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Maxine Goodman Levin
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Prepared by:

**The Center for Public Management
Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs
Cleveland State University**

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**A Scan of
Attributes in
County
Government
Structure**

Draft Report

UUP

The Ohio Urban University Program
2121 Euclid Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44115
<http://urban.csuohio.edu>



A Scan of Attributes in County Government Structure

This report was researched and prepared by the staff the Center for Public Management of the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University. Project management and oversight was provided by Kevin O'Brien, Director. Principal authors were Kevin O'Brien, Director; Holly Cooper Whisman, Ryan Foster, and Melissa Rowe, Graduate Research Assistants. Additional research and analysis was provided by Claudette Robey, Assistant Director, and Daila Shimek, Project Manager.

Abstract: This report discusses the outcome of a national scan of models of effective county leadership and operations that might translate into alternative structures for consideration by the Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform. The scan produced a number of alternate county organizational structures that utilized several formats for executive, legislative, and administrative roles.

Key Words: county government reform, county leadership, alternative county organizational structures, county government structure

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	10
Legal Authority Governing County Government Structure	14
County Government Structures	21
Appendices	53
Appendix A: HB 572 Cuyahoga County Government Reform	55
Appendix B: Organizational Charts for Counties with Clustered Functions	57
Appendix C: Resources	63

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Counties across the United States have altered their organizational structures in an effort to achieve a more efficient and effective model for policy development and service delivery. These changes – often motivated in response to management inefficiencies, the specter of corruption, the need for a more strategic approach to guide county operations, or the need for greater accountability – bring with them high expectations for the future operations of the counties.

The Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform (the Commission) engaged the Center for Public Management of the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University to conduct a national scan of models of effective county leadership and operations that might translate into alternative structures for consideration by the Commission. As a result of the scan, eight counties were identified with attributes that could serve as models for the Commission. The models are categorized according to organizational typologies of alternative county structures. The typologies include:

- Executive (appointed county administrator, elected county executive, or elected board of commissioners);
- Legislative (board of commissioners or council); and
- Administrative functions of county government (appointed department administrators or elected officials such as treasurer, auditor, etc.).

Ohio County Structure

The Ohio Constitution and the Ohio Revised Code allow three formats of organizational structure for counties to direct their policy development and operations. Those formats include:

- General Statutory Form,
- Alternative Statutory Form, and
- Charter Form.

The General Statutory Form, in place in 87 of Ohio's 88 counties, requires a Board of County Commissioners format with three commissioners functioning in the executive and legislative roles. The statute allows for the appointment of a County Administrator and County Clerk who reports to the Commission. Elected officials oversee various administrative functions.

The Alternative Statutory Form, not currently operating in Ohio, requires a Board of Commissioners with expanded membership and an appointed or elected County Executive. The commission membership can be from three to 21 members and elected by district or at-large. A majority of the countywide votes is required to adopt the Alternative Statutory Form.

The Charter Form is utilized in only one of Ohio's 88 counties, Summit County. The compelling reason behind the implementation of a charter government is elimination of the restrictive organizational guidelines mandated by the statutory forms. A charter government provides the freedom to design the organizational structure best suited for the particular county's needs, specifically the executive, legislative, and administrative functions. The procedural steps to implementing a county charter vary depending on the powers granted to the county within the charter. "Any charter or amendment which alters the form and offices of county government, or which provides for the exercise by the county of power vested in municipalities... shall become effective if approved by a majority of electors voting thereon."¹ Charters granting counties with the exclusive exercise of municipal powers require a four-part approval process. Such process requires a majority approval within each of four jurisdictions: (1) the county; (2) the largest municipality in the county; (3) the county population outside the largest municipality; and, (4) in counties with populations of 500,000 or less, the majority of the combined total municipalities and townships. However, charters only altering the form and offices of government, and/or which provide for the "exercise by the county of power vested in municipalities by the constitution or laws of Ohio,"² requires only a majority vote of the county electors.

County Profiles

Eight county profiles were assembled utilizing the typologies that define the executive, legislative, and administrative structures of each of the counties. Each of the counties display attributes in organizational structure that may assist the Commission in its deliberations. The counties profiled in the scan include:

- Fairfax County, Virginia
- Hennepin County, Minnesota
- Charlestown County, South Carolina
- San Diego County, California
- Salt Lake County, Utah

¹ Ohio Constitution – Article X §3

² Ohio Constitution – Article X §3

- Summit County, Ohio
- Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
- Lake County, Florida

Executive and Legislative County Government Structures

Fairfax County, VA employs a traditional Council–Manager (board-governed) structure of county government, along with the vast majority of Virginia’s 95 counties. The legislative body is known as a Board of Supervisors. However, Fairfax is the only county in Virginia utilizing the Urban County Executive Form of government, allowable for counties with populations greater than 90,000. The Urban County Executive Form broadens the functional authority of the Board of Supervisors and allows an executive to be appointed by the board.

Hennepin County, MN provides an example of a traditionally structured Commission type of government. However, the limited number of elected administrative offices, coupled with the professionalized management of functionally organized administrative departments, makes the structure of Hennepin County an interesting case study for alternatives within county government. Minnesota law allows for a Board of County Commissioners structure, and several alternative structures, though all of the 87 counties in the state have retained the commission approach, while working to professionalize the management of service delivery.³ Hennepin County operates under a traditional county board structure comprised of seven county commissioners and an appointed county administrator. All seven of the commissioners are elected by district, in a nonpartisan process.

Charleston County, SC is an example of a county with an Elected Council that appoints an Administrator. There are nine council members elected by district, an appointed administrator, and seven elected administrative officials. The county has operated under this form since the Home Rule Act of 1975, though the size of the council has grown over the years to meet the needs of a growing population. (The population of the county was around 325,000 in 2004, and grew five percent from 1990-2000.) However, even prior to 1975, the county moved away from the “traditional” commissioner form; in 1948, Charleston County adopted a council-manager system, with the appointed manager as the chief executive officer. Until that point, the state lawmakers had played a dual role in state and county government, which became increasingly difficult with population growth. Charleston County led the transition to county council government across all of South Carolina when it adopted a local county

³ Association of Minnesota Counties, (2008). *County Government Structure*, retrieved September 16, 2008 from: http://www.mncounties.org/Publications/FYIs/PDF/CountyGov_Structure08.pdf

council with an appointed manager.

San Diego County, CA operates within an Appointed Administrator/County Council form of county government structure. The county is one of 14 in the state that has adopted a charter. California law provides home-rule authority to charter counties, allowing a substantial degree of choice in terms of the number of elected county officials and their duties. California requires each of its counties to employ a Board of Supervisors consisting of five members (with the exception of one charter county that has chosen to have a larger board). The Board of Supervisors is responsible for both executive and legislative functions.

Salt Lake County, UT, is an example of an Elected Executive/Council form of government, with separate executive and legislative powers. The county switched to this Mayor-Council form from a traditional county commissioner form in 2001 after approving the new form of government in November 1998. The county chose to retain eight elected administrative officials who are independent of the mayor and council. However, the executive branch departments, managed by the mayor, have a very professional and organized structure, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability.

Summit County, OH has an elected Executive/Council form of government. The council consists of, an 11-member council (three at-large, eight by district), and five elected administrative officials. It is the only county in Ohio with a charter form of government. The charter was officially adopted on January 1, 1980, after a decade of work by citizen groups.

Administrative County Government Structures

Mecklenburg County, NC, encompassing the metropolitan Charlotte area, is one example of a county government utilizing the functional cluster approach to administrative services. Within the general structure of a Board of County Commissioners type of government, an appointed Executive Team oversees all administrative county departments. The Executive Team consists of a County Manager, three General Managers and an Associate General Manager. These managers provide strategic direction, performance evaluation and other feedback to each of the county department directors.

Lake County, FL also has administrative clusters. The county has a traditional structure with five county commissioners (elected at-large) and five elected officials: Clerk of Courts, Property Appraiser, Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections, and Tax Collector.

Appointed positions include County Manager and County Attorney. Beyond these positions, the administrative functions of the county are grouped into five main clusters of departments.

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INTRODUCTION

The Center for Public Management of the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs of Cleveland State University was engaged by the Greater Cleveland Partnership and the Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform to explore alternative structural models of county government and to profile organizational structures and attributes that may provide guidance to the Commission. Governor Ted Strickland and state legislative leaders in June 2008 created the Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform to explore alternative organizational structures for shaping a new form of county government. Section 703.30 (A) of House Bill 572 charges the Commission with the following responsibilities:

“The Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform shall develop recommendations by which Cuyahoga County may, with a vote of the people, restructure, reform, or otherwise reorganize the county government to implement a more effective, efficient, and financially and economically viable county government structure to better serve the people of Cuyahoga County.”

The nine-member Commission will present its recommendations to the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House no later than November 7, 2008. The recommended structural changes would have to be approved by Cuyahoga County voters before enacted. A copy of House Bill 572 enacting the Commission and its duties is included in Appendix A.

Research Methodology

Review of the Governing Legal Authority

This analysis was conducted to provide a background of the legal foundation of county government structure. It also identified where flexibility exists for individual county governments establishing a governing model that meets the unique needs of their jurisdiction. The analysis encompassed a scan of the Ohio Constitution to examine the powers of the Ohio General Assembly to draft legislation for statutory forms of county government. The Ohio Revised Code was further referenced in analyzing the specific legislative requirements governing the two statutory forms of county government established under the General Assembly’s enacted legislation.

Literature Review and Identification of County Models

A national scan of county government organizational frameworks was conducted to define structural alternatives that could be applicable to the work of the Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform. This scan included contacting national trade groups and professional associations (National Association of Counties [NACo], Government Finance Officers Association [GFOA], International City/County Management Association [ICMA], American Public Works Association [APWA]) to help identify county government structures considered as models across the country. In addition, a review of relevant literature and other resources was carried out to identify alternative structures. Resources included a review of professional and trade journals, such as *Governing Magazine* and *NACo*, *GFOA*, *ICMA*, and *APWA* publications; professional academic journals, Internet-based research, and telephone discussions.

Elements of County Government Structure

Based on the national scan, themes or typologies of alternative county structures emerged. These are typologies are based on the structure of the executive (appointed county administrator or elected board of commissioners), legislative (board of commissioners or council), and administrative (appointed department administrators or elected officials such as treasurer, auditor, etc.) functions of county government.

County Structure Profiles

In order to conduct the initial scan of counties and determine which county government structures were most suited to profile, the research team first consulted with the National Association of Counties (NACo). From the information contained in that resource, NACo's Research Director, Jacqueline Byers, was contacted. Ms. Byers provided background on the different structures of counties and identified states that mandate an Elected Executive structure: Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee (Indiana is considering a mandate). Each year more counties adopt an Elected Executive structure, in an attempt to professionalize the functioning of their governments.

NACo's Research Director additionally asserted that no "best practices" in county structure or management could be isolated, as counties function under different circumstances and statutes. "What works for one county would not work for another." According to her assessment, each county must find the proper structure within its limitations and constraints.

The research team then worked to identify various state ordinances pertaining to county structure for: Arkansas, California, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota,

New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Wisconsin, Virginia, and Minnesota. Approximately 20 counties were flagged as possible “case studies,” based on their traits that are analogous with the circumstances of this region, in one or more categories, e.g., similar population, urban makeup, non-consolidated city-county structure. From this list, eight counties were chosen to profile, with regard to executive, legislative and administrative functions, based on unique or interesting features within at least one level of government.

Structure of the Report

The report is divided into three main sections that provide a summary of the scan of governing legal authority in Ohio, an overview of county government structures identified and profiles of county government structures that could be applicable to the work of the Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform.

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LEGAL AUTHORITY GOVERNING COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

Laws governing the organizational structure of Ohio counties originate in Article X §§ 1 & 3 of the Ohio Constitution. These sections provide three options for organizing county government. The first option requires the Ohio General Assembly to enact legislation governing the structural organization of county government. This option is known as the General Statutory Form, and is employed by 87 of the 88 counties in Ohio. The constitution also grants the General Assembly with the power to enact legislation governing an alternative form of county governmental organization. Though the Ohio General Assembly, in exercising its constitutional power, has enacted Chapter 302 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) authorizing an alternative form of county government, no county has yet to utilize this format. The third option provided by the Ohio Constitution is in the form of a charter county. As shown in Table 1, of the 88 counties in Ohio, 87 follow the general statutory structure, and one follows the charter county organizational structure.

Table 1: Distribution of Ohio County Structures

TYPE OF COUNTY STRUCTURE	NUMBER OF COUNTIES
GENERAL STATUTORY FORM	87
ALTERNATIVE STATUTORY FORM	0
CHARTER	1 – Summit County

General Statutory Organizational Form

The general statutory provision set forth in the Ohio Constitution requires that county governments be comprised of eleven elected positions, including: three county commissioners, an auditor, a treasurer, a prosecuting attorney, a clerk of courts, an engineer, a coroner, a recorder, and a sheriff. Each of these positions is defined in the ORC. There is no provision within the general statutory authority allowing for a county executive. The executive responsibilities, as well as any administrative duties, are the responsibility of the board of county commissioners. However, the board may appoint a county administrator who would assume all administrative duties, leaving the board responsible for only the executive duties. Additionally, the board may appoint a county clerk to serve as the secretary of the board. Without this appointment, the county

auditor would assume such responsibility.

In addition to this general statutory organization, there exist two options for county government organization within Ohio: (1) one that falls under the guidelines of an “alternative form” (according to Chapter 302 of the ORC), and (2) a charter county authorized by the Ohio Constitution.

Alternative Statutory Organizational Form

The organizational structure of the “alternative form” of county government is regulated by Chapter 302 of the ORC. This section of the Code provides the legal authority to vary the size and composition of the board of commissioners. The following two elements distinguish the alternative statutory form from the general statutory form.

This first element under the alternative form mandates the existence of a county executive, and allows said executive to be either elected (referred to as the elective executive plan) or appointed (referred to as the appointive executive plan). Under this alternative form, the county executive is responsible for all executive and administrative duties previously reserved for the board of county commissioners under a general statutory format. This leaves the board as the policy-making branch of county government. Under the general statutory form, a county executive does not exist.

