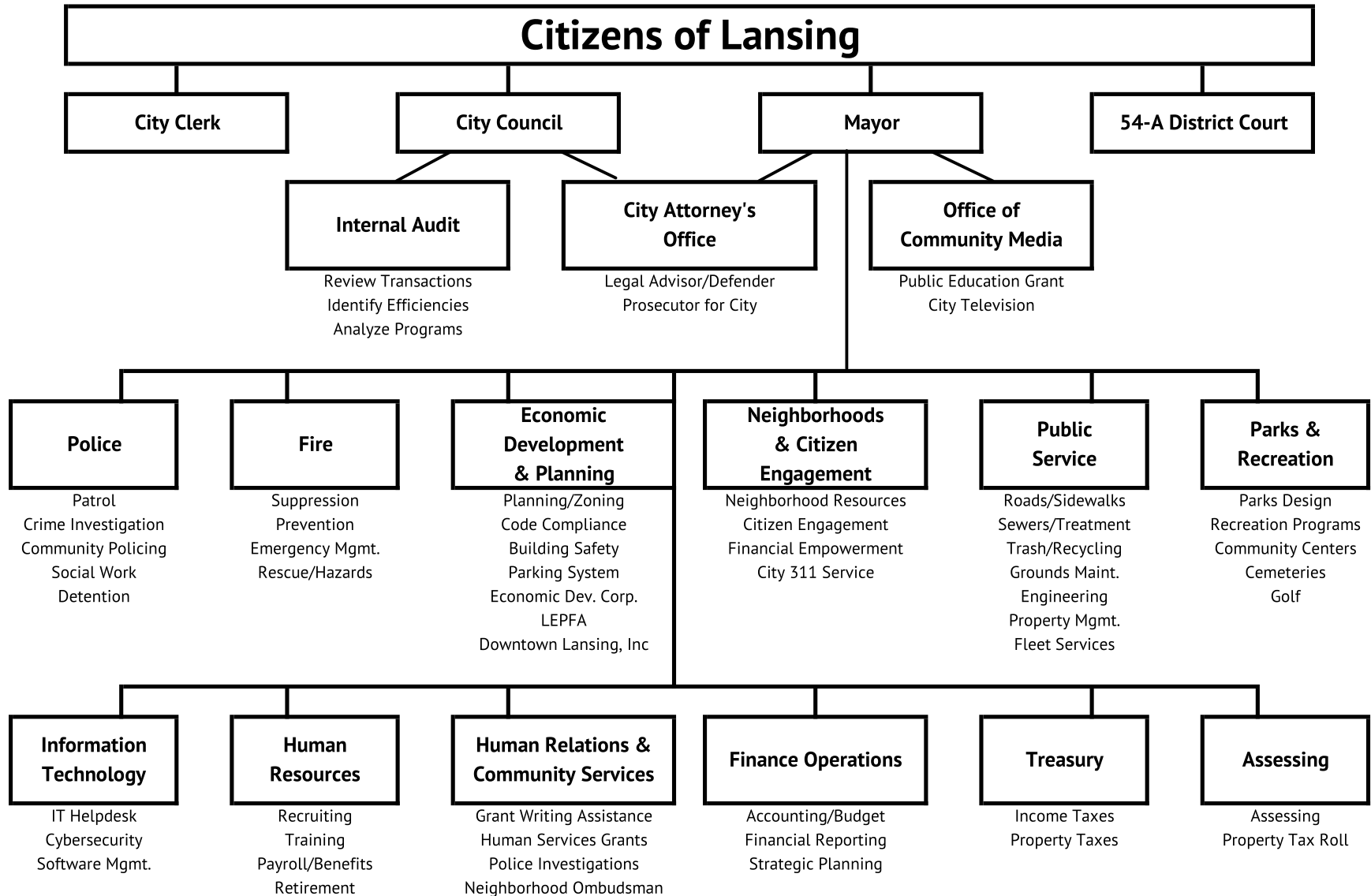
All,

I heard Commissioner Lopez ask for an org chart for city government. Attached is a copy. Please note financial empowerment has moved to EDP.

Thanks
RK

Ryan Kost
1st ward city council
517-512-5196
Lansing is Rising

Table of Organization



Drever, Emery

From: Pat McGinnis <mcginnip@portagemi.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 26, 2024 9:42 AM
To: Chartercommission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Michigan Municipal Executives
Attachments: MME 2024.pdf

I sent an email to all Commissioners this morning with an offer to connect you with resources you need to explore all options available to you as you design the Charter to be placed before the voters. I am available to discuss options with the Commission or with individual members or I can connect you with people in other Council Manager organizations in Michigan.

Our nature is to listen to elected officials (you), provide detailed information and analysis, and then continue to listen to your deliberations and fill in with requested research and analysis as needed.

Attached is a current graphic prepared by our Association to introduce you to the form in Michigan.

Pat McGinnis, City Manager *he/him*

City of Portage, MI

mcginnip@portagemi.gov

(269) 329-4400 – office

(616) 402-0815 – mobile

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Michigan
Municipal
Executives

A State Affiliate of ICMA

Strengthening the Quality of Local Governance through Professional Management



CITY MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Under this form of government residents elect a governing body to set policy. This governing body hires an administrator or manager to carry out policies and perform day to day local government business.

TRENDS

- The council-manager form of government is growing
- Growing percent of Aaa-rated municipalities with a professional manager in place suggest positive correlation to a community's creditworthiness
- Lower tax rates tied to professional manager form of government

FACTS

- In 1908, a single city adopted what would eventually become the council manager form of government.
- Michigan's first ever Professional Manager was in Battle Creek in 1913.

