

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

# ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AUGUST 15-17 • HOLLYWOOD, FL



**LOCAL VOICES MAKING LOCAL CHOICES**

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES  
**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

# Cities 101

AUGUST 15, 2024



#FLCITIES2024  
@FLCITIES



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Florida League of Cities*

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Welcome!



Florida: The Big Picture, Types of Florida Local Government,  
Home Rule, Charters



Fundamentals of Municipal Government: Forms of Government,  
City Services, Policy Making, Strategic Planning, Finance



Common City Challenges



Resources and next steps



## Florida: The Big Picture

- ▶ Third-largest state by population (22.6 million in 2023) – California and Texas have larger populations
- ▶ 50.3% of population lives within a municipality; 49.7% in an unincorporated county
- ▶ 67 counties, 67 school districts, 1,800+ special districts
- ▶ Cities and counties are “general-purpose” local governments; others are “special-purpose”



## Florida: Types of Local Government

- ▶ School District: Special-purpose local government with no Home Rule authority. 67 total.
- ▶ Special Districts: Special-purpose local government with no Home Rule authority (example: water management district)
  - ▶ Independent: about 1,200
  - ▶ Dependent: about 600
- ▶ County: General-purpose local government with Home Rule authority; often referred to as an 'arm-of-the-state' or 'sub-state.' 67 total.
- ▶ Municipality: *Optional* level general-purpose local government with Home Rule authority; often referred to as a city, town or village





Home rule powers state that any city/county can adopt laws as long as the law doesn't conflict with state or federal law. No fiscal home rule.



Citizens put home rule powers in the Florida Constitution in 1968; reversing Dillon's Rule.



Florida Legislature recognize it and passed the Home Rule Powers Act in 1973.



## Florida's Municipalities in Law

- ▶ **Florida Constitution:** Article VIII, Section 2: establishment as optional level; empowered as governmental, proprietary and corporate powers
- ▶ **Municipal Charter:** Broad framework of municipal government; specifics are in the ordinances
- ▶ **Municipal Ordinances:** Law issued by a local government
- ▶ **Municipal Resolutions:** Opinions in time or commemorative
- ▶ **Municipal Policies:** Administrative code usually adopted by ordinance





# Charter Elements



Legal description  
of city, town or  
village



Number of  
seats; terms;  
qualifications



Fiduciary  
responsibilities



Description of  
legislative body:  
must be elected



Chain of command  
and form of  
government



Other  
contents



## How Florida City Charters Vary

- ▶ Council sizes: 3 to 19 seats; five is most common
- ▶ Terms: 2, 3 or 4 years; either staggered or all at once
- ▶ Term limits: In some cities (less than half)
- ▶ At-large, “by seat” and single-member district for elections
- ▶ Ways to elect a mayor: Directly, rotational or elected from within the council
- ▶ Titles: Council, commission, councilor, alderman, mayor, mayor pro-tem, supervisor, trustee, etc.



# Florida's Cities

## **City, Town or Village:**

- ▶ Independent, public corporations
- ▶ No legal difference in aesthetic name

## **Incorporated or unincorporated**

- ▶ Only two choices
- ▶ Always within a county

## **Elected body**

- ▶ Council or commission
- ▶ Sizes from 3 to 19 members  
– 5 is most common
- ▶ Part-time and nonpartisan
- ▶ Every city has a charter



