



GENERAL LAW

VS.



HOME RULE CHARTER

Understanding the Key Differences

Presented by David Sanchez



CRANDALL 2025

Crandall is currently governed by General Law

Kaufman County Cities

Forney – Home Rule

Kaufman – Home Rule

Terrell – Home Rule

Crandall – General Law

Scurry – General Law

Talty – General Law

Cottonwood – General law

Oak Ridge – General Law

Post Oak Bend City – General Law

Kemp – General Law

Mabank – General Law

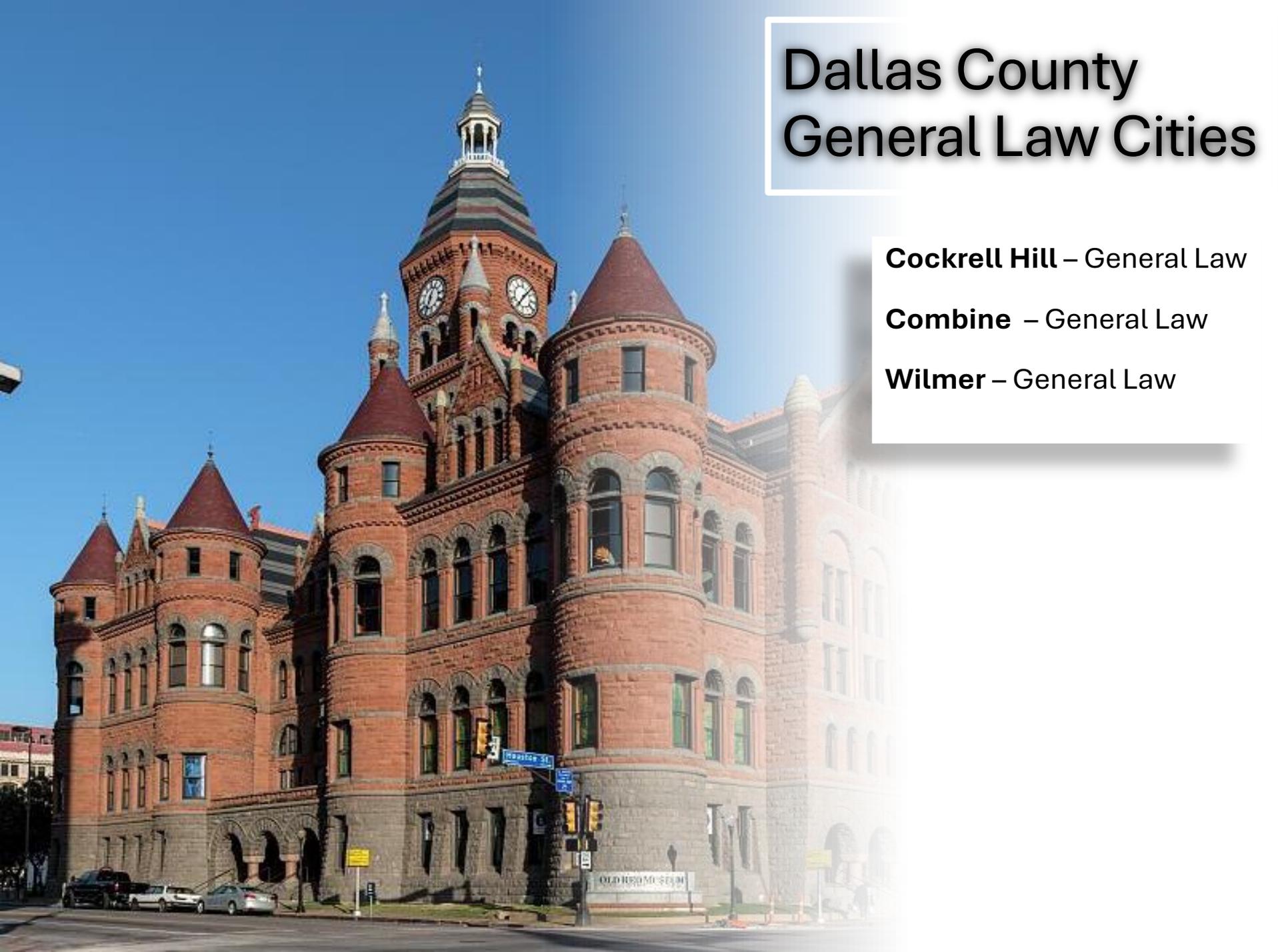


Dallas County General Law Cities

Cockrell Hill – General Law

Combine – General Law

Wilmer – General Law



WHAT IS GENERAL LAW?



A city governed by laws set by the state.



Powers are limited to what state statutes specifically allow.



Typically applies to smaller cities with populations under 5,000.



Ordinances or policies must be approved within state limitations.

Attributes of General Law

Clear Legal Boundaries

Actions are based on state rules, ensuring consistency.

Simpler

No need to create or manage a home rule charter

Limited Authority

Focuses on core services without overreach

State Oversight

Guided and monitored by state laws for compliance



WHAT IS HOME RULE?



Local self-governance with minimal state interference



Government decisions made closest to the people



Local self-government is the cornerstone of democracy



Enables the city to establish its own rules for municipal government



City populations over 5,000

KEY DIFFERENCES

GENERAL LAW

vs.