BENEFITS

COST SAVINGS

- Overall economic health of the community
- Implementation of innovative technologies and efficiency forward practices



COMMUNITY

- Community-wide perspective to policy
- Improved service delivery
- Encourage inclusion and consensus among diverse interests through holistic community approach



ETHICS

- Code of Ethics and professional organization support available to the profession



CONTACT US

www.MME.ORG

Drever, Emery

From: Jana Nicol <jananicol@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 1, 2024 3:34 PM
To: Chartercommission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thoughts on the charter

Good afternoon Charter Commission,

I appreciate you holding meetings to get feedback from residents of this city. I would like to provide some feedback of my own:

1. I believe others have expressed concerns about BWL . I feel there needs to be more checks & balances on them. Sometimes I think they have a little too much freedom.
2. I've heard the discussion about city council members and if wards should be split up, etc. Here's my thoughts on that. It may be a good idea to have more wards, but more importantly, I currently have a city council member who is collecting a paycheck for doing NOTHING. He doesn't respond to emails, he doesn't communicate with our neighborhood association, he doesn't attend our meetings, he's basically worthless. As a city council person they should be our conduit with the city and while the charter commission may not be able to do anything about it, city council members should be required to communicate with their ward on a monthly basis and should be required to hold monthly meetings.
3. The home rental situation in this city is out of control. I think someone told me Lansing is currently at 40% rentals and 60% homeowner. I don't know if that figure is true or not but it wouldn't surprise me. It's appalling to see the condition of some houses in my neighborhood and there's a direct correlation between crime and rental properties. There is currently a young man living in a rental a block from me who is choosing to do his drug deals at Spencer and Forbes so his parent (or guardian) doesn't find out. So mark this down: the next shooting in the 48915 zip code will likely be at Spencer and Forbes.
4. I'm sure you all heard the fiasco of the MLK reconfiguration. What you may not know is this project was first let out for bid in early 2023 but got no bids and so, instead of working with the neighbors, they held the project and put it out for bid again in early 2024. The communication from the city was lackluster at best. The only thing they achieved was putting the entire westside neighborhood on the defensive (and very angry). We need a public comment procedure in this city. On top of that, there was a vacancy from our ward on the planning board for over a year. Had we had someone from our ward on that board we might not have been so caught off guard.

In closing, I will be honest, I am looking to move out of this city. It makes me really sad because I love my house and my neighbors. But 3 times this summer I've been told to shelter inside by LPD due to a shooting in our neighborhood and I just can't take it any more.

I wish you all the best in your endeavors in re-doing the Charter. And thank you for listening.

Jana Nicol
jananicol@yahoo.com

To: Lansing Charter Commission Members

From: Carol Wood

Date: October 2, 2024

I have been asked to put together my thoughts on the Lansing Charter and any suggestions for changes. In putting together my thoughts, I looked at areas that I believed could benefit from more transparency and clarity, where, in my beliefs, they were open to interpretation. The Charter must also lay out a clear path if it is violated. Lastly, even though there is the opportunity to make numerous changes, this body must always ask, will the voters approve these changes?

Section 2-103 Ineligibility for Office

.2 No person who is in default to the City shall be eligible to hold any City office.

The City Attorney's Office has interpreted this section in several ways over the years.

A candidate was running for a Council position when Marilyn Slate was City Clerk; the person owed the City property taxes. Ms. Slate moved to have the candidate removed from the ballot, and the city attorney's office took the case on behalf of the Clerk. Billie Jo O'Berry presented the Clerk in court, and the court decided the candidate was ineligible to be on the ballot.

More recently, Brigham Smith, City Attorney, interpreted this section to allow a candidate to be on the ballot for election. If the person was elected and the taxes were paid before taking the oath of office, this person was eligible to run and hold office.

In another case, a sitting Council Member was delinquent with his property taxes, and the City Treasurer had turned the matter over to the County by the time this was discovered. The City Attorney's office stated that the elected official was no longer in default to the city because the delinquent taxes were now in the hands of the county.

I believe there needs to be stronger language that requires elected officials, people running for office, and Board member appointments to be current with their obligations to the City, whether that be taxes, permits, or other such issues. It is unfair for someone to receive taxpayer dollars or make decisions about those dollars if they are not current with their obligations.

2-302 Forfeiture And Removal For Cause

.2 The position of an elective City officer or an appointee shall be forfeited if he or she:

(a) lacks at any time any qualifications required by this Charter. an annual

An annual reporting system is needed to ensure that the elected and appointed officials comply with the Charter. This report should be due February 1st before taxes are turned over to the county.

2-203 Wards

.1 The City of Lansing shall be divided into four wards, from each of which a member of the City Council shall be nominated and elected.

4 The Election Commission shall, to the greatest extent possible, establish wards that are compact, contiguous and of equal population.

I have mixed feelings about changing the ward and at-large positions. As a former At-Large Council Member, I see this position as valuable. My concern about creating eight ward positions is the potential for an ever-changing population in smaller geographic areas, which would require changing the boundaries more frequently.

At-large, members of the Council should interact with Ward Council Members and serve the needs of Lansing residents.

You could consider electing two At-large members from the 1st and 4th Wards, who would have to live in one of those wards. For example, two other At-large members could be elected from the 2nd and 3rd Wards.

2-304 Temporary Absence Of Mayor

.1 During the temporary absence of the Mayor from the City or the inability of the Mayor to perform the duties of the office, the President of the City Council shall be considered the temporary Mayor of the City for the purpose of performing statutory duties of the office.

A better definition of "temporary absence of the Mayor from the City " is needed. Several incidents have occurred when the Mayor has been temporarily absent from the City and has not notified the President of the City Council.

3-207 Rights And Responsibilities Of Council Members

.1 Members of the City Council shall have all of the rights appropriate to city legislators as established by this Charter or by statute, including the right to make inquiries of City officers and employees and receive specific information in response.

Numerous times over my career, the Council as a body, Committees, and individual Council members have asked questions of City officers and employees and been told they are not allowed to answer. There are no provisions spelled out in this section if they fail to do so. Language needs to be added to this section to ensure accountability. If a supervisor directs the employee not to provide Council members with information, the supervisor must be held accountable.

3-301 City Action Requiring An Ordinance

.1 In addition to other acts required by law or by specific provision of this Charter to be done by ordinance, those acts of the City shall be by ordinance which:

(a) provide a penalty or establish a rule or regulation for violation of which a penalty is imposed;

Any new or changed ordinance that the enforcing department undergoes should require training on the ordinance and enforcement. If, for any reason, the Department deems the ordinance unclear or unable to be enforced, the Department Director must send a notice to the Council within 45 days of the passage and enactment of the ordinance explaining the issues. The Director can be penalized if a Department does not enforce an ordinance and has not reported to the Council.

4-401 Heads Of Departments

.2 Unless otherwise stated in this Charter, the Mayor shall appoint a qualified person as head of each City department.

