

Background and Current Structure:

The Aurora Charter has not been amended or updated since 1985 and needs updating and modernizing to changes that have occurred since 1985. In addition, the City Council believes that the form of government in Aurora should change from its current form – strong mayor, to a city manager-council form of government. This change is driven by a desire to separate citizen volunteer leadership from day-to-day professional administration.

The City of Aurora currently operates under a "strong mayor" or mayor-council form of government. Under the current City Charter, the elected Mayor serves as the chief executive and administrative officer of the city. In this role, the Mayor directly oversees day-to-day city operations, manages department heads, prepares the municipal budget, and directs administrative staff, in addition to presiding over the City Council.

Proposed Changes:

If approved, Measure [24-525] would amend the Aurora City Charter to transition the city from a strong mayor system to a council-manager form of government, effective January 1, 2027.

Under the proposed Council-Manager structure:

Professional City Manager: Administrative and operational authority would transfer from the Mayor to a professional City Manager appointed by the full City Council based on executive qualifications and experience. The City Manager would oversee daily operations, hire and direct city staff, enforce city ordinances, and prepare the proposed annual budget.

City Council Role: The Mayor and City Council members would collectively serve as the legislative and policy-making body for the city. The Council would set overall policy goals, pass local laws, approve the municipal budget, and hire, evaluate, or remove the City Manager, City Attorney, and Municipal Court Judge.

Mayor Role: The Mayor would remain an elected member of the City Council, serving as the presiding officer during meetings, representing the city at ceremonial functions, and voting on policy decisions, but would no longer handle administrative operations or personnel decisions.

Reasons for the Proposed Governance Change:

The City Council placed this charter amendment on the ballot following recommendations from the Charter Review Committee to modernize city administrative governance.

Proposed reasons for transitioning to a council-manager form of government include:

Professional Administration: Assigning daily management to a trained, professional administrator rather than an elected official with varying administrative background.

Policy vs. Operational Separation: Separating political leadership and policy-making (Council) from daily administrative management (Manager).

Clearer Accountability: Centralizing council oversight over one appointed executive who serves at the pleasure of the full elected Council.

Effect of a Vote:

A YES vote approves the charter amendment, transitioning Aurora to a council-manager form of government.

A NO vote retains the existing mayor-council ("strong mayor") form of government.