## Florida's Cities



411 cities



Populations range  
from 8 to 987,247

**60%**

have populations  
under 10,000

**6,485**

Median  
population



## Forms of City Government in Florida

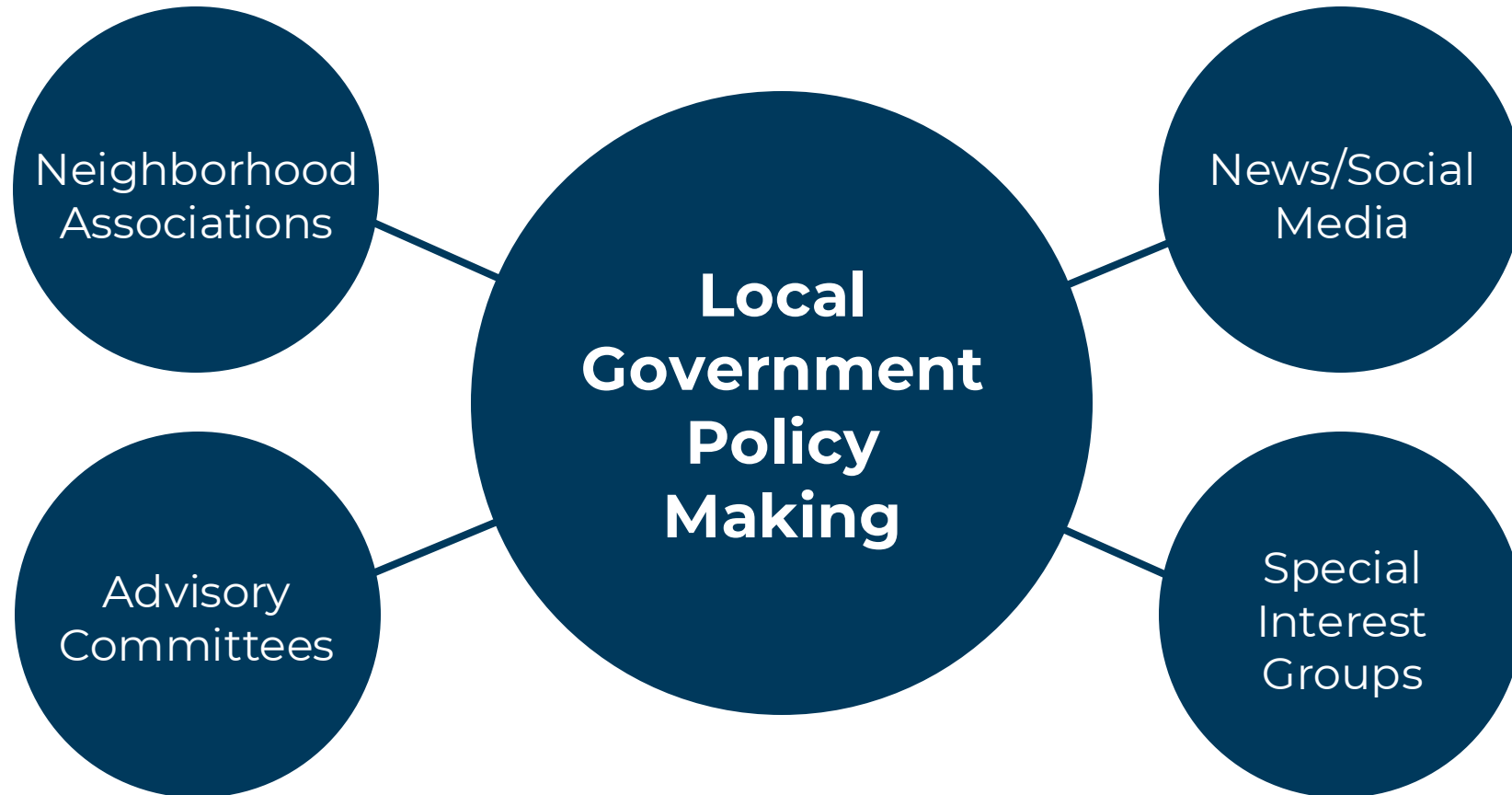
- ▶ **Council-Weak Mayor:** Everything is under the council collectively
- ▶ **Council-Strong Mayor:** Mayor is administrator and usually does not vote with council
- ▶ **Commission:** Largely disappearing from United States; each official runs departments
- ▶ **Council-Manager:** Most prevalent; council hires professional administrator for implementation of actions, policies
- ▶ **Hybrid: A** mix of the four types
- ▶ **Why the form matters:** Each city needs a structure and chain of command that works for that city – unique, adaptive and functional!