The second distinguishing element of the alternative form is the broader freedom it provides over the number of members allowed to serve on the board of county commissioners, as opposed to three-commissioner mandate in the general statutory form. The alternative form also requires that the county proposing the alternative form identify the number of commissioners to be elected at large and the number to be elected by district. If the county proposing the alternative form opts to implement a board elected at large, the board would have to be comprised of three, five, seven, or nine members. If the county chooses a board that will be elected by district, there must be at least three but no more than 21 members on the board. If the board of county commissioners is to be made up of more than seven members, no more than half may be elected at large, (see Figure 1).

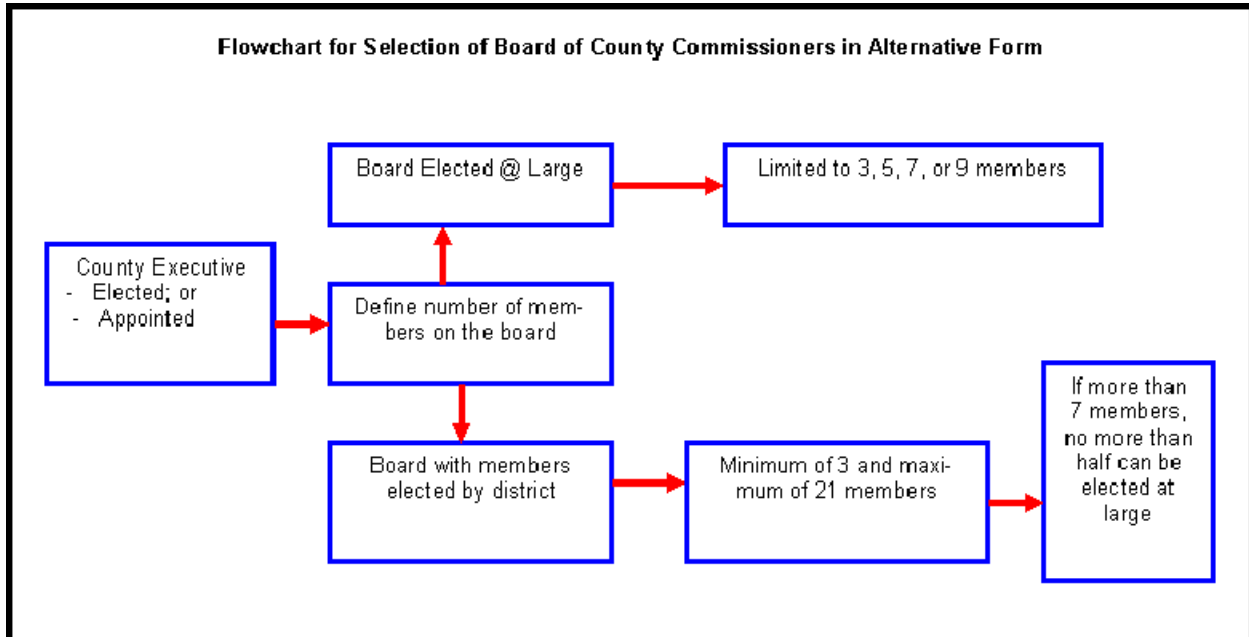


Figure 1

This alternative form has only been around since 1961. During this time, only a few attempts have been made to implement this form, the most recent being in 1991 when Delaware County unsuccessfully considered enactment.⁴ Currently, there are no Ohio counties operating under this form of government. Table 2 below outlines the steps to forming an alternative form of county government.

Table 2: Procedural Steps to Forming an "Alternative Form" of County Government in Ohio

Steps	Substance of Each Step in the Formation of the Alternative Form
1	Alternative form of county government must be initiated by: 2/3 vote of county commissioners, or, upon petition by vote of 3% of the electors of the county (ORC § 302(A))
2	If appropriate approval is obtained in step 1, the county commissioners must then submit the proposal for an alternative form of government to the county voters (ORC § 302.03(A))
3	If a majority of the voters in step 2 approve the "alternative form" if it adopted (ORC § 302.05)
4	Election of the county commissioners pursuant to ORC §§ 302.04 & 302.08(A)(B)
5	A county executive is required in an "alternative form" (ORC § 302.14)
6	If county chooses an elected executive, as opposed to appointed, the executive is to be elected at the first regular county general election (ORC § 302.15)

⁴ Ohio County Commissioner Handbook, November, 2002

Where Structural Flexibility Lies in the Statutory Organizational Forms

The greatest level of structural flexibility lies in the successful, but arduous, process of adopting a charter. Absent a charter, the statutory structure is bounded by the ORC, which provides limited flexibility. Under the general statutory provision of county governance, structural flexibility is limited to 1) the optional appointment of a county administrator by the board of county commissioners; and 2) the optional appointment of a county clerk by the board of county commissioners. Under an alternative form of county government, structural flexibility is broader, allowing a great deal of flexibility with regard to the number of county commissioners serving on the board. The law mandates only that there be between three and 21 commissioners, depending on whether they are elected by district or elected at large. Additionally, the alternative form requires a county executive, but allows said executive to be either elected or appointed.

Charter County Organizational Form

A charter county structure permitted by the Ohio constitution and the ORC provides more flexibility in the organization, which is one of the reasons it is so controversial. Initiating a charter county simply requires the drafting of a proposal, which must contain three provisions. First, the proposal must identify the form of government the county seeks to implement. Secondly, the proposal must include the election guidelines, which officers will be elected and the manner in which they will be elected. This allows for the abolishment of elected county positions. Thirdly, the proposal must include a provision establishing the power vested in the county as well as a provision establishing duties of the county under the charter.

Table 3 below outlines the remaining steps in the formation of a charter county. While several counties have attempted to adopt a charter, Summit County is the only one that has successfully implement this form of government.

Table 3: Procedural Steps in Charter Formation

Steps	Steps in the Formation of a Charter County
1	Proposal for charter county drafted
2	The drafted charter must be submitted to the voters of the county in one of three forms
3	Notification to electors – each elector must receive a copy of the proposed charter 30 days prior to the election of said charter
4	Must be approved by majority vote
5	Effective 30 days after majority approval by voters

Charter County History

The Ohio Constitution was amended in November 1933 to allow for the adoptions of charter counties. The amendment established that in order to create a charter county, a county charter commission must be elected to draft the charter. Following this constitutional amendment, eight counties presented proposals to elect a charter county commission to draft a charter to their electors. County electors in Summit County, Stark County, Franklin County, and Montgomery County rejected the proposal, while county electors in Cuyahoga, Lucas, Mahoning, and Hamilton all approved the election of a charter county commission. These charter county commissions then submitted their drafted charters to the voters of the county for adoption; Cuyahoga County was the only one of the four to receive a majority vote in favor of adopting the charter.⁵

Though it appeared that Cuyahoga County would become the first charter county in the state in 1935, the Ohio Supreme Court, in State ex rel Howland v. Krause, Board of Elections of Cuyahoga County, concluded that the charter violated Article X § 3 of the Ohio Constitution. The court held that the proposed county charter vested municipal powers in the county, requiring a “multiple majority requirement,” which was not achieved in this case. The court further explained that a “multiple majority requirement,” articulated in Article X § 3 of the Ohio Constitution, requires that when municipal powers are vested in a county, four voting requirements must be met. The charter must receive a majority vote in each of the following jurisdictions⁶:

⁵ Ohio County Commissioners Handbook, November, 2002

⁶ Ohio County Commissioners Handbook, November, 2002

1. The county as a whole,
2. The largest municipality within the county,
3. The county population outside of the largest municipality, and,
4. Approval is also required “In each of a majority of the combined total of municipalities and townships.”⁷

In the immediate case, the charter was approved in a countywide vote by the residents of Cleveland, as well as approval from the county outside Cleveland, but it did not fulfill the fourth requirement and the charter was struck down. In 1957, the Constitution was amended to clarify that the “multiple majority requirement” only applied in certain cases, making the adoption of county charters less demanding.⁸ This has effectively created two forms of charter county governments; those vested with the exclusive exercise of existing municipal powers, and those in which a charter alters only the officers and form of government, and/or, which provide for the “exercise by the county of power vested in municipalities by the constitution or laws of Ohio.”⁹ The “multiple majority requirement” is constitutionally required only in the former, while implementation of the later requires only a simple majority vote of county electors.¹⁰

Since the amendment to the constitution in 1957, there have only been a few attempts at forming a charter county. Cuyahoga County has attempted several times, but failed. Summit County made two failed attempts before becoming the first (and still the only) to adopt a charter in 1979, only after the enactment of ORC §§ 307.94-99. This section of the code now allows the initiation of charters to originate, not only in the election of a county charter commission, but also through a petition submitted to the board of county commissions by 10 percent of the electors of a county. The most recent attempts at adopting a charter county have been made by Columbiana County, but both of those attempts have also been voted down.¹¹

A pattern appears to exist among those counties that have attempted to adopt charters. The largest cities in Ohio are located in eight of the nine counties that have attempted to adopt a charter: Toledo (Lucas), Cleveland (Cuyahoga), Akron (Summit), Canton (Stark), Youngstown (Mahoning), Cincinnati (Hamilton), Dayton (Montgomery), and Columbus (Franklin).

⁷ This fourth element currently applies only in counties with a population of 500,000 or less - Ohio Constitution, Article X § 3

⁸ In cases where a “a charter or amendment provides for the exclusive exercise of municipal powers by the county or provides for the succession by the county to any property or obligation of any municipality or township without the consent of the legislative authority of such municipality or township...” This requirement does not apply to charters that do not assert exclusive county exercise of municipal powers. Ohio Constitution, Article X § 3.

⁹ Ohio Constitution – Article X §3

¹⁰ Ohio Constitution – Article X §3

¹¹ Ohio County Commissioners Handbook, November, 2002

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COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

In examining overall county governmental structures, there were different configurations for each branch of government. The executive branch generally has an appointed county administrator, elected county executive, or elected board of commissioners; the legislative branch has a board of commissioners or a county council; and the administrative branch has either appointed department administrators or elected administrative officials such as treasurer, auditor, etc. These vary from state to state because they are dictated by state law. These structures are broadly discussed below.

Executive and Legislative Structures

A scan of county government executive branch organizational structures was conducted to identify alternatives with a chief executive leadership framework that included elected and appointed county executive positions. The *elected* county executive, elected by the eligible voters, serves as the chief executive officer of a county. The position is most often associated with a county council serving as the legislative branch. The *appointed* county executive position, appointed by a county legislative body, also serves as the chief executive. The appointed county executive (usually called administrator or manager) position can also be an attribute of the county commission government format.

Research of the legislative structure of county government included variables such as the size of the council and the method of the appointment of council members (elected by ward, at-large, or both). County councils are constituted with members directly elected by the electorate, in one of the three alternative representational formats. A structure where members are elected by ward provide for geographic representation of districts of equal size, while those members elected at-large provide for countywide selection.

Based on the national scan of county government organizational frameworks and literature review, themes or typologies of county structures emerged within the executive and legislative functions. These are appointed administrator/board of county commissioners, appointed administrator/county council and elected administrator/county council. The appointed administrator/county council and elected administrator/county council typologies are illustrated in the county profiles in this report. These counties were selected based on the outcome of the initial scan of counties and were

chosen to profile, with regard to executive, legislative and administrative functions, based on unique or interesting features within at least one level of government.

Appointed Administrator/County Council Form

Fairfax County, Virginia

Fairfax County employs a Council–Manager (board-governed) structure of county government (see Figure 2), along with the vast majority of Virginia’s 95 counties. The legislative body is known as a Board of Supervisors. However, Fairfax is the only county in Virginia utilizing the Urban County Executive form of government, allowable for counties with populations greater than 90,000.¹² The Urban County Executive form broadens the functional authority of the Board of Supervisors and allows an executive to be appointed by the board.¹³

Fairfax County elects nine board members by district, and a board chair, who is elected at-large. The Board of Supervisors is responsible for county legislation and policy (within the limitations set by the Virginia General Assembly), budget approval and the appointments of county officials.

A county executive is appointed by the board and serves as the head of the senior management team. Among the offices reporting to county executive are the office of the internal auditor, government relations, office of partnerships, neighborhood and community building coordinator, and office of public affairs.

In addition to an executive assistant and a legislative liaison, the senior management team also employs four deputy county executives. Each deputy executive is responsible for a cluster of functionally related administrative departments or offices. For example, the departments reporting to one of the executive deputies include department of management and budget, department of tax administration, and department of finance.

Fairfax County has relatively few elected officials to direct administrative functions of the county. In addition to the board members, the residents select a sheriff, a commonwealth’s attorney, and a clerk of the circuit court. It operates with a traditional county board structure, employs an appointed executive, and utilizes a functional clustering approach to administrative services.

¹² Virginia Code, Title 15.2. *Counties, Cities and Towns*. Retrieved September 12, 2008 from: <http://law.justia.com/virginia/codes/toc1502000/toc1502000.html>

¹³ National Association of Counties, (2001). *County Government Structure: A State to State Report* (Second Edition). Washington, DC.

In 2008, the National Association of Counties awarded five achievement awards to Fairfax County, including one presented to the department of finance for its implementation of a program known as Data Analysis and Retrieval Tool (DART).¹⁴ The intent of the DART program is to allow the financial managers within various county departments to easily access data from the department of finance's systems in order to perform analysis and forecast efficiently, thereby improving the quality of fiscal decision-making across agencies.