There needs to be a section within this portion of the Charter that requires the City Council to do an annual review of each Department head's contract and performance based on the objectives laid out within their contract. This review should also include how they have worked with the City Council. It should be done by December 1st of each year. No new contract should be let until the review is completed.

4-304 Law Department

.1 The City Attorney may be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The City Attorney shall be the administrative head of the Department of Law and shall be responsible to the Mayor and the City Council to see that the legal affairs of the City are properly managed.

A provision should be added to this section that would allow the Council to get outside legal advice when they feel the information they receive from the City Attorney's office is inadequate or could be interpreted differently. The Council must have confidence in the information they are being provided when making decisions for the city.

5-103 Appointment Of Board Members

When the Mayor appoints a member to a Board, the Council confirms that appointment with a resolution and defines the term of the appointment in the resolution. The Mayor should be required to notify the Council 30 days before the completion of the term if a reappointment or new appointment is not forthcoming and why. We have two Board of Light members whose terms end on June 30, 2024, and the Mayor has failed to submit reappointments or new appointments. When asked, the Mayor was concerned about one of the appointments and decided not to proceed with either appointments. This has allowed Board Members to continue to serve until a replacement or reappointment is given to the Council according to the advice of the City Attorney. Council's resolution that approves the appointments specified the term, and at the end of the term, without action, that position should be declared empty.

5-106 Advisory Board Functions

.6 Each City officer who directs an agency or activity within the scope of an advisory board shall attend all of its meetings and supply necessary secretarial services.

No City officer who directs an agency or activity within the scope of an advisory board should be responsible for running the meetings, putting the agendas together, or dictating how the Board should function.

5-204 Withdrawal Of Funds

.1 The funds and revenues of the Board of Water and Light shall be deposited in the City Treasury and shall be credited only to the funds and accounts of the Board of Water and Light. They shall not be withdrawn or used for any other purpose whatsoever. The Board shall have and exercise full control over all of the funds of the Board of Water and Light in the City Treasury.

.2 All warrants drawn for the payment of money under the authority of the Board shall be signed by the Secretary of the Board and countersigned by the City Controller.

I am not sure this is being done.

7-105 Adoption Of Budget Resolution

.1 Not later than the third Monday in May of each year, the Council shall, by resolution, adopt a budget for the ensuing fiscal year and make an appropriation of the money needed therefore.

.2 The resolution shall designate the sum to be raised by taxation for the general purpose of the City and for the payments of principal and interest on its indebtedness. The adoption of the budget resolution shall constitute appropriations of the amounts specified from the funds indicated and a levy for the property tax specified.

The budget resolution shall include each department's staffing levels. If those levels increase over the fiscal year, the Council shall approve funding for the positions and the increase in the number of positions.

Summary Report for the Lansing Charter Commission: Literature Review on Forms and Efficiency of Municipal Government

Pei-Jyun Lu, Ph.D. Student, Michigan State University (lupeijyu@msu.edu)

Mark Skidmore, Professor and Morris Chair in State and Local Government Finance and
Policy, Interim Director of the Center for Local Government Finance and Policy
(mskidmor@msu.edu)

Executive Summary

In 2023 Lansing voters authorized a potential revision of the City Charter by a narrow margin of 51.6%. As a result, a nine-member Charter Review Commission will spend the next three years researching and engaging with residents to draft a new charter. This report provides a summary of research on municipal forms of government to assist the committee in crafting the new charter.

The report is divided into two main sections. The first section discusses the mayor-council and council-manager systems of government and their impacts on public service performance. Currently, the City of Lansing operates under a mayor-council structure but is reconsidering the existing structure. The second section explores what might be the most effective or optimal number of council members needed to represent citizens most effectively. The key findings of the report are listed below.

Key Findings:

- Prevalence: Mayor-council and council-manager governments dominate nearly 90% of cities and municipalities in the United States (US).
- While cities frequently change forms of government, the trend shows that council-manager systems are becoming the majority, with 59% of cities in the U.S. using this model.
- Some cities use a hybrid approach, referred to as Type III cities or adapted cities, where municipalities may use aspects of both council-manager and mayor-council systems.
- Changes in municipal structure are primarily influenced by citizens' socioeconomic characteristics, particularly income per capita.
- Overall, council-manager governments generally perform better than mayor-council governments in terms of efficiency, management, and financial status.
- A common rule of thumb suggests having between 5 to 7 council members for most effective citizen representation. Among U.S. cities with population size that are similar to Lansing, the number of council members ranges from 5 to 11.

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I. Mayor-council, council-manager, and type III cities

In the United State (US), two major forms of municipal government are mayor-council and council-manager, where more than 90% of cities in the US adopt either mayor-council (Type I) or council-manager (Type II) forms in their city charters.¹ However, in most city charters, governments also incorporate characteristics of other types, thus there is the third category of Type III cities (DeSanties and Newell, 1996; Frederickson, 1996; and Protasel, 1994). City residents vote to decide on the form of government, but these decisions are not permanent (Hassett and Watson, 2007); it is common for cities to change forms of governments over time (Choi et al., 2013; Cooper et al., 2018).

In the first section of this report, we introduce the main characteristics of mayor-council, council-manager, and type III cities. The goal is to inform what form of government is most suitable for different types of cities. In the second section, we discuss the research on the impacts of changing city charters and as well as the drivers of change. Within each section we discuss the relevance and implications for the city of Lansing.

(1) Mayor-council, council-manager, and type III city

The mayor-council and council-manager forms of government are predominant in most city and municipal institutions in the US. These structures involve four key players within the city or municipal government: the mayor, the council, the city manager, and the chief administrative officer (CAO). However, the functions of these players vary depending on the form of government.

In a mayor-council form of government, there are two major bodies that maintain a separation of powers: a mayor who serves as the main executive officer and a council that functions as the legislative body. However, within this structure, there are two sub-forms. The first is the strong mayor-council form of government, where the elected mayor has concentrated executive authority that includes preparing the city budget, having the power to veto legislation or policy, and appointing and removing department heads without council approval. The second is the weak mayor-council form of government. In this form, mayoral powers are more limited and are often shared with council members. Additionally, the mayor may be elected by residents at-large or appointed from among the city council members. The council in a weak mayor-council form of government typically has more

¹ The other forms of governments are City Commission, Town Meeting, and Representative Town Meeting.