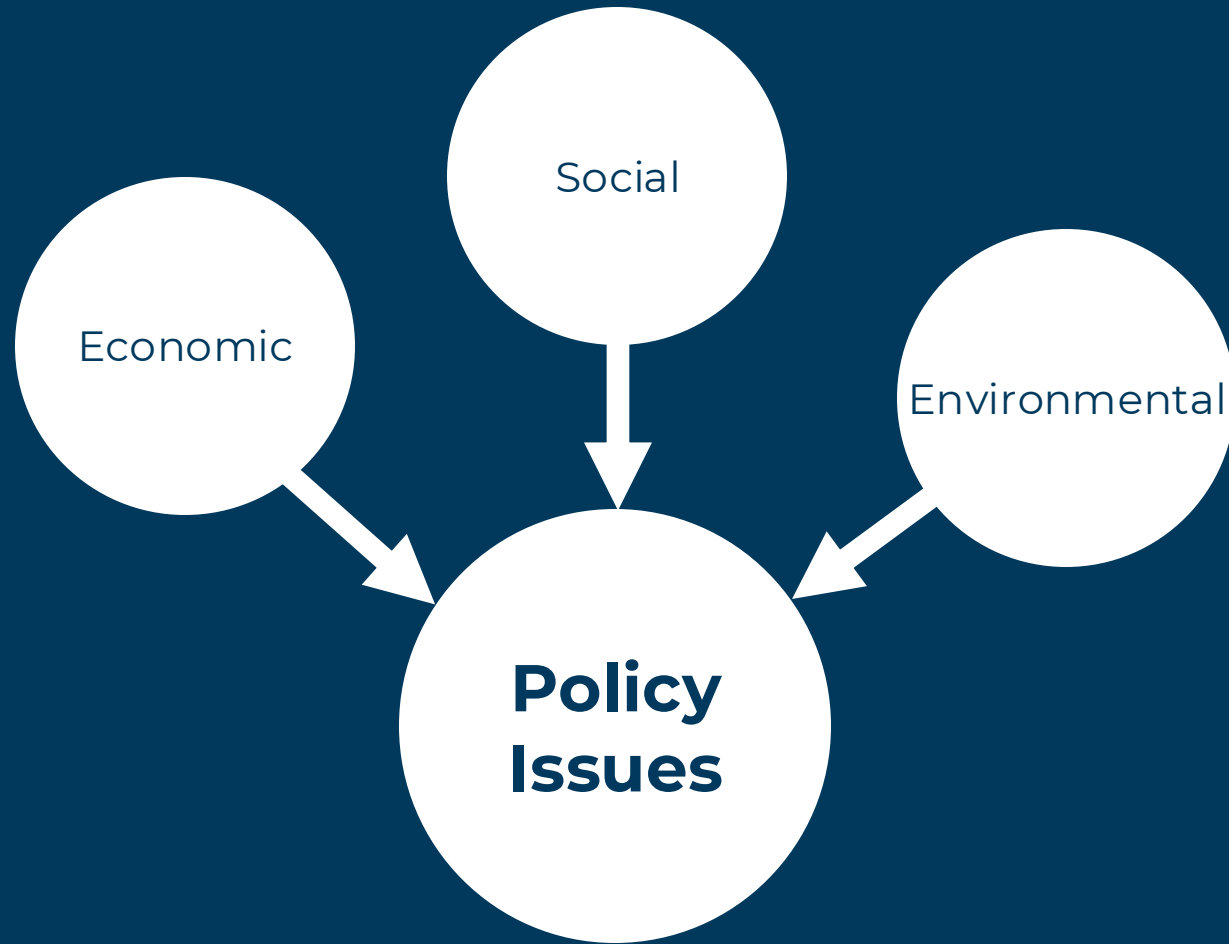


## Municipal Services

- ▶ Land-use planning, code enforcement, zoning, police, fire, EMS, solid waste collection, water, wastewater, reuse water, stormwater, building inspection, natural gas, electric, mass transit, parks & rec, historic district, museum, public works, airport, port, marina, cemeteries, library, CRA, housing authority, animal control
- ▶ Other services?









# Importance of Strategic Planning



Vision and  
Action



Update  
Goals



## **Fiscal Policies**

- ▶ Annual and Capital Budgets
- ▶ Fiscal Policies on Investments, Expenditure Procedures, Debt
- ▶ Balancing Act of Demands



## City Fiscal Structures

- ▶ Property tax is granted through Constitution
- ▶ Utility tax, business license tax and sharing in state taxes through Legislature
- ▶ About half of each city budget (50%) is fees, charges for service
- ▶ No fiscal Home Rule



## Common City Challenges



Balancing demands with resources



“Doing more with less”



Preserving home rule from preemptions and mandates



Intergovernmental issues



Financing outdated infrastructure; expanding for greater capacity



***“Remember, when you are dealing with people you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but creatures of emotion.”***

- Dale Carnegie

# LOCAL VOICES UNITED

**Local Voices United:** A grassroots network dedicated to supporting **local self-government**. The idea is simple: **The government that is closest to the people is most accountable to the people.**



**SIGN UP**

Text **LocalVoices** to  
**407.589.5034** to  
receive Grassroots  
Alerts or visit  
[localvoicesunited.com](http://localvoicesunited.com)



## Resources



Florida League of Cities



Local/Regional Leagues



Staff: Associations for professionals



Newly Elected Officials Resource Page:

- ▶ Orientation Checklist
- ▶ Florida Municipal Officials Manual
- ▶ Training opportunities



## Take Advantage of Your Experience

### Thursday:

- ▶ Speed Networking @ 5:15-6:00 p.m.
- ▶ President's Welcome Reception @ 6:00-7:30 p.m.

### Friday:

- ▶ Exhibit Hall @
- ▶ Membership Networking Event @ 6:00-7:30 p.m.

### Saturday:

- ▶ Annual Business Meeting @ 9:00-9:45 a.m.
- ▶ FLC Membership Services Workshop @ 2:00-3:00 p.m.





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