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¹⁴ Fairfax County, (2008). *Public Affairs Homepage*. Retrieved September 30, 2008 from: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/2008/142.htm>

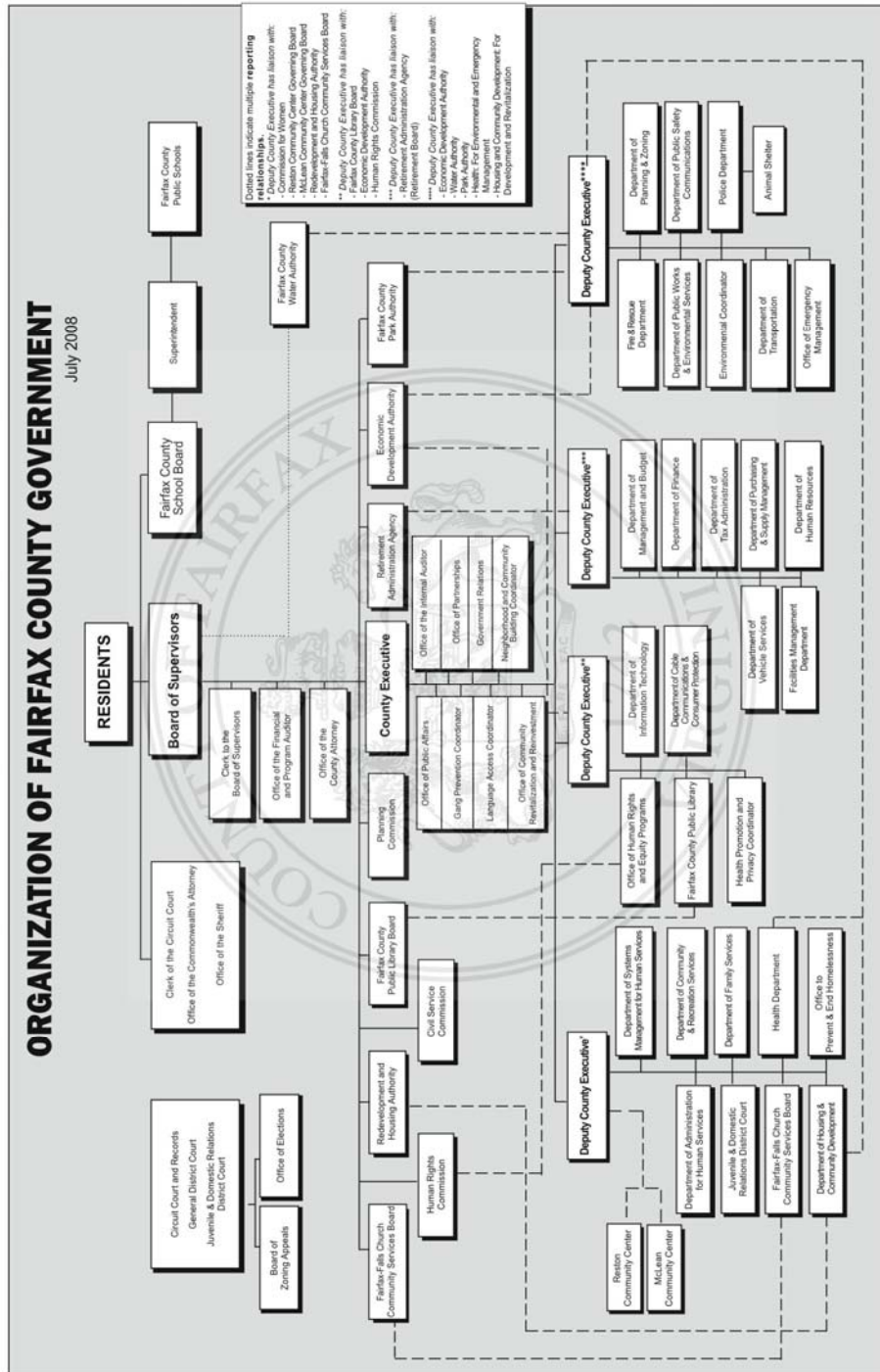


Figure 2

Hennepin County, Minnesota

Hennepin County provides an example of a traditionally structured Commission type of government. However, the limited number of elected administrative offices, coupled with the professionalized management of functionally organized administrative departments, makes the structure of Hennepin County an interesting case study for alternatives within county government.

Minnesota law allows for a Board of County Commissioners structure, and several alternative structures, though all of the 87 counties in the state have retained the commission approach while working to professionalize the management of service delivery.¹⁵ Hennepin County operates under a traditional county board structure (see Figure 3), comprised of seven county commissioners, and an appointed county administrator. All seven of the commissioners are elected by district, in a nonpartisan process.

In a recent conversation with Hennepin County Administrator Richard Johnson, the change in government structure occurred in the late 1990s and was initiated by the County Administrator at that time, who wanted a different reporting structure with the department heads. Johnson referred to this reporting structure as a “business line” structure, where departments are assembled based on similar “communities of interest” and goals. District boundaries, based on geography and population, were recommended by staff and adopted by the county commissioners. Additionally, the number of Commission members was increased in the 1970s from five to seven members. Johnson stated that this type of structure works well because of the departments being grouped together based on similarities.

The commissioners possess legislative authority for the county, including responsibility for accepting annual budgets, adopting resolutions, and appointing the county administrator. The county administrator oversees the daily functioning of the county’s operational departments and implements the policies of the Board of Commissioners. The departments reporting to the county administrator include:

- Budget and Finance
- Community Corrections
- Human Resources
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Internal Audit

¹⁵ Association of Minnesota Counties, (2008). *County Government Structure*, retrieved September 16, 2008 from: http://www.mncounties.org/Publications/FYIs/PDF/CountyGov_Structure08.pdf

- Labor Relations
- Medical Center Systems
- Metropolitan Health Plan
- Primary Care
- Public Affairs

In addition to the appointed county administrator, a deputy county administrator is responsible for the following departments:

- County Assessor
- Examiner of Titles
- Information Technology
- Library
- Medical Examiner
- Property Services
- Purchasing and Contract Services
- Taxpayer Services

Two assistant county administrators are also appointed; one is responsible for human services and public health. The other is an assistant county administrator for public works, who is responsible for the following:

- Transportation
- Housing, Community Works and Transit
- Public Works Management Support
- Environmental Services

Hennepin County has a low number of elected county officials, as compared to other counties. Excluding the seven commissioners and the county's judges, only the county attorney and sheriff are elected. This provides an administrative structure that is depoliticized and functionally oriented. The positions of county assessor, medical examiner, and numerous others are appointed by the Commission (see Figure 3). In addition, numerous citizen advisory boards exist to facilitate the involvement of Hennepin County citizens in governance.

Each year, the National Association of Counties announces achievement awards for numerous categories of county government functioning. In 2008, Hennepin County received two of those awards, both for work within administrative departments.¹⁶

¹⁶ National Association of Counties, (2008). *Achievement Awards, Best of Category*. Retrieved September 19, 2008 from: <http://www.naco.org/>

A Scan of Attributes in County Government Structure

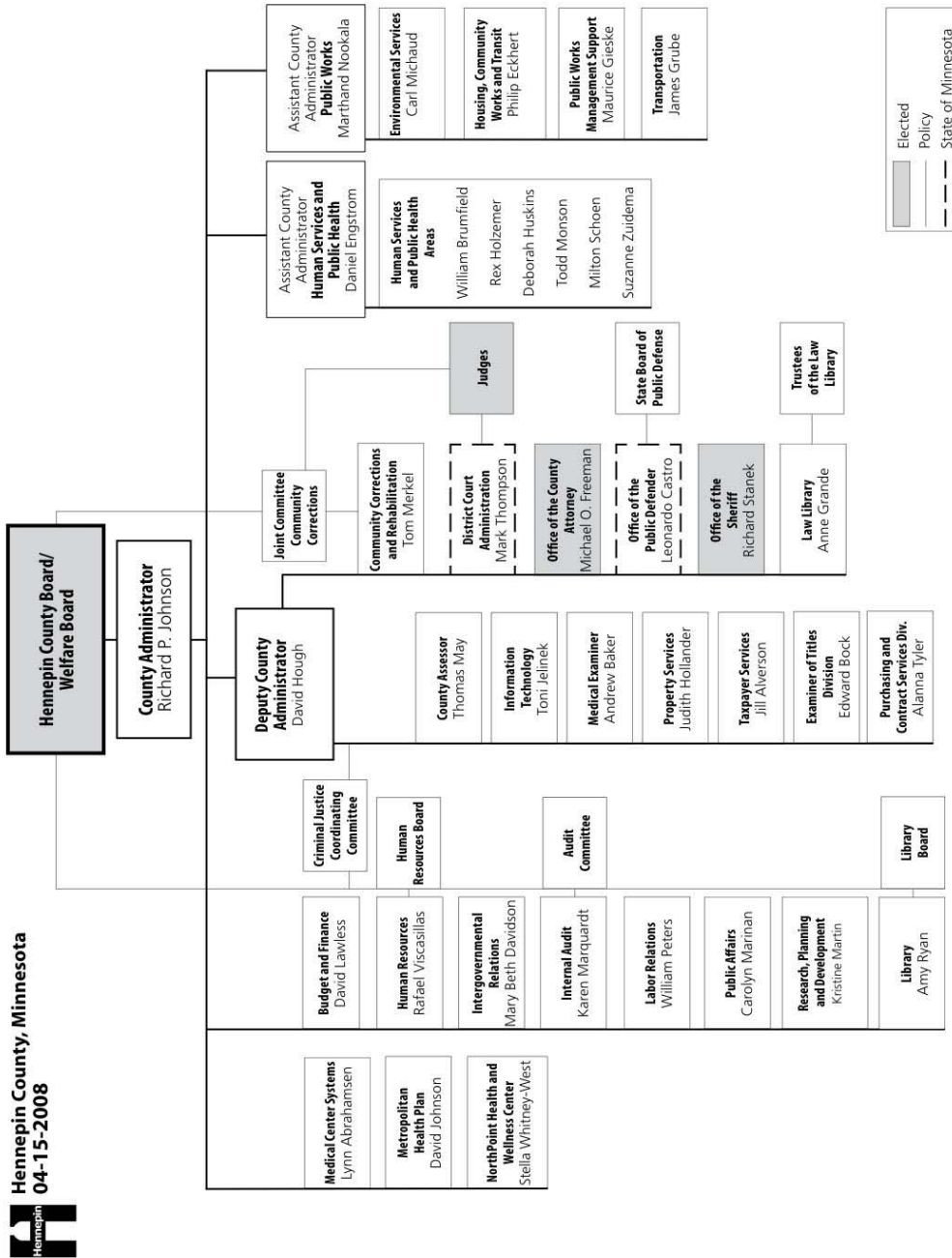


Figure 3

Charleston County, South Carolina

Charleston County is an example of a county with an Elected Council that appoints an administrator. There are nine council members elected by district, an appointed administrator, and seven elected administrative officials (Figure 4). The county has operated under this form since the Home Rule Act of 1975, though the size of the council has grown over the years to meet the needs of a growing population. (The population of the county was around 325,000 in 2004, and grew five percent from 1990-2000.) However, even prior to 1975, the county moved away from the “traditional” commissioner form; in 1948, Charleston County adopted a council-manager system, with the appointed manager as the chief executive officer. Until that point, the state lawmakers had played a dual role in state and county government, which became increasingly difficult with population growth. Charleston County led the transition to county council government across all of South Carolina when it adopted a local county council with an appointed manager.¹⁷

With the passage of the South Carolina Home Rule Act (also known as the Local Government Law) in 1975, all counties in the state evolved into one of four forms of government, as shown in Table 4. Within these four structures are several independently elected county officials who function as department heads. The primary positions are Sheriff, Clerk of Court, Treasurer (except Council-Manager counties), and Auditor (except Council-Manager counties). Other elected officials traditionally found in South Carolina county government include Solicitor, Magistrate, Coroner, and Register of Mesne Conveyance (Register of Deeds).¹⁸

As noted above, Charleston County’s has an administrator who holds executive power, while its nine-member county council holds legislative power. For many years, council members were elected at-large. Later, under the direction of the U.S. Justice Department, the county moved in November 2004 to electing its council members by single districts so it would better represent minority voters. The resulting council is diverse and seems to better represent the constituents of the county.

¹⁷ South Carolina Association of Counties, (2008). “Handbook for County Government in South Carolina,” Retrieved September 26, 2008 from: <http://www.sccounties.org/research/Handbook/Handbook2005.pdf>

¹⁸ Beaufort County, South Carolina, (2008). “County Government Organization and Administration”. Retrieved September 27, 2008 from: <http://www.co.beaufort.sc.us/council/CountyGovorganizationandAdministration.php>

**A Scan of Attributes in
County Government Structure**

Table 4: Forms or Structures of Government in South Carolina

Council Form of Government	Council/Supervisor Form of Government	Council/Administrator Form of Government	Council/Manager Form of Government
Council holds all legislative, executive, & administrative power	Supervisor popularly elected as separate county officer & chairs the Council	Council hires professional Administrator who holds executive power	Council hires a professional Manager who holds executive power
Council may hire an Administrator, if it desires	Supervisor holds administrative power	Council can remove Administrator	Council can remove Manager
Five SC counties currently of this form of government	Supervisor votes only to break tie votes	34 SC counties currently of this form of government	Positions of County Treasury and County Auditor may be made appointive rather than elective
	Supervisor cannot be removed by Council		Three SC counties are currently of this form of government
	Four SC counties are currently of this form of government		

There has been substantial discussion in the county regarding possible ways to simplify the government structure. In the 1970s, the public defeated a proposed consolidated government charter that would have consolidated all existing governments in the county into a single government agency with authority to perform both “county” and “city” functions. The public was apparently concerned about the loss of local control to a much larger government entity.¹⁹

In Charleston County, there are seven elected administrative officials with independent departments:

- Auditor
- Clerk of Court
- Coroner
- Register Mesne Conveyance (Register of Deeds)
- Sheriff
- Solicitor
- Treasurer

¹⁹ Charleston County Management, Accountability, and Performance Commission, Final Report, (2008). Retrieved September 29, 2008 from:
<http://www.charlestoncounty.org/MAP/FinalReport/index.htm>

Outside of these elected positions, there are several appointed positions, as outlined in the organizational chart (Figure 4). Three small administrative clusters include economic development, public information, and information technology services. There are also two large clusters:

- Administration (with an appointed chief deputy administrator) that includes planning, public works, facilities, and communications, and
- Finance (with an appointed chief financial officer) that includes a controller, assessor, budget, internal services, and human resources.

The final report for the county's "Management, Accountability, and Performance Commission" highlights the county's ongoing efforts to "reorganize and streamline its administrative structure" and to try simply the layers of supervision in the county. The county is striving to address the larger problems of accountability and improved service provision.

