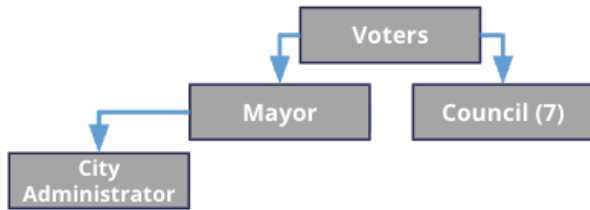


Camas Form of Government

Washington law allows several forms of city government. These are the two options currently being discussed for City of Camas.

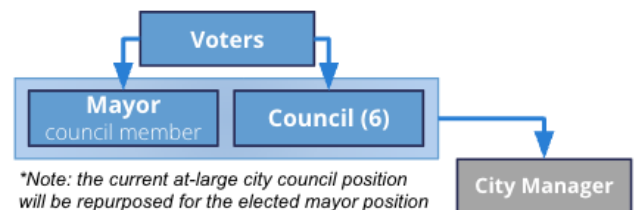
Mayor-Council with City Administrator (Camas today): Voters elect the Mayor and the City Council. The Mayor runs the city day-to-day. The Mayor can hire a City Administrator to help, and is the only one who can remove them.

Other Washington cities using this system: Oak Harbor, Mukilteo



Council-Manager with Elected Mayor (the alternative): Voters elect the City Council and the Mayor. A City Manager runs the city day-to-day. The Council hires the City Manager and can remove them.

Other Washington cities using this system: Washougal, Vancouver



Key differences between each Form of Government

		Mayor-Council with City Administrator (Camas today)	Council-Manager with Elected Mayor
1	Do voters directly elect the mayor?	Yes	Yes
2	What are the requirements to run for mayor?	Registered voter and Camas resident. No education or experience required.	Registered voter and Camas resident. No education or experience required.
3	Who runs the city day-to-day?	The Mayor, with help from the City Administrator	The City Manager
4	Who does the City Administrator / City Manager answer to?	The Mayor	The full City Council
5	What are the requirements to serve as City Administrator or City Manager?	No state requirement. Camas sets its own qualifications, and has hired from varied backgrounds.	No state requirement either. The city sets qualifications, typically drawing from a recognized public administration profession.
6	Who prepares the proposed budget?	The Mayor	The City Manager
7	Who gives final approval of the budget?	The City Council votes to approve it	The City Council votes to approve it
8	Who hires and fires city staff?	The Mayor	The City Manager
9	Can the Mayor veto a council vote?	Yes. Overriding it takes 5 of 7 council votes.	No. Mayor votes on issues as a full council member.
10	Who can remove the Mayor for wrongdoing? How long does it take?	Voters can vote to recall the Mayor. This can take 8 to 12 months or more, and has a cost.	This works the same way. Same process, same timeline, same cost.
11	Who can remove the City Administrator or City Manager? How long does it take?	The Mayor decides. This can happen right away, depending on their contract.	The Council publicly votes to remove the City Manager. It can take effect immediately or depending on any employment contract in place.

What Happens When Something Goes Wrong?

Six common situations, and how each system responds

	Situation	Mayor-Council with City Administrator (Camas today)	Council-Manager with Elected Mayor
1	Residents are unhappy with how the city is run, but nothing illegal happened.	Voters wait for the next Mayoral election.	Voters wait for the next Council election. The Council can also vote to change the City Manager sooner, if they want.
2	The City Administrator (or City Manager) resigns or is let go, and the city needs a replacement.	The Mayor leads the search. The Mayor makes the hire.	The full Council leads the search. The Council makes the hire.
3	The Mayor resigns and the city needs a replacement.	The Mayor Pro-tem assumes mayoral responsibilities. This change can briefly affect daily operations, since the Mayor runs daily operations.	The Council picks a replacement within 90 days, effective immediately for the remainder of the unexpired term (RCW 35A.12.050). Daily operations continue as normal, since the City Manager runs daily operations.
4	The City Administrator (or City Manager) mismanages money or breaks a rule.	The Mayor decides what to do. If the Mayor does nothing, the Council has no formal way to step in.	Any Council member can raise the issue in public. The Council can remove the City Manager with a majority vote. They don't need to prove a crime.
5	The elected Mayor is accused of wrongdoing.	Voters can try to recall the Mayor. They must prove a real legal violation, like breaking the law or not fulfilling their duties. A judge reviews the case first. This takes about 8 to 12 months or more, and it costs money.	This works exactly the same way. It does not change based on which system Camas uses.

What to remember: Your vote for Mayor works the same either way. The real difference between these two systems is who runs the city day-to-day, and who can step in to remove that person if they make a serious mistake.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is this being discussed right now?

Camas has grown quickly. The city's population has grown from about 15,000 in 2004 to about 28,000 today, nearly doubling in two decades. As a city grows, running it gets more complex: bigger budgets, more staff, more infrastructure, more regulatory requirements.

The Council is raising this question now so residents can weigh in on which form of government best fits a growing city's future. Many growing Washington cities revisit this question periodically, as part of normal long-term planning, regardless of who holds office at the time.

Does this cost taxpayers money?

If this question goes to voters, it's expected to appear alongside other items already scheduled for that same February election, so the added cost of the ballot measure itself should be minimal.

Both types of governments have similar costs. If voters approved the change, the city would need to hire a City Manager, and would not have the salary cost of the elected full-time Mayor and City Administrator. The salaries are comparable according to city staff for the Administrator and Manager positions.