

Part 4. Modification of Form of Government

§ 160A-101. Optional forms.

Any city may change its name or alter its form of government by adopting any one or combination of the options prescribed by this section:

- (1) Name of the corporation:
The name of the corporation may be changed to any name not deceptively similar to that of another city in this State.
- (2) Style of the corporation:
The city may be styled a city, town, or village.
- (3) Style of the governing board:
The governing board may be styled the board of commissioners, the board of aldermen, or the council.
- (4) Terms of office of members of the council:
Members of the council shall serve terms of office of either two or four years. All of the terms need not be of the same length, and all of the terms need not expire in the same year.
- (5) Number of members of the council:
The council shall consist of any number of members not less than three nor more than 12.
- (6) Mode of election of the council:
 - a. All candidates shall be nominated and elected by all the qualified voters of the city.
 - b. The city shall be divided into single-member electoral districts; council members shall be apportioned to the districts so that each member represents the same number of persons as nearly as possible, except for members apportioned to the city at large, if any; the qualified voters of each district shall nominate and elect candidates who reside in the district for seats apportioned to that district; and all the qualified voters of the city shall nominate and elect candidates apportioned to the city at large, if any.
 - c. The city shall be divided into single-member electoral districts; council members shall be apportioned to the districts so that each member represents the same number of persons as nearly as possible, except for members apportioned to the city at large; and candidates shall reside in and represent the districts according to the apportionment plan adopted, but all candidates shall be nominated and elected by all the qualified voters of the city.
 - d. The city shall be divided into electoral districts equal in number to one half the number of council seats; the council seats shall be divided equally into "ward seats" and "at-large seats," one each of which shall be apportioned to each district, so that each council member represents the same number of persons as nearly as possible; the qualified voters of each district shall nominate and elect candidates to the "ward seats"; candidates for the "at-large seats" shall reside in and represent the districts according to the apportionment plan adopted, but all candidates for "at-large" seats shall be nominated and elected by all the qualified voters of the city.
 - e. The city shall be divided into single-member electoral districts; council members shall be apportioned to the districts so that each member represents the same number of persons as nearly as possible,

except for members apportioned to the city at large, if any; in a nonpartisan primary, the qualified voters of each district shall nominate two candidates who reside in the district, and the qualified voters of the entire city shall nominate two candidates for each seat apportioned to the city at large, if any; and all candidates shall be elected by all the qualified voters of the city.

If either of options b, c, d or e is adopted, the council shall divide the city into the requisite number of single-member electoral districts according to the apportionment plan adopted, and shall cause a map of the districts so laid out to be drawn up and filed as provided by G.S. 160A-22 and 160A-23. No more than one half of the council may be apportioned to the city at large. An initiative petition may specify the number of single-member electoral districts to be laid out, but the drawing of district boundaries and apportionment of members to the districts shall be done in all cases by the council.

(7) Elections:

- a. Partisan. – Municipal primaries and elections shall be conducted on a partisan basis as provided in G.S. 163-291.
- b. Nonpartisan Plurality. – Municipal elections shall be conducted as provided in G.S. 163-292
- c. Nonpartisan Election and Runoff Election. – Municipal elections and runoff elections shall be conducted as provided in G.S. 163-293.
- d. Nonpartisan Primary and Election. – Municipal primaries and elections shall be conducted as provided in G.S. 163-294.

(8) Selection of mayor:

- a. The mayor shall be elected by all the qualified voters of the city for a term of not less than two years nor more than four years.
- b. The mayor shall be selected by the council from among its membership to serve at its pleasure.

Under option a, the mayor may be given the right to vote on all matters before the council, or he may be limited to voting only to break a tie. Under option b, the mayor has the right to vote on all matters before the council. In both cases the mayor has no right to break a tie vote in which he participated.

(9) Form of government:

- a. The city shall operate under the mayor-council form of government in accordance with Part 3 of Article 7 of this Chapter.
- b. The city shall operate under the council-manager form of government in accordance with Part 2 of Article 7 of this Chapter and any charter provisions not in conflict therewith. (1969, c. 629, s. 2; 1971, c. 698, s. 1; c. 1076, s. 1; 1973, c. 426, s. 19; c. 1001, ss. 1, 2; 1975, c. 19, s. 64; c. 664, s. 6; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 6.1.)