Charleston County has received various awards. Of particular note is the county's receipt for the 20th consecutive year of the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.²⁰ In addition, this year the County won NACo's National Sustainable Communities Award, which is presented every two years to only ten counties across the country. This award recognizes "the most effective and innovative county-led partnerships with private sector, faith-based or community groups in developing economically prosperous, environmentally safe and socially equitable communities."²¹

²⁰ Charleston County, (2008). "Charleston County Awarded for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 20th Year," Retrieved on September 29, 2008 from: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/News/2887.htm>

²¹ Charleston County, (2008). "Charleston County Wins National Sustainable Communities Award," Retrieved on September 29, 2008 from: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/News/2861.htm>

**Charleston County, South Carolina
Organizational Chart**

Revised
09/27/2002

County Departments
Effective 10/01/2002

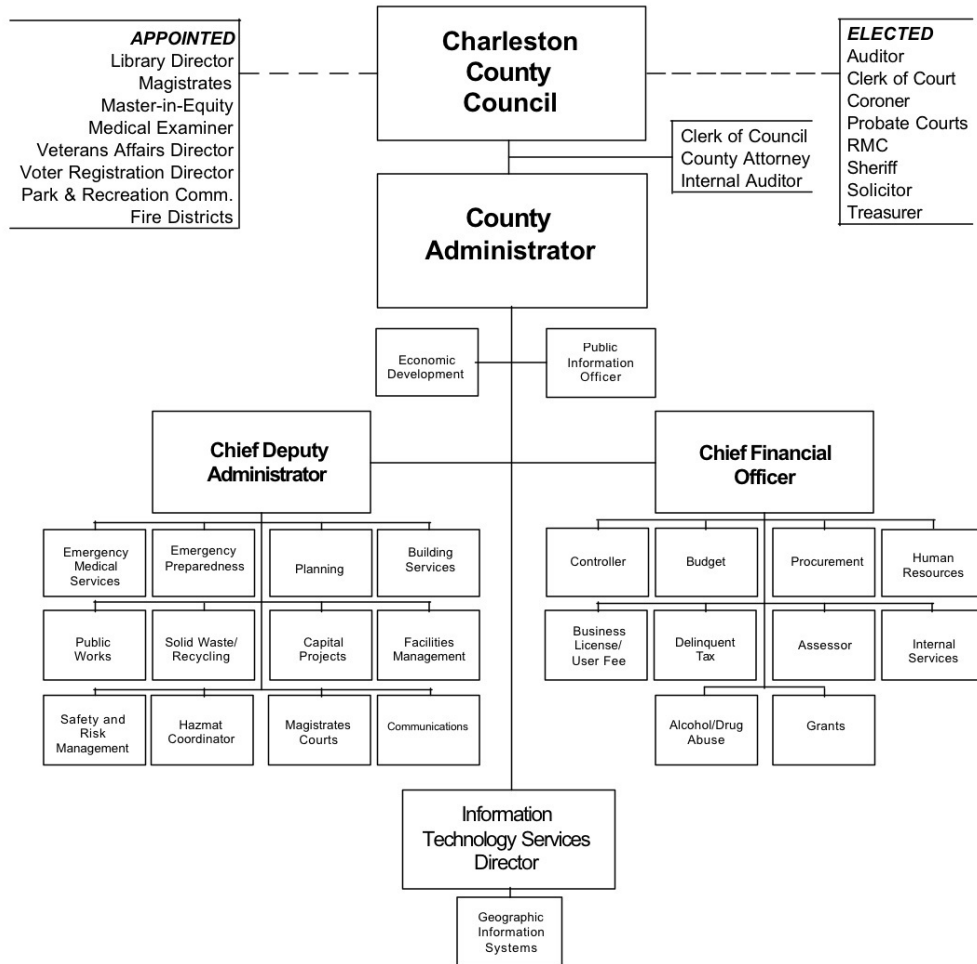


Figure 4

San Diego County, California

San Diego County operates within an Appointed Administrator/County Council form of county government structure (Figure 5). The county is one of 14 in the state that has adopted a charter. California law provides home-rule authority to charter counties, allowing a substantial degree of choice in terms of the number of elected county officials and their duties. California requires each of its counties to employ a Board of Supervisors consisting of five members (with the exception of one charter county that has chosen to have a larger board). The Board of Supervisors is both the legislative and the executive authority of the county.²²

San Diego County's five supervisors are elected by district. The county charter requires that the board reapportion the five districts after each decennial census, in accordance with state law and so that "the area of at least two districts is as substantially outside the City of San Diego as the population will permit."²³

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors appoints a Chief Administrative Officer, a County Counsel, a Clerk of the Board, and a Probation Officer. The Chief Administrative Officer nominates residents to the Citizens Law Enforcement Review Board, is responsible for carrying out the policies of the board, and supervises the administrative functions of the county.

The administrative or "row" offices of San Diego County are organized into five groups: a public safety group, health and human services agency, land use and environment group, community services group, and finance and general government group. Each of these departments has a group general manager, with the exception of the health and human services agency, which employs a director. These managers work within the chief administrative officer's management committee.

The voters of San Diego County elect four positions other than the board of supervisors: a sheriff, a district attorney, an assessor/recorder/county clerk, and a treasurer/tax collector. Prior to 1995, the assessor and the recorder / county clerk were two separate positions; treasurer and tax collector had been two distinct offices before 1986.²⁴

²² California State Association of Counties, (2008). *County Structure*. Retrieved September 22, 2008 from: <http://www.counties.org/>

²³ San Diego County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, (2006). *Charter of the County of San Diego*. Retrieved September 22, 2008 from: <http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/cob/docs/charter.pdf>

²⁴ San Diego County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, (2006). *Charter of the County of San Diego*. Retrieved September 22, 2008 from: <http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/cob/docs/charter.pdf>

Assistant Chief Administrator Helen Robbins-Meyer stated that the change in organizational structure of San Diego County dramatically improved the efficiency and effectiveness of county government by removing the “stove pipe” and increasing the operational accountability of county government. San Diego County appointed an external committee, with the aid of county staff, to develop the initial district lines for county commission elections. The committee utilized population, density, and census data and information, and submitted a few alternatives to the Charter Commission to decide the final district boundaries.

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A Scan of Attributes in County Government Structure

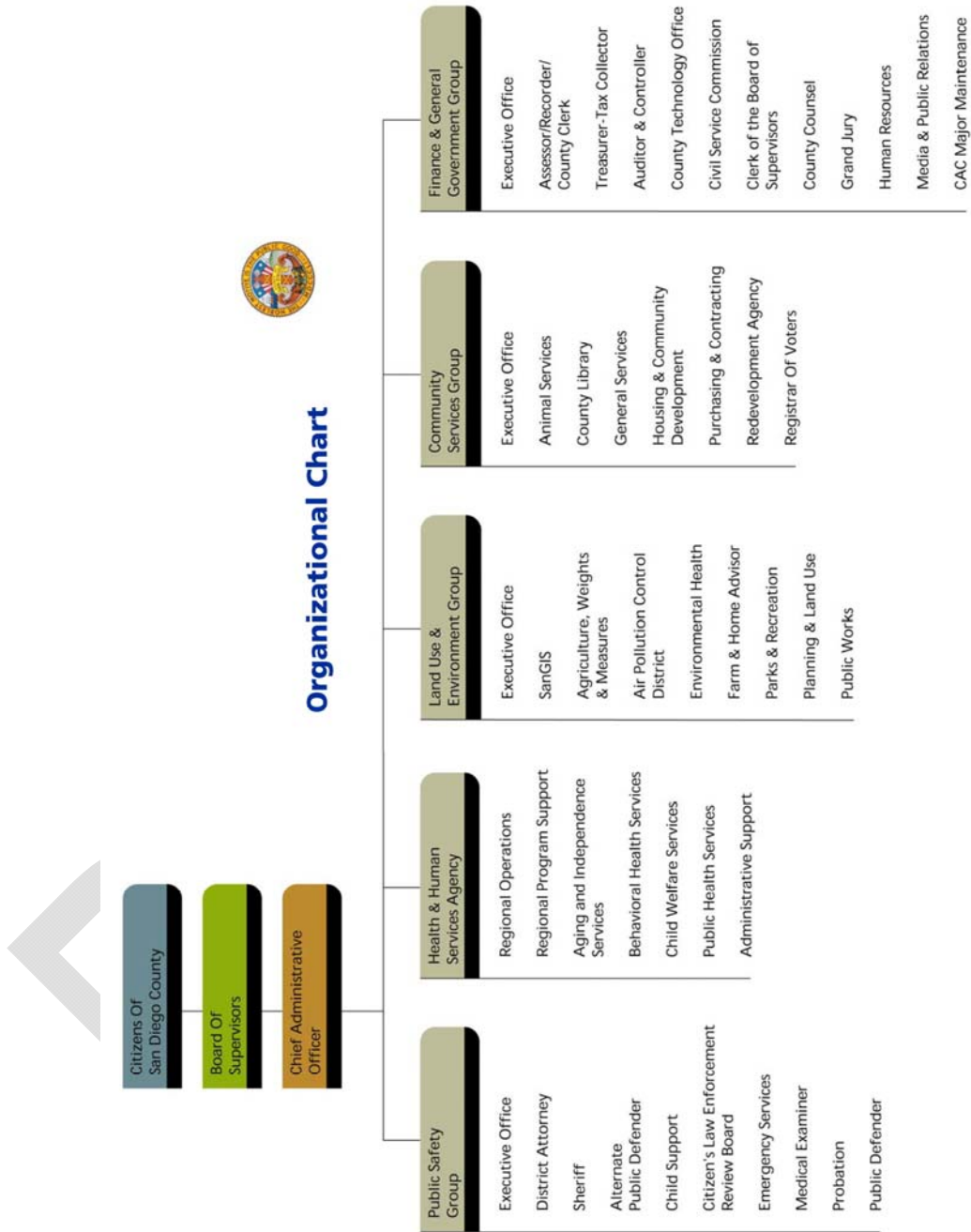


Figure 5

The centerpiece of San Diego County's pursuit of efficiency and accountability is its General Management System (GMS). It is based upon five principle elements, which guide the functioning of the county: Strategic Planning, Operational Planning, Monitoring and Control, Functional Threading, and Motivation Rewards and Recognition (Figure 6). GMS presents a business-like approach to county government and directs a process of continuous improvement.²⁵

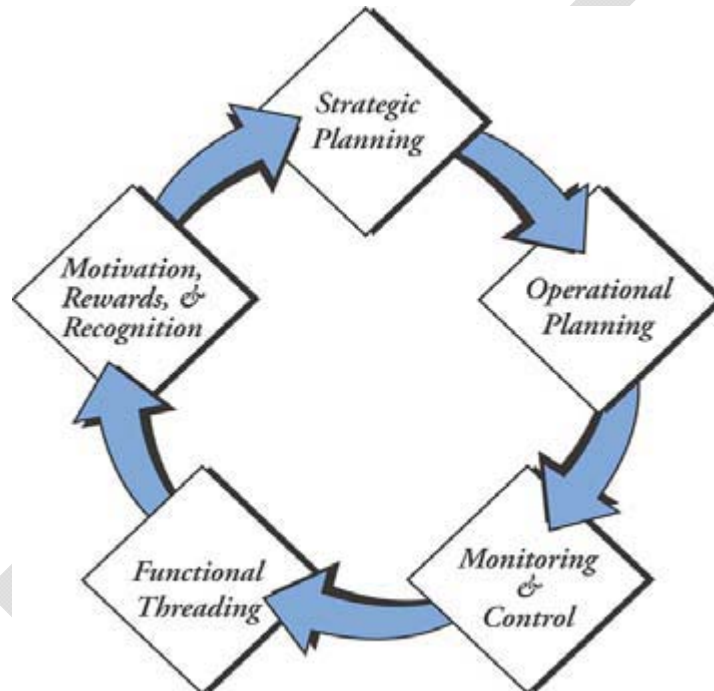


Figure 6: San Diego County General Management System (GMS) graphic depicting the process that takes place during the course of each fiscal year.²⁶

²⁵ County of San Diego, (2008). General Management System Manual. Retrieved September 22, 2008 from: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/cao/docs/completegms.pdf>

²⁶ County of San Diego, (2008). General Management System Manual. Retrieved September 22, 2008 from: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/cao/docs/completegms.pdf>

Figure 7 outlines the practice of San Diego County’s utilization of the GMS.

Tool	Description
CAO Goals and Accomplishments	An annual written statement of goals and accomplishments submitted by the CAO to the Board of Supervisors.
Quarterly Reviews	Reports from groups are prepared and presented orally to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) by each group General Manager/DCAO and management staff. Quarterly reviews cover specific management topics, as determined by the CAO, including regular reviews of each group’s fiscal and human resources data, program performance issues, customer service feedback and potential risks.
Project Management Reporting Systems	Quarterly, specific projects are reviewed by the CAO and General Managers/DCAOs through Contract Business Process Review (CBPR) and Project Management Review (PMR). These formal review panels provide an opportunity to report on a project’s cost, schedule status, performance measures, major risks and mitigation plans.
Department Reviews	Monthly, General Managers/DCAOs look over operational areas with their department heads to review performance measures and identify risks as soon as possible.
CFO and General Manager’s Resource Allocation Review	Every two weeks, the General Managers/DCAOs review and reassess group budget decisions based on current events, available resources, and priorities.
Business Process Reengineering and Continuous Improvement Projects	There are always government services or processes that can be improved. When these areas are identified, executives work with front line employees to create explicit performance targets, set deadlines, and develop strategies for improvement. These projects track our ability to provide new or improved services to citizens using fewer tax dollars.
Risk Overview Committee	The Risk Overview Committee (ROC) meets quarterly to identify and address significant legal, financial, contractual and operational risks to the County. The ROC serves in an advisory role to the CAO and the Board of Supervisors, and is chaired by the Assistant CAO and County Counsel.
Audit Committee	The Audit Committee meets quarterly and advises the CAO on matters relating to the County’s internal and external audits, including advice on risk assessments, internal controls and governance matters. The Committee is chaired by the Assistant CAO and includes the Chief Financial Officer, the Auditor & Controller, the County’s Chief of Audits and three independent members of the public.

