



Memorandum

Date: 3/23/2021
Meeting of: City Council Study Session

File No. SS 21-021
Type: Study Session

TO: Members of the City Council
FROM: Mayor Angela Birney
DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR CONTACT(S):

Executive	Malisa Files	425-556-2166
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DEPARTMENT STAFF:

Executive	Nina Rivkin	Chief Policy Advisor
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TITLE:

Form of Government Review

OVERVIEW STATEMENT:

At the December 3, 2020, Council meeting on the proposed 2021-2022 budget, Council requested a study session in the first quarter of 2021 to discuss the classification and form of government for the City. The City of Redmond is a Non-Charter Code City with a Mayor-Council form of government, also referred to as a "Strong Mayor" form of government.

☒ **Additional Background Information/Description of Proposal Attached**

REQUESTED ACTION:

☒ **Receive Information** ☐ **Provide Direction** ☐ **Approve**

REQUEST RATIONALE:

- **Relevant Plans/Policies:**
N/A
- **Required:**
N/A
- **Council Request:**
Council requested information on options and forms of government in other cities, historical information on the City's classification and form of government, and information on the 2003 ballot measure that proposed to change the City's form of government from Mayor-Council to Council-Manager.
- **Other Key Facts:**
See information below

OUTCOMES:

Council will discuss Redmond's classification as a Non-Charter Code City and the options of a First Class City or Charter-

Code City, as well as changing from a Mayor-Council to a Council-Manager form of government.

City Classifications

There are four classifications of cities:

- First Class Cities: city with a population of 10,000 or more at the time of organization or reorganization that has adopted a charter; the charter defines the structure and authorities under which the city operates
- Second Class Cities: city with a population over 1,500 at the time of organization or reorganization that does not have a charter and does not operate as a code city under the Optional Municipal Code (RCW 35.01.020)
- Towns: population of less than 1,500 at the time of organization and does not operate under the Optional Municipal Code; it is no longer possible to incorporate as a town
- Code Cities: cities that operate under the Optional Municipal Code (RCW 35A, authorized in 1967); a city with a population over 10,000 may adopt a charter to become a Charter-Code city.

Code cities have the greatest degree of local control and flexibility, as they have any power not prohibited by the State Constitution nor in conflict with State law. In First Class and Charter cities, the charter determines the roles, structure, and authorities for the city. The charter must be approved by the voters, and any change to the charter requires voter approval.

City Form of Government

There are two principal forms of government for a city, Mayor-Council and Council-Manager.

- A Mayor-Council form of government consists of a mayor elected at-large, responsible for administration of the city, and an elected city council, elected at-large or from districts, which serves as the legislative authority responsible for the adoption of policy for the city (RCW 35A.12).
- A Council-Manager form of government consists of an elected city council which serves as the legislative authority responsible for the adoption of policy for the city, and appoints a city manager who is responsible for administration of the city; the city council may only deal with the administrative service solely through the city manager (RCW 35A.13.110). The mayor presides at council meetings and is generally selected by the council, though the voters of an Optional Municipal Code City or the charter of a First Class City or Charter-Code City may provide for the mayor to be directly elected by the voters.

Information on classification and form of government in other cities is attached. The number of cities in Washington by classification and form of government, including First Class cities, is included in Attachment A. Information on cities in King County, their classification, and form of government is included in Attachment B.

Historical Information on the City of Redmond's Classification and Form of Government

The City incorporated as a Fourth Class Town on December 30, 1912, changed its classification to a Third Class Town on June 14, 1961, and became a Non-Charter Code City on October 6, 1970. These documents are included in Attachments C-E.

2003 Ballot Measure Proposing to Change the City's Form of Government to Council-Manager

In spring 2002, the Council decided to re-examine the Mayor-Council form of government and appointed an eight-member citizen committee to study the issue and provide recommendations. The committee was aided by a consultant, the Cedar River Group, and a citizen survey was conducted that summer by the Gilmore Research Group.

In August, the committee recommended a change in the form of government to Council-Manager with a directly elected full-time mayor; the Report is included in Attachment F. Both recommendations required a separate ballot measure to implement. If the Council-Manager ballot measure was successful, the incumbent mayor would join the council as an 8th member until the expiration of the mayor's term. Only a city council operating under a Council-Manager form of

government can propose a ballot measure to directly elect a mayor in a Council-Manager form of government.

The City Council adopted a resolution on December 3, 2002, to place a measure before the voters at a special election on March 11, 2003, to change the form of government to Council-Manager. Of the 23,898 registered voters, 7,382 voted (30.9%) in the election. The ballot measure failed, with 2,207 yes votes (29.9%) and 5,175 no votes (70.10%).

COMMUNITY/STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT:

No community or stakeholder outreach has occurred.

- **Timeline (previous or planned):**
N/A
- **Outreach Methods and Results:**
N/A
- **Feedback Summary:**
N/A

BUDGET IMPACT:

Total Cost:

Funding has not been provided in the adopted 2021-2022 budget for a potential change to the classification of the City or form of government.

Approved in current biennial budget: ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A

Budget Offer Number:

N/A

Budget Priority:

N/A

Other budget impacts or additional costs: ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

If yes, explain:

Any change in the classification of the City or form of government would require extensive community involvement including citizen survey work (conducted by a consultant with expertise in conducting surveys) to inform a Council decision, preparation of legal documents, and King County election costs for any ballot measure to be submitted to the voters. City costs in 2002 for consultant work were \$63,750. King County election costs for a 2022 election range from \$61,000-\$97,000 depending on when an election would be held, at the spring (February or April), primary, or general election.

Funding source(s):

N/A

Budget/Funding Constraints:

N/A

☐ **Additional budget details attached**

COUNCIL REVIEW:

Previous Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
N/A	Item has not been presented to Council	N/A

Proposed Upcoming Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
N/A	None proposed at this time	N/A

Time Constraints:

There are no time constraints for Council discussion. If Council chooses to continue discussion and ultimately advance any change in the City classification or form of government, Council will need to provide direction on a scope of work, and funding will need to be provided for community engagement and potential legal and election costs.

ANTICIPATED RESULT IF NOT APPROVED:

No action is proposed.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A: Washington Cities, Classification and Form of Government
- Attachment B: King County Cities, Classification and Form of Government
- Attachment C: Articles of Incorporation as a Fourth Class Town, December 1912
- Attachment D: Resolution Changing Redmond's Classification to a Third Class City, June 1961
- Attachment E: Ordinance Adopting the City of Redmond Classification of Non-Charter Code City with Mayor-Council Plan of Government, October 1970
- Attachment F: Redmond Governance Study, Citizens' Committee Final Report, August 2002