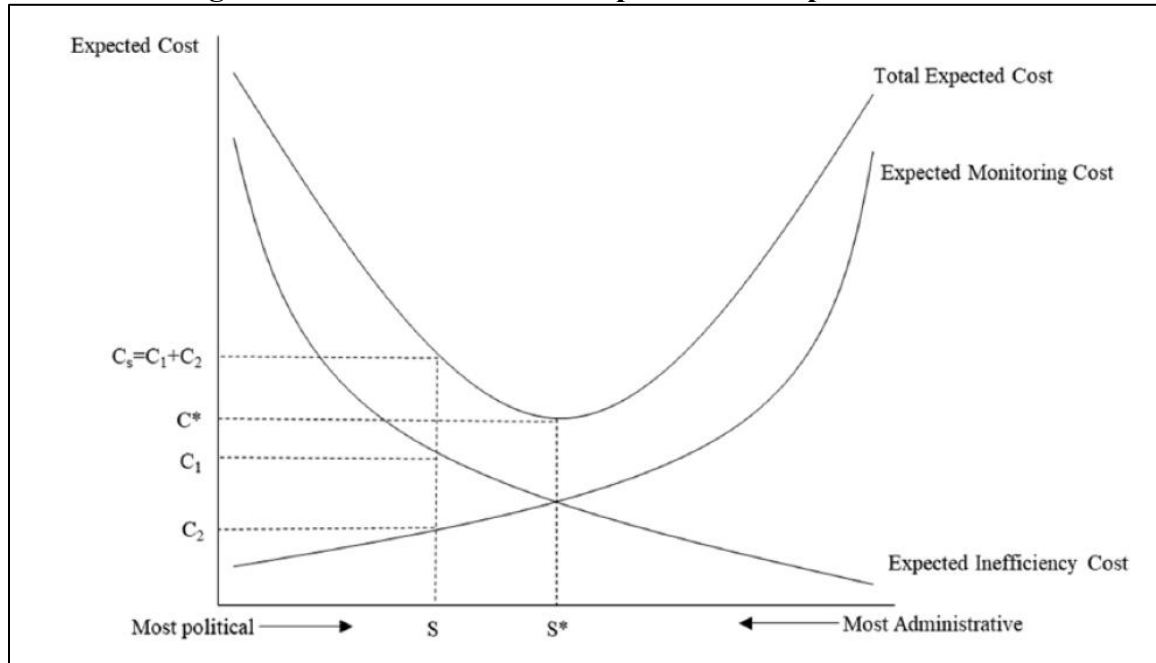
influence over policy decisions and manages the city's administration.

The council-manager form of government is a relatively modern approach that provides professional management of city administration. In this system, the city council is directly elected by the residents; it is the responsibility of the city council to make policy decisions, pass legislation, and provide a vision for the city. The city council does not execute policy but appoints a professional city manager to function as administrator and conducted daily operations, such as oversee and prepare the budget, supervise department heads and staff, and efficiently deliver public services. City managers are hired and dismissed based on performance by the city council.

The mayor-council and council-manager systems may appear to be two distinct paradigms, with only one typically specified in the city charter. However, in many municipalities, elements of both paradigms are present simultaneously (Svara and Watson, 2010). Wei et al. (2019) proposed a theoretical framework for determining the optimal paradigm. In a mayor-council form of government, inefficiencies represent a major cost, while in a council-manager government, monitoring costs arise. Due to these trade-offs, it is common for cities to adopt a hybrid approach in an effort to find the optimal balance between the two paradigms, as illustrated in Figure 1. The hybrid framework is referred to as an "adapted city" or "Type III city." Unlike the purely political (strong mayor-council government) and purely administrative (council-manager government) systems, a Type III city deals with both inefficiency costs and monitoring costs. Depending on the unique characteristics of each city, the mixture of the two paradigms and the optimal balance can vary.

For example, one method to improve the executive efficiency of a mayor-council government is for the mayor to hire a chief administrative officer (CAO) to manage daily operations. The roles of the city manager and the CAO are similar. Compared to the city manager, who is responsible for the entire administration, the CAO typically handles only a portion of the city's administrative functions and shares some of the executive responsibilities with the mayor.

Figure 1. Theoretical model of optimal municipal structure



Source: Wei et al. (2019)

According to Frederickson and Johnson (2001), there are six criteria for pure mayor-council and council-manager institutions, as shown in Table 1. The left column represents the most political form of government, while the right column represents the most administrative form. In the middle, the city of Lansing is used as an example to illustrate how a mayor-council city can adapt to a council-manager system.

The criteria for an adapted city include having a CAO, an approximately even mix of council members elected at-large and by district, and a mayor who may serve either full-time or part-time. The city of Lansing is not the only Type III city in Michigan. Carr and Karuppusamy (2009) examined 263 city charters in Michigan and classified each city according to the adapted cities framework. The analysis shows that in Michigan 76 (29%) cities are administrative cities, 179 (68%) cities are adapted cities, and only 8 (3%) cities are political cities.

Table 1. Criteria of Pure Political or Administrative Forms of Government

Most Political	City of Lansing (Adaptive city/Type III)	Most Administrative
No CAO.	• Charter §4-201 • The Mayor shall have an Executive Assistant who shall perform such duties and functions as may be required by this Charter or directed by the Mayor for the efficient operation of administrative services and functions	Council does not have a staff that is devoted to council business
Council is paid and may have one staff		Members of the council are not paid
At least one council member is elected by district	• Charter §5-103-8 • Four from each ward; four from at-large	Council elections are at large
Elections are partisan		City council elections are nonpartisan
Mayor is directly elected	• Charter § 2-101-1 • The elective officers shall be the Mayor, eight members of the City Council and the city Clerk	Mayor is selected from among the council
Mayor is full-time	• Charter §4-101 • The Mayor shall be the chief executive officer of the City of Lansing and shall devote full time to the service of the City	Mayor is part-time and paid less than \$10,000 per annum

Source: Frederickson and Johnson (2001); The charter of the city of Lansing.

During the nineteenth century, most American municipalities adopted a weak mayor system, a vestige of English colonial practices. In this system, city council members elected one of their own to serve as mayor. However, legislative, financial, and executive powers remained with the council members, rendering the mayoral role as largely symbolic.