Figure 7: San Diego County General Management System (GMS) table illustrating examples of monitoring and control evaluation tools.²⁷

²⁷ County of San Diego, (2008). General Management System Manual. Retrieved September 22, 2008 from:

San Diego County has received numerous awards in multiple categories from a variety of different sources. Awards in recent years include NACo awards,²⁸ several awards for efficiency and cost-savings strategies from the San Diego County Taxpayers Association,²⁹ merit awards from the California State Association of Counties,³⁰ and a 2007 “Achievement of Excellence in Procurement” award from the National Purchasing Institute—an award the county has received seven years.³¹

Elected Executive/Council Form of Government

Salt Lake County, Utah

Salt Lake County, Utah, is an example of an Elected Executive/Council form of government, with separate executive and legislative powers. The county switched to this Mayor-Council form from a traditional county commissioner form in 2001 after approving the new form of government in November 1998. The county chose to retain eight elected administrative officials who are independent of the mayor and council. However, the executive branch departments, managed by the mayor, have a very professional and organized structure, with clear lines of responsibility and accountability.

Salt Lake County was formed in 1850, about 50 years before Utah was admitted to the union (1896). The county’s population is currently approaching one million and the county employs over 7,000 people.

Under Utah law, four county government forms are allowed. If a county wishes to adopt a form other than the traditional county commission, it must submit an “optional plan” to adopt the alternative form. The four allowed forms are:

- County Commission -- Traditional three-member commission with both legislative and executive functions. All three commission seats are at-large. Twenty-four Utah counties have this form of government.

<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/cao/docs/completegms.pdf>

²⁸ National Association of Counties, (2008). *Achievement Awards, Best of Category*. Retrieved September 19, 2008 from: <http://www.naco.org/>

²⁹ San Diego County Taxpayers Association, (2008). *Golden Watchdog Awards*. Retrieved September 22, 2008 from: <http://www.sdcta.org/>

³⁰ California State Association of Counties, (2008). *2007 Challenge Awards Merit Recipients*. Retrieved September 22, 2008 from: <http://www.counties.org/>

³¹ National Purchasing Institute, (2007). *Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Recipients*. Retrieved September 22, 2008 from: <http://www.npicconnection.org/aep/2007AEPRecipients.asp>

A Scan of Attributes in County Government Structure

- Expanded County Commission -- Expanded form of the traditional form with either a five- or seven-member county commission. Seats can be a mixture of district and at-large seats. Two Utah counties have this form of government.
- Council-Manager -- "Strong" council form, with an elected county council of three, five, seven, or nine members, either district or at-large or a combination thereof. The council (legislative body) appoints a county manager, who functions as the chief executive (though with no veto authority over council) and the administrative head of county government. One Utah county has this form of government.
- County Executive-Council -- "Strong" mayor form, with an elected chief executive or mayor to oversee the executive branch and serve as the administrative head of the county. The council (legislative body) consists of three, five, seven, or nine members, either district or at-large or a combination thereof. The mayor has veto power over the council, and the council has budgetary authority over the mayor. Two Utah counties have this form of government.³²

As noted above, Salt Lake County dissolved its County Commissioner seats in 2001 and adopted the fourth form of government allowed under Utah law. The county executive, called the mayor, is elected at-large. The mayor manages the executive branch departments, such as Public Works, Human Services, and Community and Support Services, but does not have supervisory authority over the activities of the council or the other independent elected officials (listed below).

Salt Lake County's legislative body consists of a nine-member council, with three elected at-large and six elected by district. The district members serve four-year staggered terms and the at-large members serve six-year terms.

Eight elected officials maintain their own departments:

- Assessor
- Auditor
- Clerk
- District Attorney
- Recorder
- Sheriff
- Surveyor

³² Salt Lake County Code Of Ordinances (2008). Retrieved September 25, 2008 from:
<http://ordlink.com/codes/saltlkco/>

- Treasurer

Beyond these elected official's departments, there are three stand-alone departments (Economic Development, Unified Fire Authority, and Disaster/Homeland Security) and four administrative function clusters:

- Department of Administrative Services (HR, facilities, records)
- Department of Community Services (zoo, arts, parks)
- Department of Human Services (aging services, community development)
- Department of Public Works (engineering, planning, waste)

These clusters can be viewed on the county mayor's organizational chart (see Figure 8). Each cluster has an appointed director and associate director who report to a chief financial officer and a chief administrative officer. The county also has a deputy mayor who oversees a public information officer, two inter-government affairs specialists, two community relations specialists, and a diversity affairs specialist.

The research team spoke with a Salt Lake deputy district attorney who was involved with drafting the charter for the county's change from a commissioner structure to a mayor-council structure in the late 1990s. He reported that the change was motivated primarily because of ongoing conflicts between the commissioners and the county attorney, and that the intention of the change was to separate the executive and legislative powers in the county. The county commission initiated the change, which was followed by a countywide vote. Since the change was made in Salt Lake County, the state has altered the process by which to adopt a charter. Counties are now required to coordinate a petition, a vote, and a study commission, followed by a second petition and vote. About five counties adopted charters within three to four years in the late 1990s, with the origins for the change in most being land and zoning disputes, but the deputy district attorney said that no counties have tried to adopt a charter since the additional steps were added to the process required by the state.

The deputy district attorney indicated that the separation of power and increased partisanship in the county has been "burdensome," and that the council and mayor have difficulty deciding, "Who gets to do what?" Relations among the three commissioners tended to be better than the relationship between the current mayor and council. He noted that these challenges might be personality-driven, as other charter counties in Utah do not seem to have similar conflicts. In his opinion, the mayor-council form of government is a less "open" form of government. For example, some functions that used to be discussed openly at the commissioners' weekly public meetings, such as county contracts and personnel matters, are now executive functions and aren't placed on public meeting agendas. He said the mayor makes decisions on these matters

without public input.

Salt Lake County chose to retain eight elected administrative officials (assessor, auditor, district attorney, clerk, recorder, sheriff, surveyor, and treasurer). The deputy district attorney said that there was not much discussion in Salt Lake County (or in other Utah charter counties) about whether to consolidate or eliminate elected administrative positions because of a lack of public support.

The county charter calls for nine council members: three at-large and six by district. Initial district boundaries were drawn by a citizens' committee, without much political influence. However, the redistricting that occurred after the release of the last Census was reportedly political because this responsibility falls to council members.

Overall, the deputy district attorney indicated that the change from the traditional commissioner structure to a mayor-council form of county government had not significantly benefited Salt Lake County.

A Scan of Attributes in County Government Structure

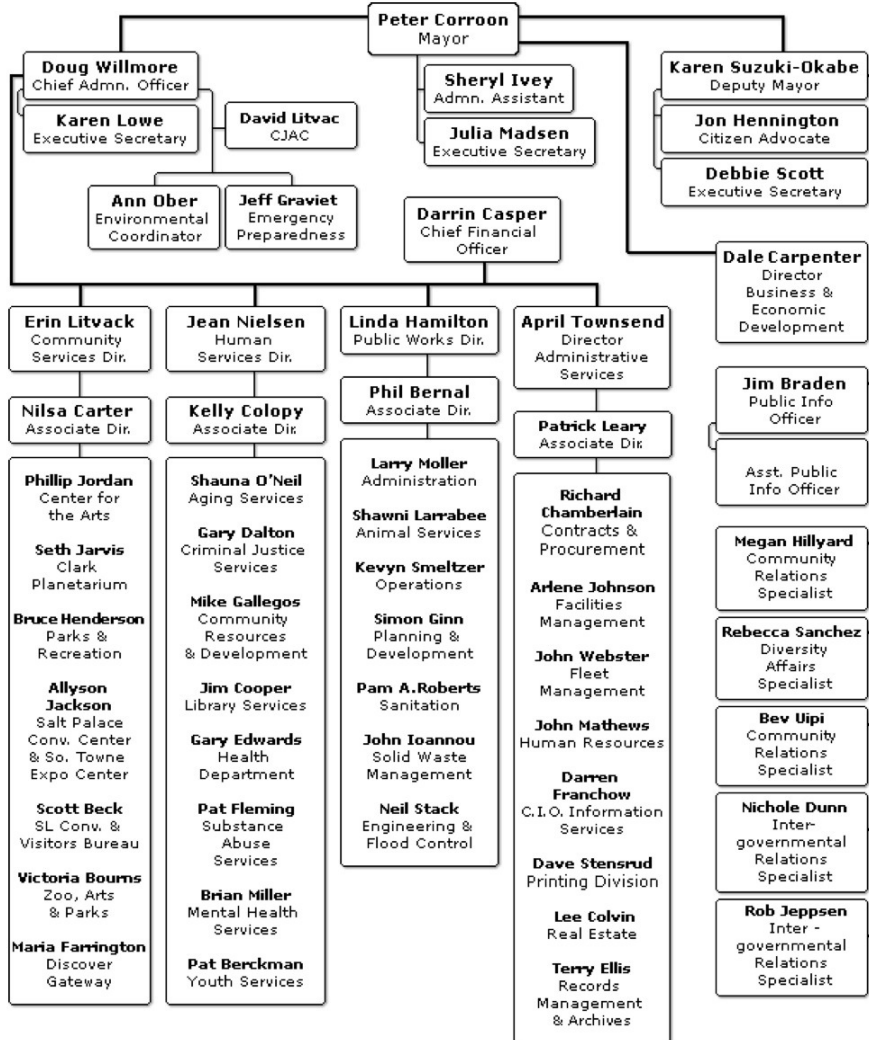
Salt Lake County Organizational Chart

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Salt Lake County Mayor's Organization Chart

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Page 1 of 1

Figure 8

Summit County, Ohio

Summit County has an elected executive-council form of government. The council consists of, an 11-member council (three at-large, eight by district), and five elected administrative officials (Figure 9). It is the only county in Ohio with a charter form of government. The charter was officially adopted on January 1, 1980, after a decade of work by citizen groups. The change from the three-commissioner form of government came about as a result of reports of wrongdoing in some segments of the county government, as well as the changes in the community as rubber companies moved away and caused many people to lose their jobs.³³

In a phone interview with Eugene Kramer, an attorney who worked with Summit County on the transformation to a charter form of government, the impetus was concern of the business community and others that government was not functioning well (a “good government” issue) and that there were financial performance issues. Mr. Kramer indicated that the charter form of government is more efficient and the financial management has improved. It is now easier to deal with the county he said because there is a single elected executive rather than three commissioners. The county executive, Russell Pry, concurred with this indicating that the county has been able to streamline some processes to put deals together.

Summit County’s adoption of a charter government required many years of effort and resulted in an elected executive/council structural form, with a mix of council members elected at-large and by district. The positions of auditor, treasurer, and recorder were consolidated into the position of fiscal officer; the elected coroner became an appointed medical examiner; and five elected administrative offices were retained.

Summit County retained several independently elected administrative official positions: clerk of courts, prosecuting attorney, engineer, sheriff, and fiscal officer. The fiscal officer exercises the powers and performs the duties of an auditor, treasurer, and recorder (property appraisals, homestead exemption, real estate assessments, estate taxes, personal property taxes, etc.). The county also has an appointed Medical Examiner rather than an elected Coroner. In addition, one of the county council members recently proposed (not for the first time) that the elected office of engineer be consolidated and changed to an appointed position of “service director.”³⁴ The county continues to consider its administrative functional structure and elected offices.

³³ Summit County, Ohio, (2008). “Summit County History,” Retrieved September 30, 2008, from: <http://www.co.summit.oh.us/history.htm>

³⁴ Akron Beacon Journal, (2008). “Summit County councilman seeks changes in charter,” Retrieved September 30, 2008, from: <http://www.ohio.com/news/27120469.html>

A Scan of Attributes in County Government Structure

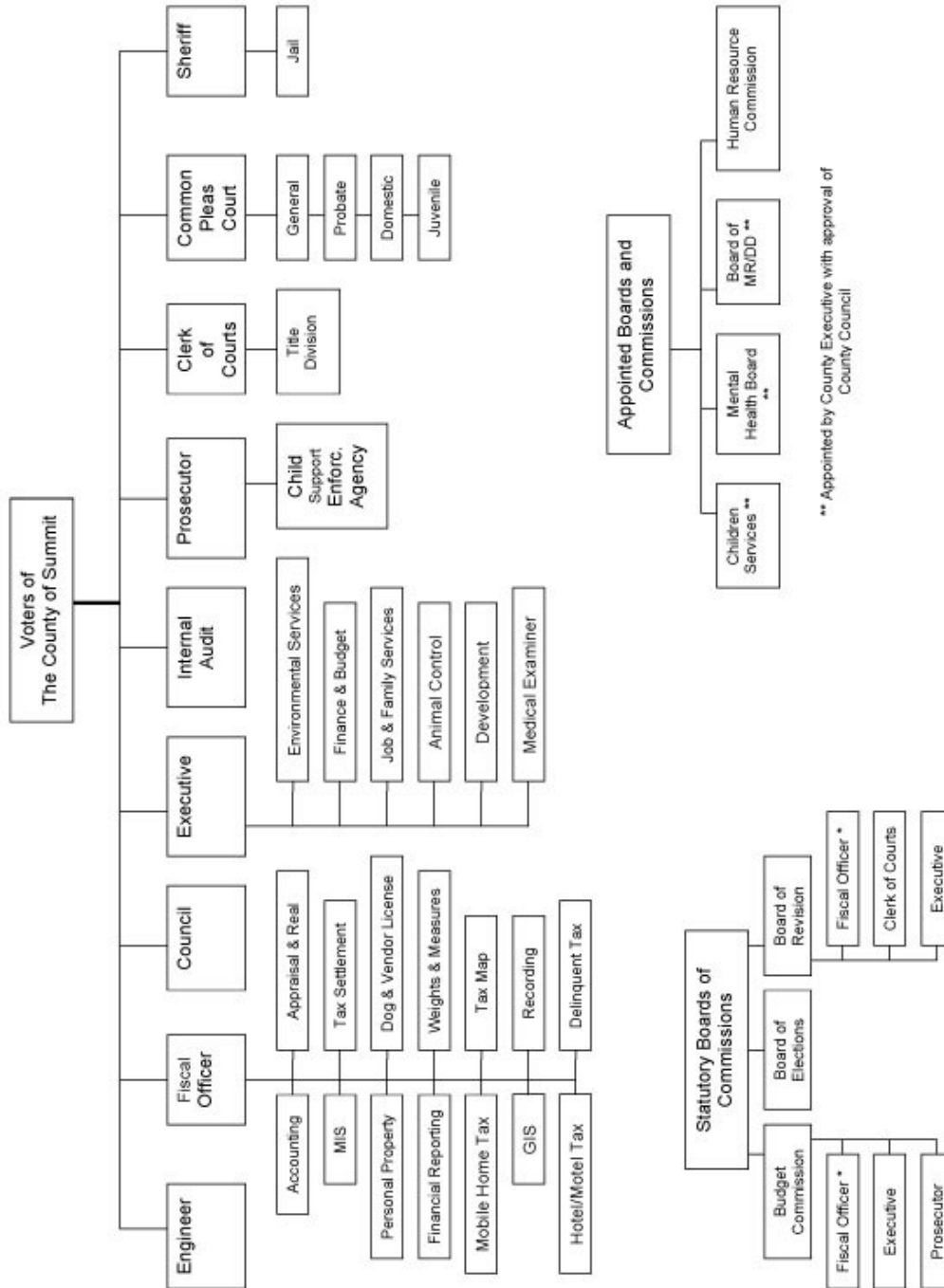


Figure 9

The fiscal officer exercises the powers and performs the duties of an auditor, treasurer, and recorder (property appraisals, homestead exemption, real estate assessments, estate taxes, personal property taxes, etc.), and the county has an appointed Medical Examiner rather than an elected Coroner. In addition, one of the county council members recently proposed (not for the first time) that the elected office of engineer be consolidated and changed to an appointed position of “service director.”³⁵ The county continues to evaluate its structure and amend its charter.

