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Does the Form of Government Really Matter?

Town of Elgin – Mayor Melissa Emmons
City Manning – Mayor Julia Nelson
City of Sumter – Mayor David Merchant

Annual Meeting July 18, 2026



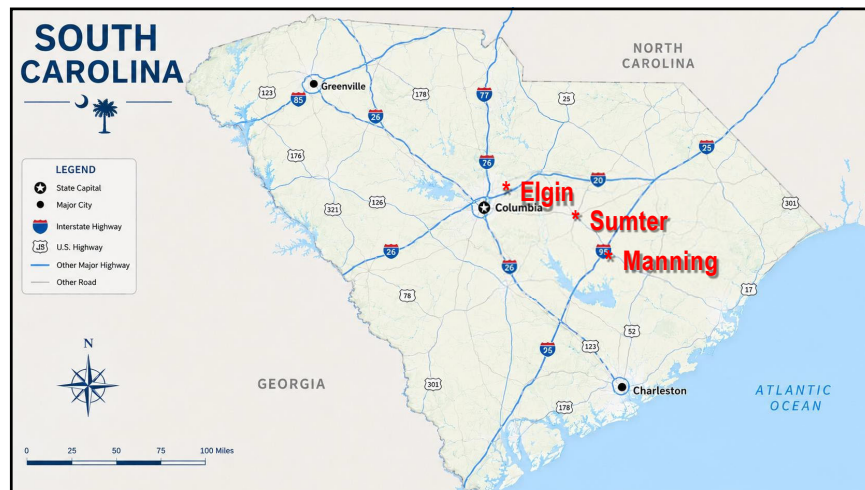
Form of Government Panel

Town of Elgin (1,634 pop. Mayor-Council Form)
• Mayor Melissa Emmons

City of Manning (3,878 pop. Council Form)
• Mayor Julia Nelson

City of Sumter (43,463 pop. Manager Form)
• Mayor David Merchant





Forms of Government

Does the Form of Government Really Matter?

FOG in South Carolina

Two distinct areas of functional responsibility in local governments regardless of the form:

1. Policy
 - Policy = Council
 - The “What” and “Why” of issues
2. Administration
 - Administration / Operations = Staff
 - The “How,” “When” and “Where” of issues

FOG in South Carolina

Three Authorized Forms of Municipal Government

- Mayor-Council - 133
(83 under 1K, 3 over 25K)
- Council - 103
(38 under 1K, 3 over 25K)
- Council-Manager – 35
(1 under 1K, 11 over 25K)

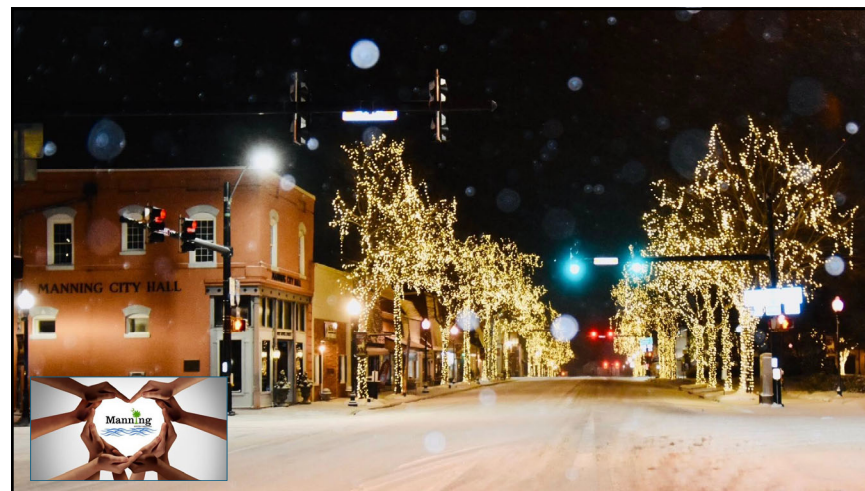
To Be Clear

All municipal governments in South Carolina operate under one of three forms of government: mayor-council, council or council-manager. Each form can be equally effective.

The Municipal Association of South Carolina does not make recommendations on which form a city or town chooses.









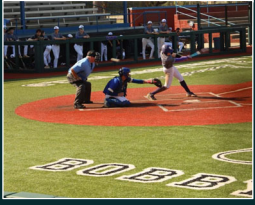




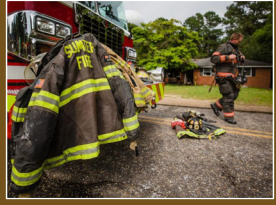
INVEST.



INVITE.



SERVE.





Panel Discussion

Does the Form of Government Really Matter?



Municipal Association
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Question/Answer

Does the Form of Government Really Matter?



Municipal Association
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Resources

SC Code of Laws Title 5
Chapters 5,9,11,13

Municipal Association of
South Carolina

www.masc.sc
(Keyword:
forms of government)

Forms and Powers of Municipal Government

AN ELECTED OFFICIAL'S GUIDE FROM THE
MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Municipal Association
of South Carolina

**NEW
UPDATE**

Municipal Association
of South Carolina

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