

Summary of Council Composition and Method of Election for Council and Mayor for Virginia Independent Cities

<i>City</i>	<i>Approx. 2021 population</i>	<i>Council Composition and Method of Election for Council & Mayor</i>
Richmond City	(1) 227,000	9 Council members elected by ward, 1 Mayor elected at large (5 of 9 wards). Terms not staggered (4 years).
<i>Select Comparison Cities</i>		
Norfolk	(2) 235,000	5 Council members elected by ward, 2 by super-ward, 1 Mayor elected at large. Term staggered (4 years), with election for 5 ward members alternating with elections for super-ward members and Mayor.
Virginia Beach	(3) 458,000	10 Council members elected by ward, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years). (Current system recently adopted under federal guidance.)
Chesapeake	(4) 251,000	8 Council members and 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).
<i>Other Virginia Cities</i>		
Alexandria	(5) 155,000	6 Council members and 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms not staggered (3 years).
Bristol	(6) 17,000	5 Council members elected at large, 1 of which serves as Mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Buena Vista	(7) 7,000	6 Council members elected at large, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years for Council, 2 years for Mayor).
Charlottesville	(8) 46,000	5 Council members elected at large, 1 of which serves as Mayor. Terms staggered (4 years)
Colonial Heights	(9) 18,000	7 Council members elected at large, 1 of which serves as Mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Covington	(10) 6,000	5 Council members elected by ward, 1 of which serves as Mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Danville	(11) 42,000	9 Council members elected at large, 1 of which serves as Mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Emporia	(12) 6,000	7 Council members elected by ward, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).
Fairfax	(13) 24,000	6 Council members elected at large, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms not staggered (2 years).
Falls Church	(14) 14,000	7 Council members elected at large, 1 of which serves as Mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Franklin	(15) 8,000	6 Council members elected by ward, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years for Council, 2 for Mayor).
Fredericksburg	(16) 28,000	4 Council members elected by ward, 2 Council members elected at large, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years, alternating between ward and at-large elections).
Galax	(17) 7,000	7 Council members elected at large, 1 of which serves as Mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Hampton	(18) 138,000	6 Council members elected at large, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).

Harrisonburg (19) 51,000	5 Council members elected at large, 1 of which serves as Mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Hopewell (20) 23,000	7 members elected by ward, 1 of which serves as Mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Lexington (21) 7,000	6 members elected at large, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).
Lynchburg (22) 79,000	7 members; 4 elected by ward, 3 at large, 1 of which serves as mayor. Terms staggered (4 years, alternating between ward and at-large elections).
Manassas (23) 43,000	6 Council members elected at large, 1 Mayor elected at large. Term staggered (4 years).
Manassas Park (24) 17,000	6 Council members elected at large, 1 Mayor elected at large. Term staggered (4 years).
Martinsville (25) 14,000	5 members elected at large, 1 of which serves as mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Newport News (26) 185,000	6 members elected from 3 wards, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).
Norton (27) 4,000	5 members elected at large, 1 of which serves as mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Petersburg (28) 33,000	7 members elected by ward, 1 of which serves as mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Poquoson (29) 13,000	6 members elected from 3 wards, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).
Portsmouth (30) 98,000	6 members elected at large, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).
Radford (31) 16,000	4 members elected at large, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).
Roanoke (32) 99,000	6 members elected at large, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).
Salem (33) 25,000	5 members elected at large, 1 of which serves as mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Staunton (34) 26,000	7 members elected at large, 1 of which serves as mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Suffolk (35) 96,000	7 members elected by ward, 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).
Waynesboro (36) 23,000	4 members elected by ward, 1 at large, 1 of which serves as mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Williamsburg (37) 16,000	5 members elected at large, 1 of which serves as mayor. Terms staggered (4 years).
Winchester (38) 28,000	8 members elected from 4 wards (2 per ward). 1 Mayor elected at large. Terms staggered (4 years).

Notes: 21 Virginia cities have an elected Mayor, 17 have a Mayor elected from among Council members. 35 of 38 cities have staggered terms for Council. Richmond is the only city with 4 year City Council terms, not staggered.

In Richmond, the elected Mayor appoints a Chief Administrative Officer with consent of Council, who serves at pleasure of the Mayor. In all other Virginia cities, Council appoints a City Manager, who serves at pleasure of Council.

In Richmond, the Mayor is not a member of City Council. In the vast majority of Virginia cities, the Mayor is a full voting member of City Council and also presides over City Council; in a small number of cases, the Mayor presides over Council, but does not vote except to break ties.

Appendix 2. Summary of Form of Government for Southeastern Cities, Population 180,000 to 300,000

City (population)	Form of Government	Members of Council	At-Large/Ward	Role of Mayor
Birmingham, AL (198k)	Mayor-Council	9	Ward	CEO
Huntsville, AL (217k)	Mayor-Council	5	Ward	CEO
Mobile, AL (185k)	Mayor-Council	7	Ward	CEO
Montgomery, AL (199k)	Mayor-Council	9	Ward	CEO
Little Rock, AR (202k)	Council-Manager	10	7 Ward/3 at-large	Various*
Augusta, GA (201k)	Mayor-Commission	10	Ward	Leads Commission
Columbus, GA (206k)	Mayor-Council	10	8 Ward/2 at-large	Various*
Baton Rouge, LA (222k)	Mayor-Council	12	Ward	CEO
Shreveport, LA (184k)	Mayor-Council	7	Ward	CEO
Durham, NC (286k)	Council-Manager	7	3 Ward/4 at-large	Leads Council
Fayetteville, NC (209k)	Council-Manager	10	9 Ward/1 at-large	Leads Council
Greensboro, NC (298k)	Council-Manager	9	5 Ward/4 at-large	Leads Council
Winston-Salem, NC (250k)	Council-Manager	9	8 Ward/1 at-large	Leads Council
Chattanooga, TN (182k)	Mayor-Council	9	Ward	CEO
Knoxville, TN (193k)	Mayor-Council	9	6 Ward/3 at-large	CEO
Chesapeake, VA (251k)	Council-Manager	9	8 Ward/1 at-large	Leads Council
Newport News, VA (185k)	Council-Manager	7	6 Ward/1 at-large	Leads Council
Norfolk, VA (235k)	Council-Manager	7	5 Ward/2 super ward	Leads Council
Richmond, VA (227k)	Mayor-Council	9	Ward	CEO

- In Columbus, Georgia, the Mayor nominates key administrative officers, can initiate their dismissal, presides over the Council, and has a tie-breaking vote on Council
- In Little Rock, Arkansas, the Mayor presides over the council and nominates the city manager
- This list includes mid-sized cities from the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia.
- Each of these cities have directly elected Mayors.