One of the most significant changes to the Summit County charter came in 2000, after a state audit of the county based on allegations of fraud. Voters overwhelmingly approved proposed legislation (Article X, County Internal Auditing) that created an Internal Audit Department, reporting to an Audit Committee, to oversee the operations of the entire county. This was done to improve oversight and accountability. , and Summit County is the only county in Ohio with such a structure. Internal audit departments are prevalent in the southern and western regions of the United States, but there is some disagreement about the superiority of such a department over an elected or appointed county auditor.³⁶

The composition of the Audit Committee is also noteworthy in that it includes two citizens of the county, in addition to the county council president, fiscal officer, and executive (see Figure 10).³⁷

³⁵ Akron Beacon Journal, (2008). “Summit County councilman seeks changes in charter,” Retrieved September 30, 2008, from: <http://www.ohio.com/news/27120469.html>

³⁶ Association of Local Government Auditors, (2005). “Point/Counterpoint Elected vs. Appointed Auditors,” Retrieved September 30, 2008, from: <http://www.governmentauditors.org/content/view/169/123/>

³⁷ Summit County, Ohio, Press Releases, (2007). “The Summit County Internal Audit Department Receives an Unqualified Opinion by the Association of Local Government Auditor’s Peer Review Team,” Retrieved on September 30, 2008, from: <http://www.co.summit.oh.us/internalaudit/PDFs/PRESS%20RELEASE-Peer%20Review11-07.pdf>

Summit County Internal Audit, (2008). “Audit Committee Organization Chart,” Retrieved September 30, 2008, from: <http://www.co.summit.oh.us/internalaudit/PDFs/IAD%20Audit%20Cmt%20Org%20Chart.pdf>

**SUMMIT COUNTY AUDIT COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION CHART
AS MANDATED BY ARTICLE X OF THE SUMMIT COUNTY CHARTER**

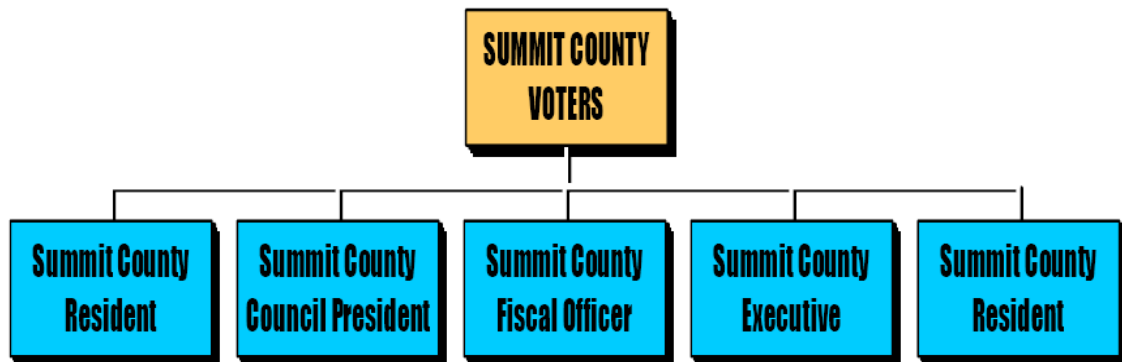


Figure 10

Summit County's adoption of a charter government required many years of effort and resulted in an elected executive/council structural form, with a mix of council members elected at-large and by district. The positions of auditor, treasurer, and recorder were consolidated into the position of fiscal officer; the elected coroner became an appointed medical examiner; and five elected administrative offices were retained. The county continues to consider its administrative functional structure and elected offices.

Administrative Structure

The structure of administrative functions in a county government is dictated by state statutory limitations and other factors and is typically characterized or organized in one of three ways:

- Elected heads of administrative functions or offices (e.g., county treasurer, sheriff, prosecutor, engineer) who are voted in by their constituency
- Appointed heads of administrative functions or offices (e.g., director of finance, law director, public works director) who are appointed by a Board of County Commissioners or County Council
- A combination of the elected and appointed heads of administrative functions

Although the nature (elected or appointed) of the unit or department administrator may be a factor, the actual structure of the departments may have a greater effect on efficient operational functionality. Several of the counties, which have been profiled, serve as examples of professionalized administrative departments utilizing clustered groupings of offices. Counties in which departments are clustered around function have various names for their departments, but the idea is the same: to group departments and functions in ways that increase efficiency and connectivity. This type of structure also offers citizens an opportunity to gain an increased understanding of county structure and services, and seems to foster cooperation and accountability among county administrative departments.

There are various options for the management of administrative services, ranging from a single official at the head of each cluster (such as deputy county executives or managers), to appointed executives or administrators working in collaboration with managers of specific service agencies, as is the case with Mecklenburg County's Focus Area Leadership Teams. Counties may have as few as two elected officers, as is the case in Hennepin County, Minnesota, or as many as eight, not including judges.

There is a wide variety of administrative operating structures utilized by counties across the country. Many county governments have adopted an organizational structure that has professionalized the administration of county functions and reduced the number of elected offices that administer those functions.

In Ohio, the Revised Code mandates the number and type of county administrative offices in the two statutory forms of county government. The mandated county offices include auditor, recorder, treasurer, coroner, engineer, prosecutor, sheriff, and clerk of court. The ORC further requires that voters of the county elect the director of each office (e.g., auditor, treasurer, etc.) at large. The Ohio Constitution provides counties with the freedom to establish a charter government, allowing fewer mandates on the number and election of county administrative offices. In Summit County, Ohio's only chartered county, the electorate maintained a number of administrative offices that were formerly overseen by elected officials, including clerk of court, engineer, prosecutor, and sheriff, and recently added an elected fiscal officer.

Models of Administrative Government Structures

The purpose of this portion of the report is to examine and present alternatives for administrative structure of county government based on the general approach of functional clustering. Two examples have been provided in this section. Mecklenburg County, North Carolina was chosen because it is frequently cited with regard to the professionalization of its government and the cooperative regional approach it

embodies.³⁸ Lake County, Florida, was selected for its simplicity of structure and the logical approach to grouping county functions together thematically.

Mecklenburg County, NC

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, encompassing the metropolitan Charlotte area, is one example of a county government utilizing the functional cluster approach to administrative services (Figure 11). Within the general structure of a Board of County Commissioners type of government, an appointed Executive Team oversees all administrative county departments. The Executive Team consists of a County Manager, three General Managers and an Associate General Manager. These managers provide strategic direction, performance evaluation and other feedback to each of the county department directors. Under the direction of the Executive Team, four clusters known as Focus Areas serve the following functions: **Effective and Efficient Government; Growth Management and Enforcement; Social, Education and Economic Opportunity;** and **Community Health and Safety**. Members of the Executive Team serve on the Focus Area Leadership Teams for each of the four areas.

Each of the Focus Areas is represented by an overarching goal, while encompassing several functions. Each function, in turn, represents a number of services provided by the county. For example, the Focus Area Goal for Effective and Efficient Government is “Provide services in a highly effective, efficient and inclusive manner, and be accountable for results.” Beneath the broad heading, other more specific goals are outlined, such as “Improve Financial Management,” under which Program Categories and Business Strategies are detailed. In this case, the Program Categories are Financial Management / Fiscal Control; Property / Asset Management and Maintenance; and Land / Property and Records Management. Figure 11 illustrates the Mecklenburg County structure.

³⁸ According to Governing Magazine February 2002: GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE PROJECT: REPORT CARD, “Mecklenburg County has a tradition of a strong professional staff and a reputation for good intergovernmental relations.” Mecklenburg County has been the recipient of numerous NACo awards including 2003 Managing For Results, 2005 Service Excellence, and 2004 Strategic Program Review: The Foundation for Performance-Based Budgeting. In 2007, a Public Officials of the Year award was received by the Planning Director of Charlotte/Mecklenburg County, Debra Campbell. Additionally, the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA Journal) cited the successes of Mecklenburg County’s effective use of information technology: “The GIS Internet applications have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of Mecklenburg County’s information services as well as provided services previously unavailable without Internet technology. The county’s efforts have resulted in Mecklenburg County being viewed as a well-governed community by its citizens.” (From: <http://www.urisa.org/files/MecklenburgCOvol17no2-5.pdf>.)

A Scan of Attributes in County Government Structure

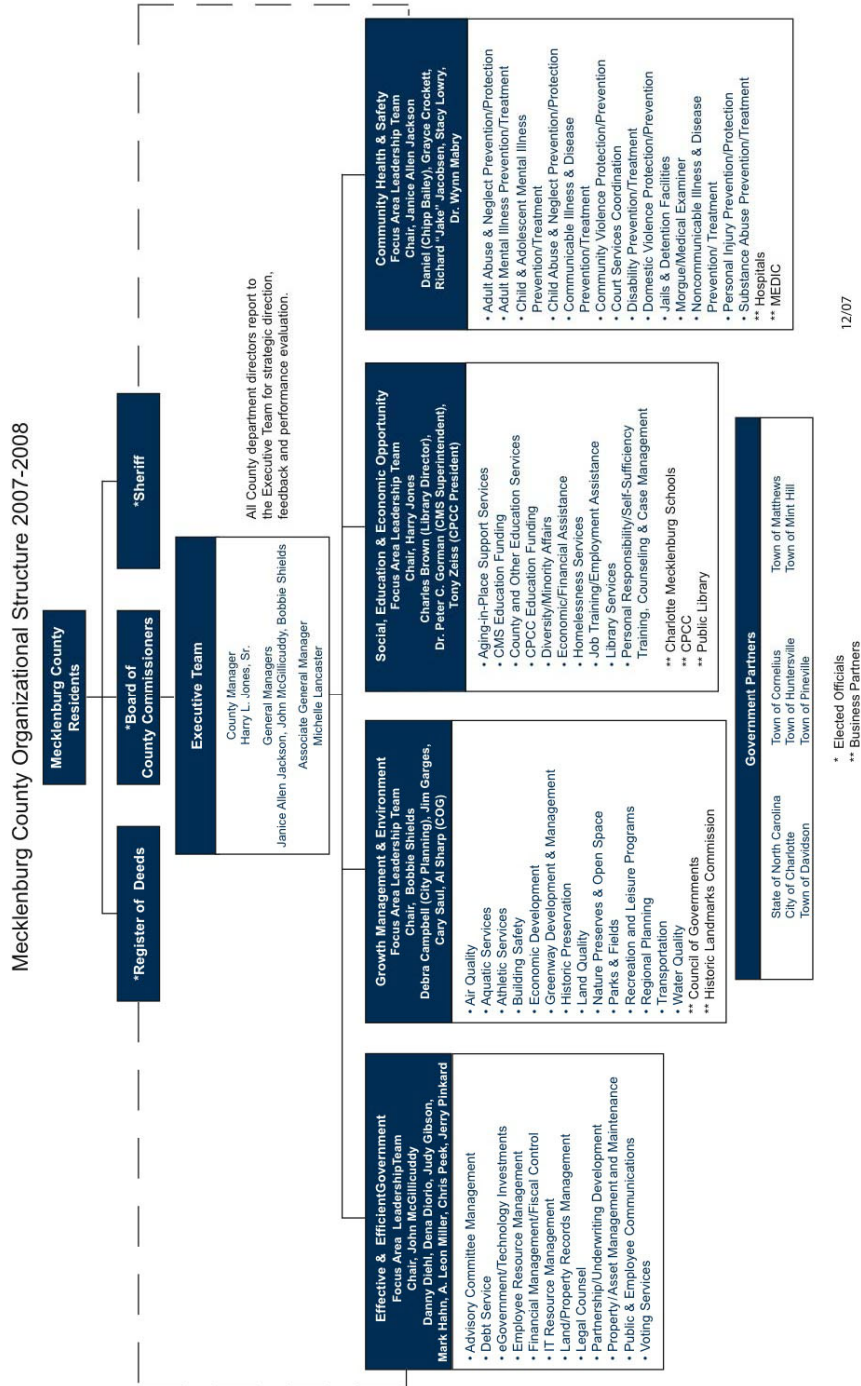


Figure 11

To illustrate one other Focus Area, Community Health and Safety has a simple goal: “Make our community safer and healthier.” Each of the Program Categories and Business Strategies in this Focus Area are grouped into one of the three following headings: “Reduce Injury, Violence and Emotional Harm”; “Increase Efficiency and Cost Accountability of Justice Services”; and “Reduce Preventable / Communicable Disease and Other Health Problems.”