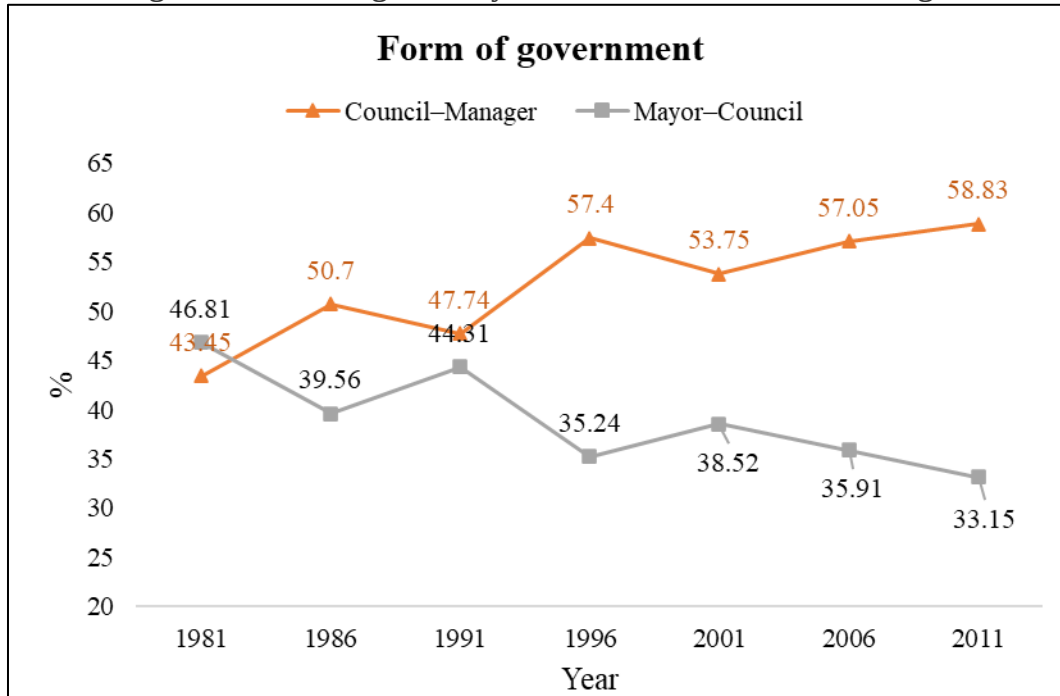
Starting in the 1840s, cities began transitioning from a weak mayor system to a strong mayor-council government. Under this new framework, mayors gained strong executive authority. Additionally, mayors were no longer appointed by council members but were elected at-large by the public. Two major factors drove this transition. First, Jacksonian democratic principles advocated for the direct election of mayors to better represent residents. Second, the inefficiencies of the weak mayor system prompted residents to seek more effective forms of government.

In the pursuit of improving efficiency, municipalities began appointing city managers as early as 1908. American municipalities evolved from mayor-council government to council-manager government (Gordon, 1968; Kessel, 1962; and Knoke, 1982). With the exception of the smallest and largest cities, the council-manager form of government has become the most widely used structure (Svara and Watson, 2010).

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) surveys all cities and municipalities in the US, and the composition trends have changed over time (see Figure 1). In 1984, among all cities and municipalities with populations over 2,500, approximately 55.8% used the mayor-council form of government. However, this percentage has continued to decrease. After 1996, the percentage of cities adopting the council-manager form surpassed that of the mayor-council form and continued to grow. According to Ballotpedia, by 2011, the percentage of cities in the US using the council-manager form had increased to 59%, while only 33% employed the mayor-council form.²

² See Ballotpedia for more information: https://ballotpedia.org/Mayor-council_government#cite_note-encyc-12. The raw data is also sourced from ICMA.

Figure 1. Percentage of Mayor-Council and Council Manager



Source: Wei et al. (2019) and ICMA. The percentage represents cities in the dataset adopted mayor-council and council-manger governments, ignoring other types of institutional arrangements. Therefore, the sum of the percentages is not 100%.

(2) Determinants of Changing Form of Government (adoption and abandonment)

Building on the previous sections, the shift between different government forms is a dynamic process (Hirschman, 1982). The existing literature explores the drivers behind these changes, identifying three major theoretical perspectives: political conflict theory, social cleavages theory, and policy diffusion.

Kessel (1962) first developed political conflict theory, which suggests that different interest groups select various forms of government based on their political status, such as differing social norms, disadvantaged groups, or special interest groups.

The second major theory is social cleavages theory. This theory posits that preferences for different forms of government are influenced by social cleavages, including race, wealth, religion, and education. Groups tend to favor the government form that best aligns with their self-interest. Essentially, changes in form of government often result from conflicts between two main groups: the middle and upper classes versus the working class (Choi et al., 2013; Hays, 1974; Knoke, 1982; Lineberry and Fowler, 1967; and Simmons and Simmons, 2004).

The final theory is policy diffusion. Knoke (1982) argued that the decision to adopt the council-manager form of government is often influenced by the practices of neighboring regions.

Based on these theories, the research literature provides empirical examination of the factors influencing changes in government forms. Choi et al. (2013) found that social context factors, particularly economic conditions, affect both the adoption and abandonment of council-manager governments. However, much of the existing literature overlooks Type III cities. Wei et al. (2019) addressed this gap by using an index to measure different government forms and found that changes in municipal structure are associated with citizens' socioeconomic characteristics, particularly income per capita; higher per capita income is associated with a higher likelihood of the council-manager form of government

(3) Performance of Different Forms of Government

A key question is which form of city government is most effective. In the previous section, we demonstrated that while evidence shows cities frequently shift forms of government, the trend indicates that the adoption of the council-manager style is most common.

Svara and Nelson (2008) argued that cities with a council-manager system tend to perform better in terms of efficiency, financial status, and management. Similarly, Carr (2015) reviewed over 76 articles comparing the performance of different government forms in the US, providing both theoretical and empirical reasons for the growing preference for the council-manager model, citing its superior efficiency and management.

(a) Efficiency and Management

The form of government significantly affects the adoption of the preferred policies of different interest groups (Krause, 2012; and Carr, 2015). A notable example of this influence is evident in land-use decisions. In mayor-council systems, property owners have greater influence over decisions such as granting housing or building permits, approving density bonuses, and establishing growth boundaries.

