



Directly Elected Mayor vs. Rotational Mayor Governance Structure Frequently Asked Questions

- I. How does Monrovia currently select its Mayor?
 - a. Monrovia currently elects its Mayor directly once every two years in odd-numbered years.

- II. Has Monrovia always selected its Mayor by direct election?
 - a. No, Monrovia actually used to employ a rotational Mayor system where every member of the City Council was eligible to serve as the mayor on an annual basis.

- III. Really? When did Monrovia change to our current process? And why did that change occur?
 - a. In the 1960's – 70's, Monrovia was a struggling community and the City leaders at the time thought that having a directly elected Mayor might enhance our image when we went looking for Federal and State economic development grants.
 - b. Given this thought, in 1976, the citizens of Monrovia approved a ballot measure that changed our process of selecting the Mayor.
 - c. Prior to the change, the Mayor was selected each year by the City Council from amongst the five elected members. In that manner, each individual that was elected to the City Council had an opportunity to become the Mayor. After the transition, the Mayor became elected directly once every two years.
 - d. Unfortunately, after transitioning to a system of governance where we had a directly elected Mayor, the City did not gain any advantage in obtaining Federal and State economic development grants. We learned over time that other governmental institutions and development interests were focused solely on financial commitments from cities and developers.
 - e. In addition, according to many elected and appointed officials connected with the City, the experiment of having a directly elected Mayor has yielded little beneficial results. Not only did Monrovia fail to garner added respect in the eyes of State and Federal grant agencies, the change resulted in increased infighting amongst and between members of the elected City Council.
 - f. To that end, it is important to note that today, all five members of the City Council – including the directly elected Mayor – all have equal authorities here in Monrovia, however, the Mayor is in many instances presumed to speak and act for everyone on the City Council.



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- IV. Does Monrovia have to directly elect its Mayor?
- a. No, Monrovia does not have to directly elect the Mayor. It is up to the community as to how the Mayor is selected, and we can either continue having a directly elected Mayor, or we can transition back to a rotational system where the Mayor is selected each year from among the five elected City Council members.
- V. What additional authority / power does the directly elected Mayor have compared with the rest of the City Council?
- a. The short answer is none! While the directly elected Mayor is tasked with chairing the City Council meetings and ratifying board and commission appointments as recommended by the City Council, in terms of actual authority / power, the directly elected Mayor has no additional legal authority than that which is bestowed upon the rest of the City Council members.
- VI. Then why have a directly elected Mayor? What are the advantages of directly electing the Mayor?
- a. Those that advocate for a directly elected Mayor have articulated that such a system of governance provides more responsiveness to the community. In that manner, those supporting our current system indicate that the directly elected Mayor serves as the head of the community and can better exert leadership and power over the rest of the City Council.
 - b. Furthermore, those that believe we should retain our current system have outlined that a directly elected Mayor is in the best position to reflect the majority opinion of the community, is more responsive to the community, and better represents the will of the people.
 - c. In addition, many have noted that the presence of a directly elected Mayor does have its place in local government in large metropolitan cities, such as Los Angeles and San Francisco. Those types of cities have directly elected Mayors who serve as executive officers. In that role, those directly elected Mayors are responsible for the actual operations of the municipal organization, including the hiring and firing of all department managers.
 - d. In addition, those that advocate for a directly elected Mayor have articulated that cities which elect council members from individual districts, such as Pasadena, also benefit from having a directly elected Mayor from across the entire community. In that way, the directly elected Mayor can better bring all of the individual council members and their districts together to unify the city.



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VII. And what are the advantages of having a rotating Mayor system of government?

- a. As we have seen in Monrovia, having a directly elected Mayor sometimes creates situations where it is difficult for the City Council as a whole to work together as a cohesive unit. In our current form of government (the council-manager form of government), where the City Council appoints a city manager to serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the City, those that believe in a rotating system to select the Mayor argue that the public is best served when the authorities and power of the elected body are shared between all five members of the City Council.
- b. In addition, it is vitally important for the City Council to be able to work well together, because under our current council-manager form of government, the Mayor does not wield any executive authority, and it takes a majority of the City Council in order to implement any policy direction.
- c. To that end, by selecting the Mayor through a rotating system, the importance of every single City Council position is emphasized, as any of the elected representatives could be selected to serve as Mayor. This creates a situation where the public is better represented by their local elected City Council members.
- d. In addition, those that advocate for a rotational system have shared that under such structures, each member of the City Council is in effect “rehearsing” to serve as Mayor, and a greater sense of mutual respect between members of the City Council would be achieved.
- e. Finally, it has also been articulated that the current directly elected Mayor form of government has at times created unhealthy factions and divisions within the community. This distracts from the Monrovia-way of doing things, where we have historically had the ability to disagree and then get back to working together for solutions to community priorities.

VIII. How do other cities select their mayor?

- a. Monrovia’s way of directly electing the Mayor is an anomaly in the San Gabriel Valley, where we are one of only 6 cities with a population of under 100,000 people that have a directly elected Mayor.
- b. In fact, in the San Gabriel Valley, for those cities with a population of under 100,000 people, 78% of those communities (21 out of 27 cities) utilize a rotational mayoral system.
- c. This is likely due to the fact that in smaller communities, where local issues are of paramount importance, it has been found that sharing the position of Mayor is conducive to developing a more cohesive City Council, which leads to better policy decisions being made.



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- IX. Would changing to a rotating Mayor system of governance cost more money, and will it take any more time to administer than the current directly elected Mayor form of government?
- a. As it currently stands, the City rotates the Mayor Pro Tem assignment between members of the City Council on an annual basis, in addition to City Council liaison assignments. Therefore, adding the position of Mayor to the list of positions being rotated each year would not cause any discernable increase in costs or time.
- X. Why is the issue of having a directly elected Mayor vs. transitioning to a rotating system being raised at this point in time?
- a. The issue is being raised at this time because all five members of the current City Council, including the directly elected Mayor, believe that it would be in Monrovia's best interest to transition back to having a rotating system where the Mayor is selected annually amongst the City Council members.
 - b. Each member of the City Council has had individual experiences that have led them to that unanimous policy recommendation, however, the City Council does not have the authority to make that particular change.
 - c. In fact, only the voters of Monrovia can decide if it makes more sense to continue utilizing a directly elected Mayor vs. employing a rotational system.
- XI. What is the City doing about the directly elected Mayor vs. rotating Mayor system of governance?
- a. The City has created a Directly Elected Mayor Advisory Review Committee made up of individuals from throughout the community. That Committee has been reviewing issues related to the matter during the past few months.
 - b. As part of the review process, the Committee is now soliciting feedback from members of the community regarding the issue of the directly elected Mayor here in Monrovia, with a goal of presenting their findings to the entire City Council in late July 2016.
 - c. At that point in time, the City Council will decide on next steps related to the overall process, however, it is important to emphasize again that only the voters can transition our system of governance from a directly elected Mayor to a rotational Mayor system.
 - d. If the issue is put before the voters, it will likely occur during the April 2017 Citywide Municipal Election.