The Executive Team supports and directs each of the four Focus Areas, in coordination with managers of specific functions in that particular cluster. This approach is highly professionalized, with a focus on evaluation, results and efficiency. (Fewer elected positions exist within the structure of Mecklenburg County’s administrative functions than in many other counties; however, even without eliminating any elected positions, a county could shift to a more functionally-oriented approach to operations by consolidating similar services into these sorts of clusters.)

Mecklenburg County utilizes a measurement-based approach to management (Managing for Results or M4R), guided by an Office of Strategic Organizational Improvement. Data are regularly collected and reported in annual performance reports and community/corporate scorecards that allow financial and management decision-making to occur with the support of quantitative measures. It is this process that has led the county to shift to an administrative structure built around program categories and clusters of services delivered.

Mecklenburg County General Manager Bobby Shields expressed in a recent phone interview that M4R has succeeded in breaking down barriers between departments, and helped to identify duplication of services, in the five years since its inception. He stated that the new system has empowered Focus Area Leadership Teams (see county organization chart for more details) to make decisions in order to maximize the efficiency of government services.

Mecklenburg County’s general manager also described changes in the county’s legislative structure. Until 1988, Mecklenburg County had five commissioners, all elected at large. As the County saw rapid population growth, the structure was changed. After 1988, the number of Commissioners changed to seven (4 elected by district; 3 elected at large). Starting in the early 1990s, the number of Commissioners increased to the current structure of nine (6 elected by district; 3 elected at large). Initially, the Commissioners drew the districts, and they are revisited periodically, based on growth and population.

Lake County, FL

Another county with administrative clusters is Lake County, FL. The county has a traditional structure with five county commissioners (elected at-large) and five elected officials: Clerk of Courts, Property Appraiser, Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections, and Tax Collector. Appointed positions include County Manager and County Attorney. Figure 12 depicts the Lake County government structure. Beyond these positions, the administrative functions of the county are grouped into five main clusters of departments under the following headings:

- **Internal Services** is responsible for an Office of Employee Services and Quality Improvement, Office of Information Technology, and Department of Facilities Development and Management.
- **Economic and Strategic Development** contains a Department of Economic Growth and Redevelopment, Department of Growth Management, and Department of Tourism and Business Relations.
- **Environmental Services and Infrastructures** houses a Department of Conservation and Compliance, Department of Environmental Utilities, and Department of Public Works.
- **Citizen Services** covers a Department of Public Safety and a Department of Community Services.
- **Fiscal Services** maintains an Office of Budget and Office of Procurement Services.

Lake County commissioners maintain a set of countywide goals that are performance based and focused on fostering countywide cooperation. In addition, there is an office of information outreach to assist county offices and departments with internal and external communications, particularly with web and multimedia development, graphic design, and communication with the media. The office functions similar to an advertising agency and helps the county maintain a "consistent, powerful, and professional image."

The County Manager reports to the Board of County Commissioners, and oversees each of the five administrative clusters. The Departments belonging to each of those clusters employ Directors who report to the County Manager, as well as support staff appropriate to that office. For example, the Department of Economic Growth and Redevelopment is structured with a Senior Planner, an Executive Associate, and the Director of Economic Growth and Redevelopment, who is accountable to the County Manager.

A Scan of Attributes in County Government Structure

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF LAKE COUNTY GOVERNMENT Fiscal Year 2008

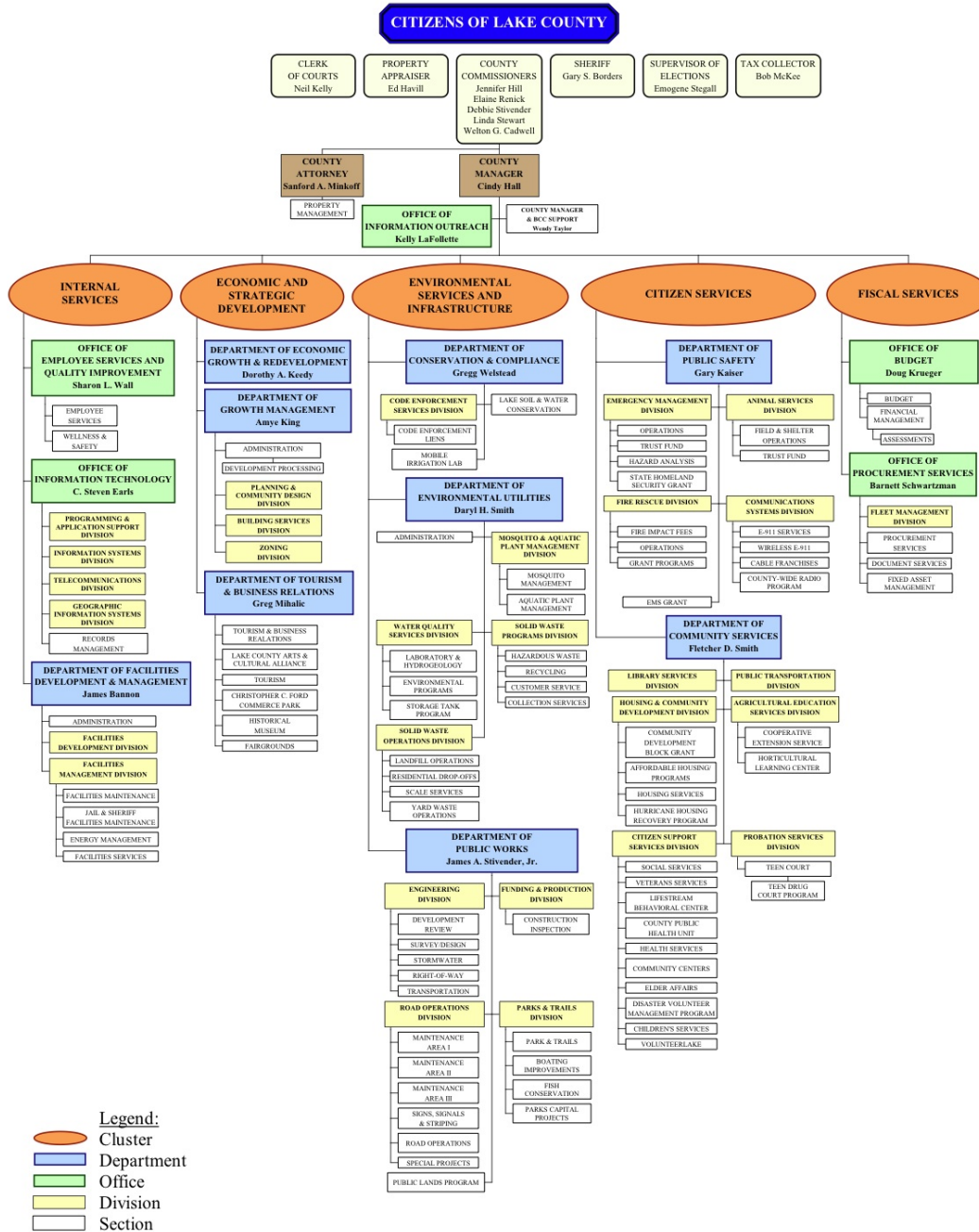


Figure 12

Fiscal Year 2008 - April 8, 2008

Additional U.S. County Clusters

Many other counties have their administrative functions clustered into four to six groups, including Frederick County, MD; Cobb County, GA; Pitt County, NC; York County, VA; Shelby County, TN; El Paso County, CO; and Bernalillo County, NM. The cluster headings for these counties generally consist of some variation of the following: Community Services, Public Services (or Public Safety), Planning and Development (or Land Use and Environment), Financial Services (or Budget Administration), and Public Works (or Support Services). The organizational charts for some of these counties are included in the appendices.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: HB 572 Cuyahoga County Government Reform

**Appendix B: Organizational Charts for Counties with Clustered
Functions**

**Bernalillo County, NM
King County, MD
Montgomery County, MD
Multnomah County, OR
Shelby County, TN
Suffolk County, NY**

Appendix C: Resources

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APPENDIX A: HB 572 CUYAHOGA COUNTY GOVERNMENT REFORM

SECTION 703.30. (A) The Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform shall develop recommendations by which Cuyahoga County may, with a vote of the people, restructure, reform, or otherwise reorganize the county government to implement a more effective, efficient, and financially and economically viable county government structure to better serve the people of Cuyahoga County.

(B)(1) There is hereby created the Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform, consisting of nine members. The President of the Senate shall appoint three members, one of whom may be a person who is recommended by the Minority Leader of the Senate. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint three members, one of whom may be a person who is recommended by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. The Governor shall appoint three members. All the members shall be residents of Cuyahoga County. The initial appointments shall be made not later than fifteen days after the effective date of this section. Vacancies shall be filled in the manner provided for original appointments.

(2) The initial meeting of the commission shall be within thirty days after the effective date of this section. At the initial meeting, by a majority vote of the commission members, the commission shall elect one of its members to serve as chairperson of the commission.

(C) The commission may consult with and obtain assistance from a business organization within Cuyahoga County for research and data gathering related to its mission. The commission may use moneys available to it for this purpose.

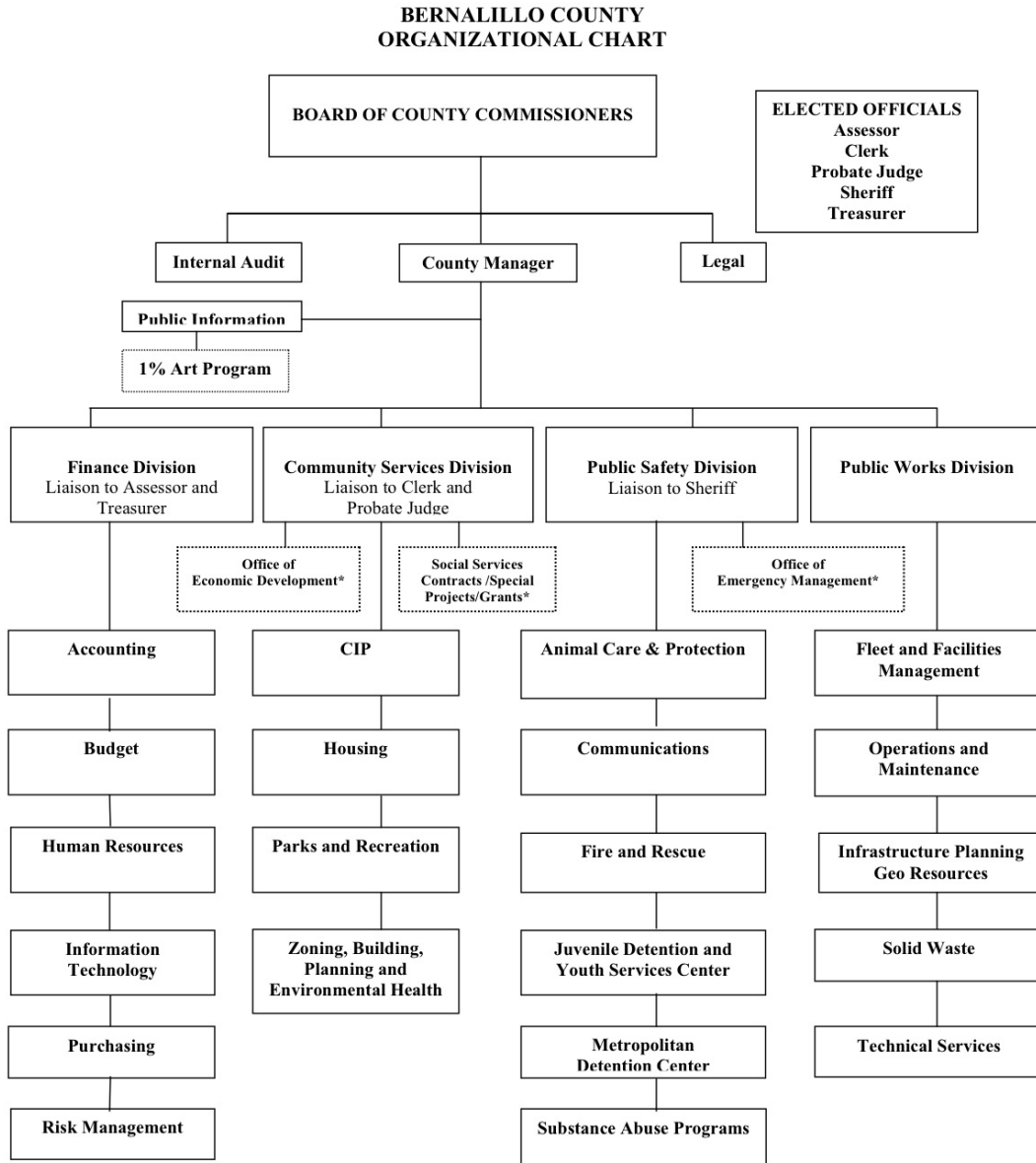
(D) All meetings of the commission are subject to section 121.22 of the Revised Code. All records of the commission are public records for purposes of section 149.43 of the Revised Code.

(E) Not later than November 7, 2008, the commission shall issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the chairpersons and ranking members of the standing committees of the General Assembly that deal with local government issues. The recommendations of the commission shall be in legislative form. The Legislative Service Commission shall provide staff and resources necessary so that the recommendations are in proper legislative form.

(F) The commission ceases to exist upon submitting its report.