In contrast, city managers in a council-manager system are motivated primarily by the goal of effective management rather than re-election. This focus on management reduces the incidence of corruption, as supported by empirical research (Nelson and Afonso, 2019;

and Afonso and Nelson, 2023).

Mayors have an incentive to adopt policies that will increase their chances in upcoming elections. Consequently, a mayor-council form of government may implement policies that serve the entire community, but often with significant benefits flowing to politically important interests or key supporters of the mayor (Feiock, Steinacker, & Park, 2009; Hawkins & Wang, 2013; Hawkins & Feiock, 2011).

Several studies have shown that voter turnout is significantly lower in council-manager governments compared to mayor-council governments (Carr, 2015). One reason for this difference is that council-manager governments tend to offer more mechanisms for resident participation in public matters beyond voting, which is the primary form of engagement in mayor-council forms of government (Nalbandian et al., 2013). For instance, Moon (2002) argued that the council-manager form of government is more open to adopting innovative policies, such as e-government initiatives. Empirical evidence indicates that cities in Florida with mayor-council governments are less likely to adopt government mobile apps (Lee, 2024).

Finally, Svvara and Nelson (2008) observed that CAOs in council-manager systems often prioritize the mayor's interests over the city council's policy goals.

(b) Financial status

Most literature reports no significant differences in per capita expenditures between council-manager and mayor-council governments. However, municipal bonds are crucial for helping cities in the US meet their capital needs (Danison et al., 2009). Of special note, to reduce borrowing costs local governments need to maintain high credit ratings (Danison et al., 2007). Lee et al. (2023) provide empirical evidence that the form of municipal government influences credit ratings. Specifically, mayor-council governments tend to be associated with lower credit ratings.

(c) Municipally-owned public utility

There is no literature discussing the relationship between government forms and the performance of municipally-owned public utilities. In Michigan, 22 cities are members of the Michigan Public Power Agency. Among these only the cities of Niles and of Wyandotte, aside from Lansing, use a mayor-council form of government. Most cities with municipally-owned public utilities in Michigan use a council-manager governmental

structure. For example, in Traverse City, the city manager also serves as the chief administrative officer of the Traverse City Light & Power Board.

In California, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) serves residents in the capital city and is one of the six largest municipally-owned power systems by the number of electric customers served. SMUD is governed by a Board of Directors, and unlike Traverse City, residents (customers) in Sacramento can elect one member to represent each district.

In the previous paragraphs, we presented evidence for why an increasing number of cities are adopting council-manager governments. However, most reviews focus solely on dichotomous forms of government, without considering Type III cities. Svvara (2005) suggested that a city's chosen model might downplay the importance of government forms. One case study examines why many cities in Wisconsin have adopted either a strong mayor-council government or a mayor-council government with a CAO. Although empirical evidence indicates that cities with strong mayor-council systems experience the highest levels of conflict between the mayor and the council during decision-making processes, these cities also tend to have better financial conditions, as measured by bond ratings. This superior financial performance may be a key factor driving the increased support for mayor-council or mayor-council with CAO systems.

II. Optimal Number of City Council Members

(1) Optimal Number of Legislators

The question of the optimal number of legislators has been discussed since the time of ancient Greece. De Santo and Le Maux (2023) provides a literature review on determining the optimal number of legislators, summarizing that population size is the key factor.

In a seminal article, Taagepera (1972) introduced the *cube root law*, which suggests that the size of a representative body should grow more slowly than the size of the total population. In the model, n^* represents the optimal number of representatives, and N represents the total population.

$$n^* = \sqrt[3]{N}$$

De Santo and Le Maux (2023) utilized data from 139 countries in year 2017 and provided an empirical link between the size of parliament and population size.

$$\ln(n^*) = -1.560 + 0.421 \times \ln(N)$$

A caveat here is that most of the literature focuses on parliaments rather than the design of city councils. According to census data, Lansing's population is 112,796, with 8 city council members. According to the cube root law, the optimal number of representatives would be 48; by empirical estimation, the optimal number would be 25. Both numbers are significantly higher than the current number of city council members.

(2) Consequences of Larger Size of Legislature

Research shows that legislature size matters. Since the 1980s, Weingast et al. (1981) proposed a theory that the size of the legislature and government expenditure are positively correlated, known as the “law of 1/n” or “Pork Barrel”. The “law of 1/n” argues that legislators have an incentive to overspend for their districts when the tax burden is relatively small (i.e., when the number of legislators, n , increases) and transfer the cost to the entire polity. However, empirical research has not reached a consensus on the law of 1/n, as the impact of increasing legislature size varies across countries.

Only one article has discussed the effect of adding an extra council member under a mayoral system. This study, using Brazil as a case study (Mignozzetti et al., 2024), found that adding a council member who belongs to the mayor’s pre-electoral coalition improves social welfare, including increased primary school enrollment and reduced infant mortality rates. However, the social welfare effects of increasing council members under a council-manager system remain unknown.

The first article to discuss the causality of the size of local councils on the efficiency of local public services was provided by Lewis (2019). The author presented evidence that when the number of city council members increases, residents pay the same amount in taxes but have less access to public services. This research, too, is based on a mayor-council structure.

(3) Current Situation in City of Lansing and Other Cities of Similar Size

The council-manager government model is often criticized, particularly in larger cities, for its perceived lack of strong leadership (Frederickson and Johnson, 2001). However, there is a lack of literature discussing how to determine the optimal number of council members. Currently, a common rule of thumb suggests that the number of council members should be between 5 and 7.

To explore a practical number for city council size, we compared Lansing with other cities of similar size as shown in Table 2. According to the 2020 Census, we selected 51 cities with populations comparable to Lansing. Of these, 39 cities, approximately 76% utilize the council-manager form of government. On average, cities have 7 members on the city council, including the mayor. Most mayors are elected at-large, while only a few are elected from among the council members. When considering only the council members, 15 cities have members elected at-large, 16 by district, and 8 cities have council members elected from both at-large and district representations.