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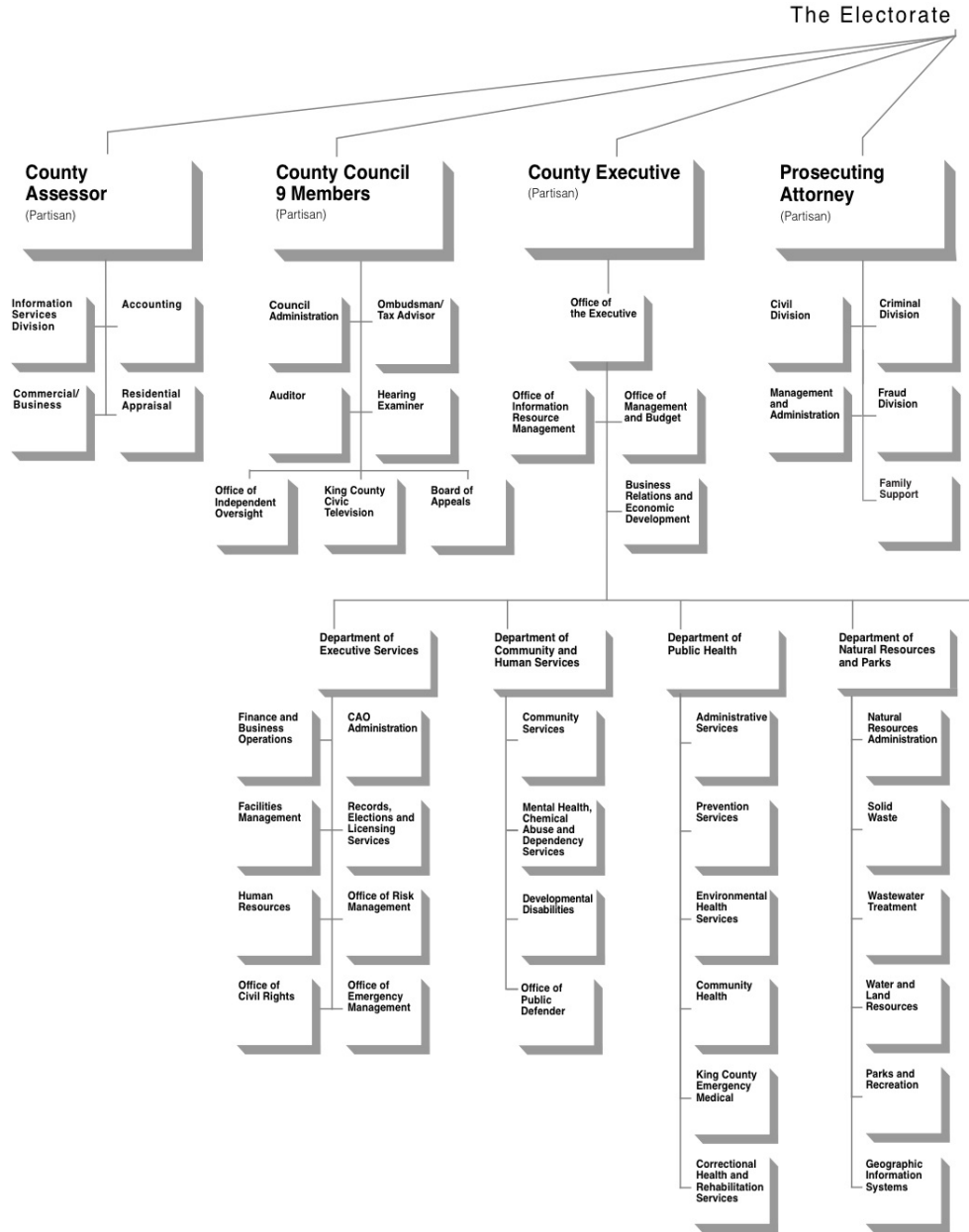
APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS FOR COUNTIES WITH CLUSTERED FUNCTIONS



*Organizational unit of county government reporting to assigned Deputy County Manager/Director
Last updated 11/7/2007

Figure 13: Bernalillo County, NM

**A Scan of Attributes in
County Government Structure**



2 0 0 7 K I N G C O U N T Y

Figure 14: King County, WA

**A Scan of Attributes in
County Government Structure**

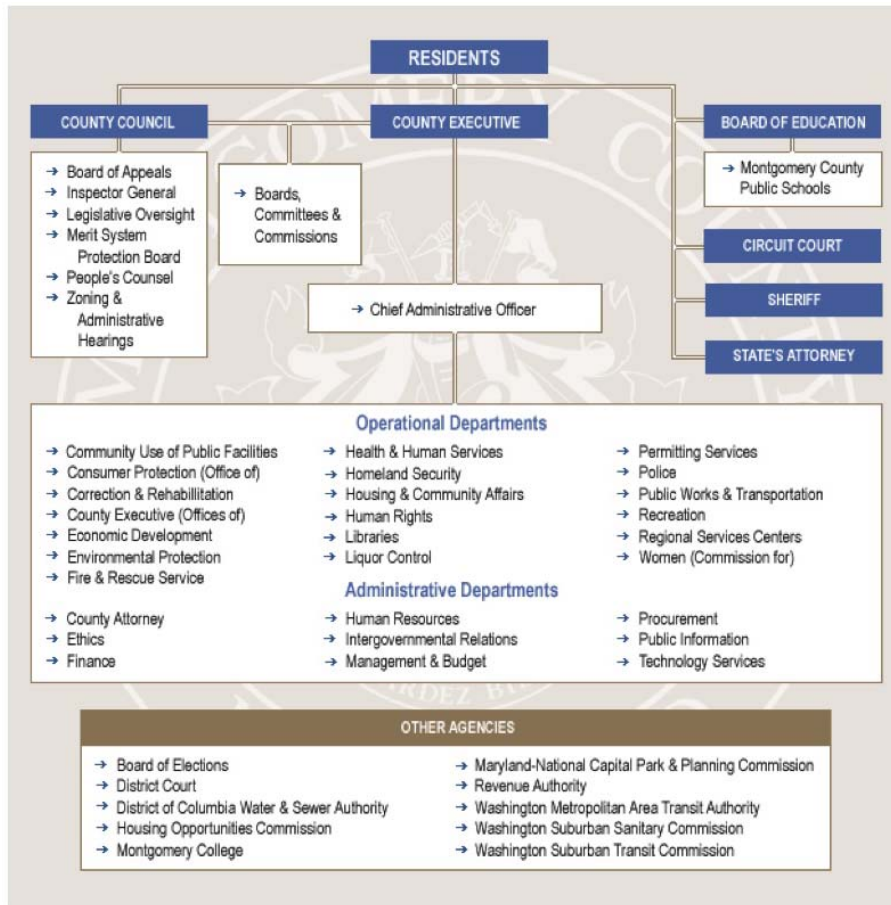


Figure 15: Montgomery County, MD

**Multnomah County
Organizational Chart**

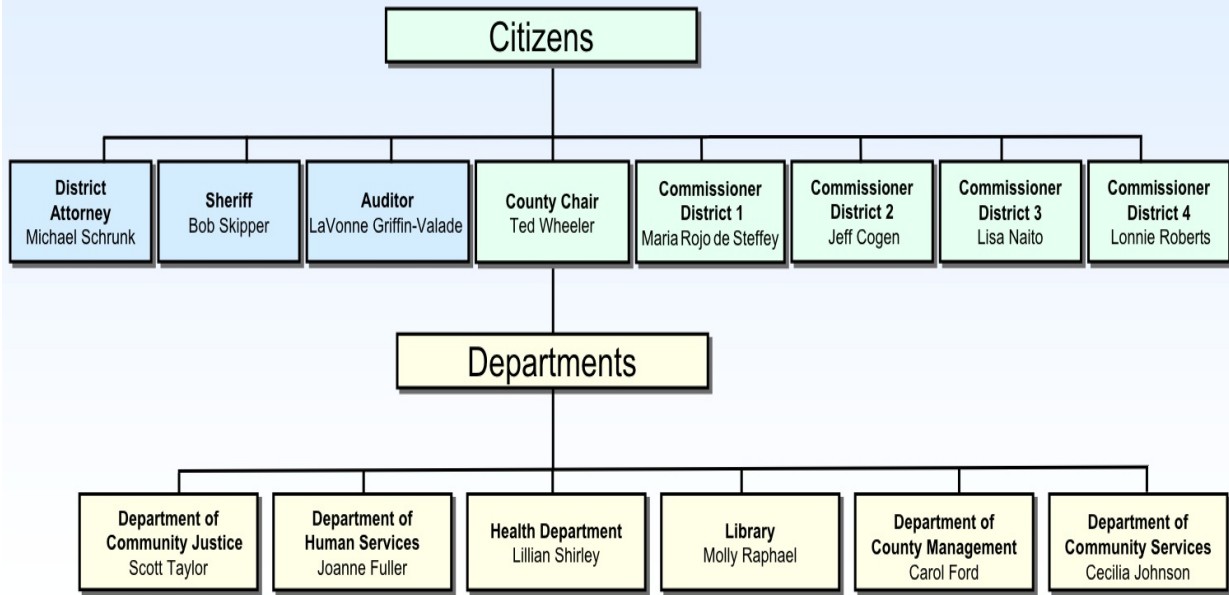


Figure 16: Multnomah County, OR

**A Scan of Attributes in
County Government Structure**

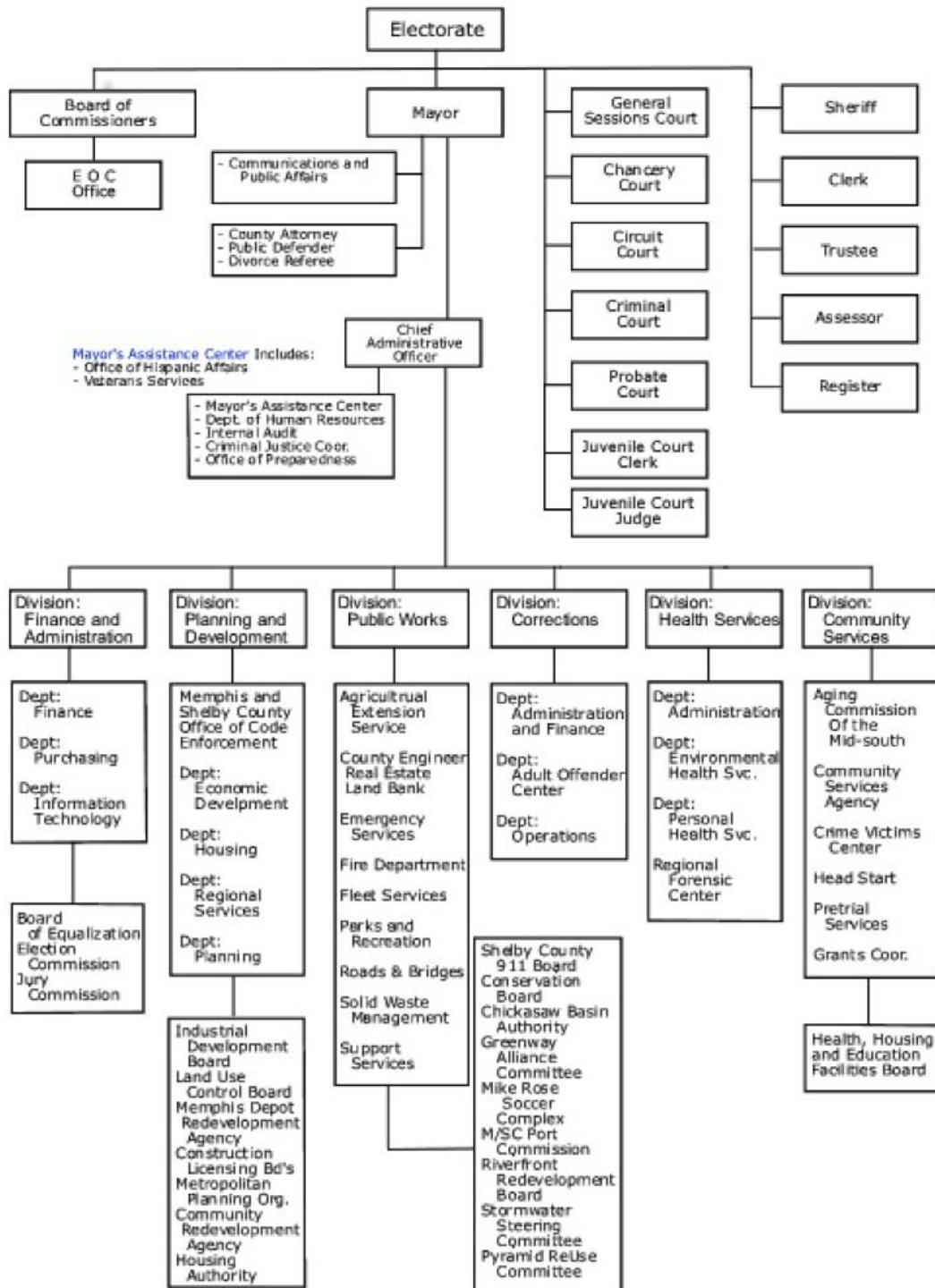


Figure 17: Shelby County, TN

SUFFOLK COUNTY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

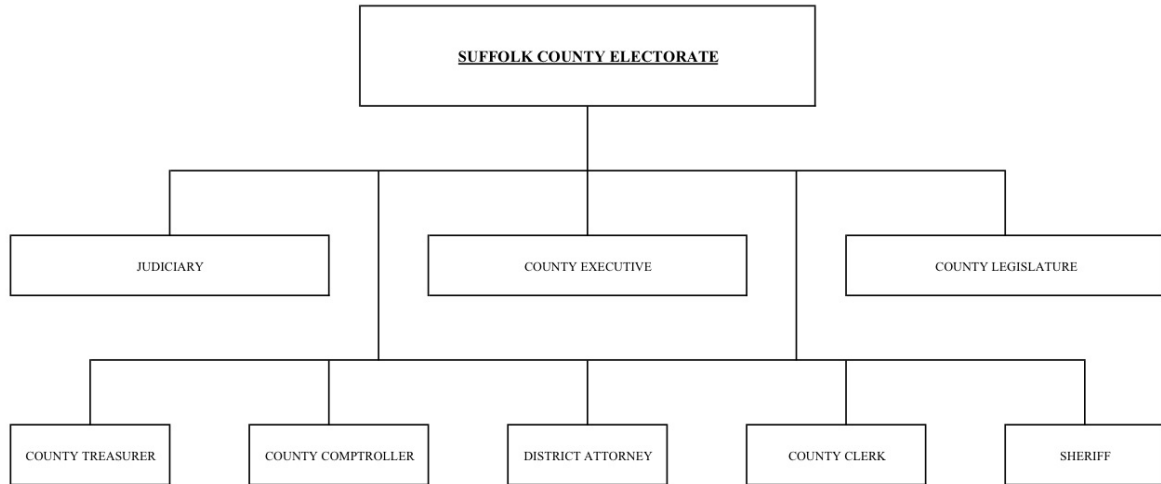


Figure 18: Suffolk County, NY

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