Among the group that uses the mayor-council government, the average city council size is 9 members, which is higher than the average for the council-manager group. Among all 51 cities, Waterbury, Connecticut has 15 city council members, while thirteen cities have only five city council members. Lansing has eight council members, with each member representing about 14,100 residents. Using population as an indicator, Lansing has better representation than the average among cities with similar population sizes.

Cities with council-manager governments need to pay particular attention to the number of city council members. For example, Billings, Montana, has 11 city council members. In contrast, there are 10 cities with council-manager governments that have only five council members, most of whom are elected at-large.

Table 2. Forms of Government for Cities of Similar Size to Lansing, Michigan

State	City	Population*	Number of Council Members (with mayor)	Ratio	Government Type	Council member Election Method
		(a)	(b)	(a)/(b)		
MT	Billings	117,026	11	10,639	Council-Manager	Mixed
IL	Peoria	112,792	11	10,254	Council-Manager	Mixed
NC	High Point	113,892	9	12,655	Council-Manager	Mixed
MA	Lowell	115,264	11	10,479	Council-Manager	At-large
CO	Westminster	116,304	7	16,615	Council-Manager	At-large
CO	Greeley	109,388	8	13,674	Council-Manager	By Districts
IL	Elgin	114,621	9	12,736	Council-Manager	At-large
CA	Burbank	107,320	5	21,464	Council-Manager	At-large

GA	South Fulton	107,623	8	13,453	Council-Manager	By Districts
CA	Temecula	110,086	5	22,017	Council-Manager	At-large
CA	Ventura	110,413	7	15,773	Council-Manager	By Districts
TX	Sugar Land	110,775	7	15,825	Council-Manager	Mixed
NM	Las Cruces	111,738	7	15,963	Council-Manager	By Districts
FL	Lakeland	112,558	7	16,080	Council-Manager	By Districts
TX	League City	114,686	9	12,743	Council-Manager	At-large
TX	Odessa	114,852	7	16,407	Council-Manager	Mixed
NC	Wilmington	116,146	7	16,592	Council-Manager	At-large
TX	Richardson	117,792	7	16,827	Council-Manager	At-large
FL	Pompano Beach	111,966	6	18,661	Council-Manager	By Districts
TX	Lewisville	112,336	7	16,048	Council-Manager	At-large
OK	Broken Arrow	114,024	5	22,805	Council-Manager	Mixed
TX	Beaumont	114,239	7	16,320	Council-Manager	Mixed
OR	Gresham	114,637	7	16,377	Council-Manager	By Districts
TX	College Station	118,441	7	16,920	Council-Manager	At-large
CO	Centennial	108,095	9	12,011	Council-Manager	By Districts
CA	El Monte	109,166	7	15,595	Council-Manager	At-large
CA	West Covina	109,345	5	21,869	Council-Manager	At-large
CA	Santa Maria	109,904	5	21,981	Council-Manager	At-large
CA	Murrieta	111,351	5	22,270	Council-Manager	By Districts
CA	Costa Mesa	111,723	7	15,960	Council-Manager	By Districts
CA	Downey	114,118	5	22,824	Council-Manager	By Districts
CA	Carlsbad	115,073	5	23,015	Council-Manager	By Districts
CA	Antioch	115,252	5	23,050	Council-Manager	At-large
FL	Clearwater	117,046	5	23,409	Council-Manager	By Districts
FL	Miami Gardens	111,085	7	15,869	Council-Manager	Mixed
CA	Inglewood	107,534	5	21,507	Council-Manager	By Districts
NV	Sparks	109,121	6	18,187	Council-Manager	By Districts
CA	Richmond	116,238	7	16,605	Council-Manager	At-large
MA	Cambridge	117,699	9	13,078	Council-Manager	At-large
State	City	Population*	Number of Council Members	Ratio	Government Type	Council member

			(without mayor)			Election Method
		(a)	(b)	(a)/(b)		
CT	Waterbury	114,159	15	7,611	Mayor-Council	At-large
NH	Manchester	115,354	14	8,240	Mayor-Council	Mixed
WI	Green Bay	107,114	12	8,926	Mayor-Council	By Districts
IN	Evansville	117,258	9	13,029	Mayor-Council	Mixed
MI	Lansing	112,796	8	14,100	Mayor-Council	Mixed
MI	Dearborn	109,657	7	15,665	Mayor-Council	At-large
WA	Everett	110,930	7	15,847	Mayor-Council	Mixed
CO	Pueblo	112,119	7	16,017	Mayor-Council	Mixed
FL	West Palm Beach	117,179	5	23,436	Mayor-Council	By Districts
UT	West Jordan	117,186	7	16,741	Mayor-Council	Mixed
SC	North Charleston	115,771	10	11,577	Mayor-Council	By Districts
UT	Provo	114,048	7	16,293	Mayor-Council	Mixed
GA	Sandy Springs	108,172	6	18,029	Mayor-Council	By Districts

*Population is from 2020 Census.

Table 3 presents information similar to that in Table 2, focusing specifically on capital cities in the U.S. Approximately 44% of these state capital cities use a council-manager form of government, whereas around 56% adopt a mayor-council form. The proportion of capital cities using the mayor-council system is relatively higher compared to the overall trend in the U.S. (see Figure 1).

In total, 20 capital cities operate under a council-manager government. On average, these cities have 8 council members, including the mayor, with each member representing approximately 30,000 residents. Although these cities utilize a council-manager system, mayors are elected at-large. Furthermore, council members can be elected at-large, by districts or wards, or through a combination of both.

It is noteworthy that two capital cities, Little Rock and Annapolis, identify as council-manager governments with strong mayors. In these cities, mayors possess veto power and the authority to hire city managers.

In contrast, the remaining 28 capital cities, which account for about 56% of capital cities, use a mayor-council government. On average, these governments have a higher number of city council members—about 12—compared to their council-manager

counterparts. Additionally, each council member in these cities represents fewer residents, averaging about 26,000. Nashville has the highest number of city council members at 41, while Boise has the lowest, with only 6 members.

Table 3 Capital Cities of Each State in United States

State	Capital City	Population*	Number of Council Members (with mayor)	Ratio	Government Type	Council member Election Method
		(a)	(b)	(a)/(b)		
ND	Bismarck	73,622	5	14,724	City Commission	At-large
SD	Pierre	14,091	5	2,818	City Commission	At-large
AK	Juneau	32,255	9	3,584	Council-manager	Mixed
AZ	Phoenix	1,608,139	9	178,682	Council-manager	By district
DL	Dover	39,403	9	3,940	Council-manager	By district
FL	Tallahassee	196,169	5	39,234	Council-manager	At-large
IA	Des Moines	214,133	7	30,590	Council-manager	Mixed
KS	Topeka	126,587	10	12,659	Council-manager	By district
KY	Frankfort	28,602	5	5,720	Council-manager	At-large
MT	Helena	32,091	5	6,418	Council-manager	At-large
NV	Carson City	58,639	5	11,728	Council-manager	At-large
NH	Concord	43,976	15	2,932	Council-manager	Mixed
NM	Santa Fe	87,505	9	9,723	Council-manager	By district
NC	Raleigh	467,665	8	58,458	Council-manager	Mixed
OK	Oklahoma City	681,054	9	75,673	Council-manager	By district
OR	Salem	175,535	9	19,504	Council-manager	By district
SC	Columbia	136,632	7	19,519	Council-manager	Mixed
TX	Austin	961,855	11	87,441	Council-manager	By district
VT	Montpelier	8,074	7	1,153	Council-manager	By district
WN	Olympia	55,605	7	7,944	Council-manager	At-large
State	Capital City	Population	Number of Council Members (without mayor)	Ratio	Government Type	Council member Election Method
		(a)	(b)	(a)/(b)		

AR	Little Rock	202,591	10	20,259	Council-manager	Mixed
MD	Annapolis	40,812	8	5,102	Council-manager	By district
AL	Montgomery	200,603	9	22,289	Mayor-Council	By district
CA	Sacramento	524,943	9	58,327	Mayor-Council	By district
CO	Denver	715,522	13	55,040	Mayor-Council	Mixed
CT	Hartford	121,054	9	13,450	Mayor-Council	At-large
GA	Atlanta	498,715	16	31,170	Mayor-Council	Mixed
HI	Honolulu	350,964	9	38,996	Mayor-Council	By district
ID	Boise	235,682	6	39,280	Mayor-Council	By district
IL	Springfield	114,394	10	11,439	Mayor-Council	By district
IN	Indianapolis	897,041	25	35,882	Mayor-Council	By district
LA	Baton Rouge	227,470	12	18,956	Mayor-Council	By district
ME	Augusta	18,899	8	2,362	Mayor-Council	At-large
MA	Boston	675,647	13	51,973	Mayor-Council	Mixed
MI	Lansing	112,644	8	14,081	Mayor-Council	Mixed
MN	Saint Paul	311,527	7	44,504	Mayor-Council	By district
MS	Jackson	153,701	7	21,957	Mayor-Council	By district
MO	Jefferson City	43,228	10	4,323	Mayor-Council	By district
NE	Lincoln	291,082	7	41,583	Mayor-Council	Mixed
NJ	Trenton	90,871	7	12,982	Mayor-Council	Mixed
NY	Albany	99,224	16	6,202	Mayor-Council	Mixed
OH	Columbus	905,748	9	100,639	Mayor-Council	By district
PA	Harrisburg	50,099	7	7,157	Mayor-Council	At-large
RI	Providence	190,934	15	12,729	Mayor-Council	By district
TN	Nashville	715,884	41	17,461	Mayor-Council	Mixed
UT	Salt Lake City	199,723	7	28,532	Mayor-Council	By district
VA	Richmond	226,610	9	25,179	Mayor-Council	By district

*Population is from 2020 Census.

If we focus only on capital cities with populations similar to that of Lansing (Trenton (NJ), Albany (NY), Springfield (IL), Hartford (CT), and Topeka (KS)) Lansing has the fewest city council members among these capitals. Most of these cities use a mayor-council form of government.

Table 4. Capital Cities in the U.S. with Populations Similar to the City of Lansing

State	City	Population	Number of City Council Members	Ratio	Government type
		(a)	(b)	(a)/(b)	
NJ	Trenton	90,871	7	12,982	Mayor-Council
NY	Albany	99,224	16	6,202	Mayor-Council
MI	Lansing	112,644	8	14,081	Mayor-Council
IL	Springfield	114,394	10	11,439	Mayor-Council
CT	Hartford	121,054	9	13,450	Mayor-Council
KS	Topeka	126,587	10	12,659	Council-manager

When focusing specifically on cities with similar populations in Michigan, most cities listed in Table 5 use the mayor-council form of government. Among these cities, Ann Arbor has the highest number of council members, with 11. Most other cities in this group have seven council members, which is the same number as Lansing. To summarize, for cities with a similar population size, the average number of council members is seven, with a practical range between 5 and 11.

Table 5. Top 20 population cities in Michigan

City	Population	Number of Council Members (with mayor)	Ratio	Government Type	Council member Election Method
	(a)	(b)	(a)/(b)		
Grand Rapids	198,917	7	28,417	Council-manager	By district
Warren	139,387	7	19,912	Council-manager	Mixed
Sterling Heights	134,346	7	19,192	Council-manager	At-large
Ann Arbor	123,851	11	11,259	Council-manager	By district
Troy	87,294	7	12,471	Council-manager	At-large
Farmington Hills	83,986	7	11,998	Council-manager	At-large
Wyoming	76,501	7	10,929	Council-manager	At-large
Kalamazoo	73,598	7	10,514	Council-manager	At-large
Novi	66,243	7	9,463	Council-manager	At-large

City	Population	Number of Council Members (without mayor)	Ratio	Government Type	Council member Election Method
	(a)	(b)	(a)/(b)		
Detroit	639,111	9	71,012	Mayor-council	Mixed
Lansing	112,644	8	14,081	Mayor-council	Mixed
Dearborn	109,976	7	15,711	Mayor-council	At-large
Livonia	95,535	7	13,648	Mayor-council	At-large
Westland	85,420	7	12,203	Mayor-council	At-large
Flint	81,252	9	9,028	Mayor-council	By district
Southfield	76,618	7	10,945	Mayor-council	At-large
Rochester Hills	76,300	7	10,900	Mayor-council	Mixed
Taylor	63,409	7	9,058	Mayor-council	At-large
Dearborn Heights	63,292	7	9,042	Mayor-council	At-large
Pontiac	61,606	7	8,801	Mayor-council	By district
Average		7	15,929		

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