HOME RULE

LIMITED AUTHORITY

can only abide by state statutes

STATE-CONTROLLED

must follow Texas legislature's rules

SMALLER CITIES

typically, under 5,000 in population

CANNOT CREATE LOCAL LAWS

unless authorized by the state

LESS FLEXIBILITY

to address local needs



MORE AUTONOMY

anything abiding by Texas Constitution

LOCALLY CONTROLLED

governed by city charter voters

LARGER CITIES

must have a population over 5,000

CAN CREATE LOCAL LAWS

and policies confined by constitution

MORE FLEXIBILITY

to address community needs

WHAT IS A CITY CHARTER?



Like a municipal constitution



Written and adopted by citizens through an election



Defines and limits power, duty, and responsibility of local government



Establishes form and structure of local government



Amendable, based on local needs and preferences



Provides local governance instead of only state laws



Gives citizens control through Elections, Referendums, Initiatives, and Recall processes



ELEMENTS OF HOME RULE CITIES



Greater local control



Citizens define government structure



Ability to adopt local laws



More public participation



Flexibility in managing city affairs

KEY COMPONENTS IN A HOME RULE CHARTER



Government Structure

Defines number of Councilmembers, terms, and election process

Outlines duties of the Mayor, Council, and staff



Citizen Rights & Powers

Initiative, Referendum, & Recall for direct democracy

Determines citizen participation in government decisions



Municipal Authority

Establishes type of government used
Defines city's right to annex, tax, and ensure public safety

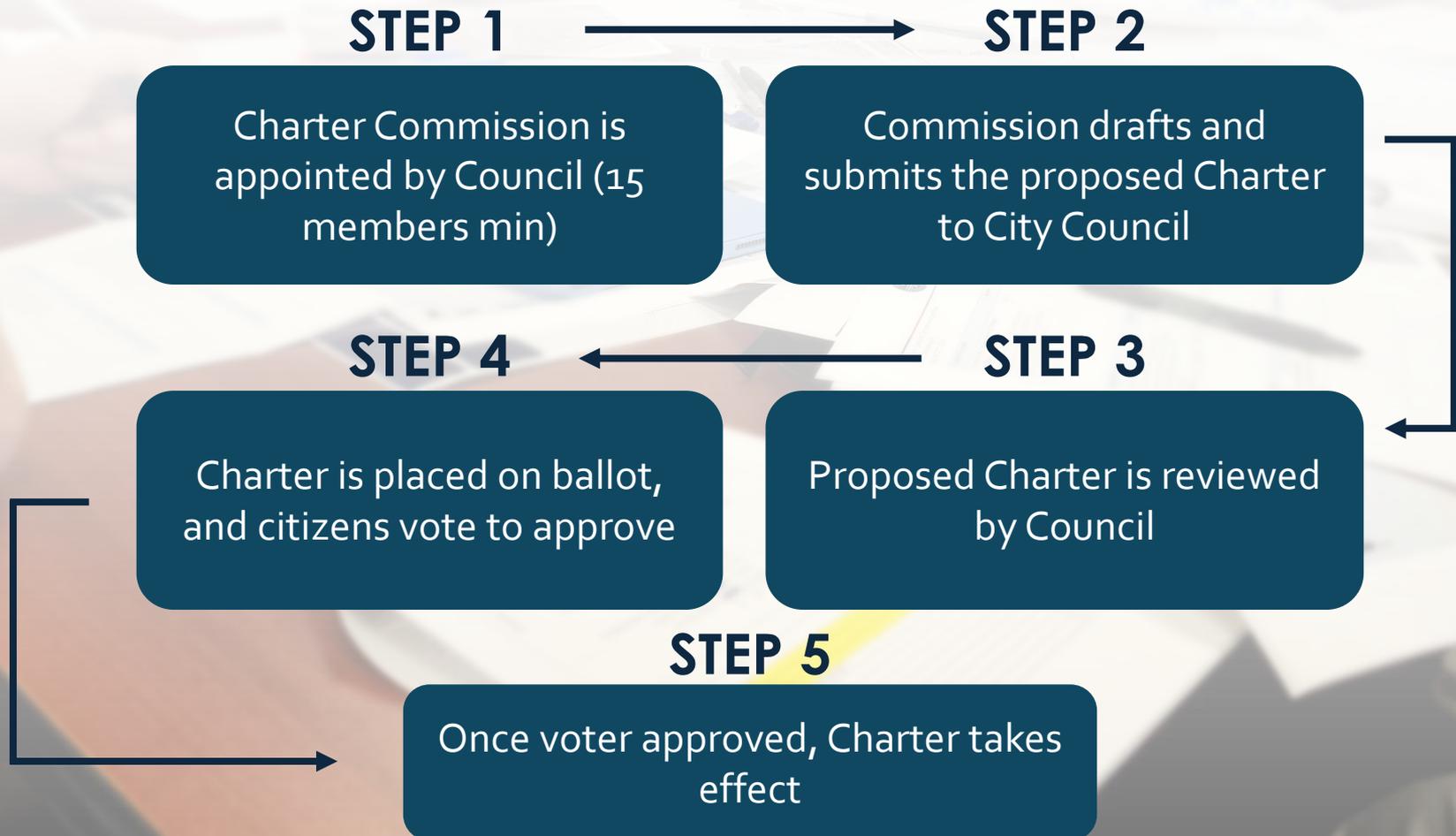


Ethics & Procedures

Sets rules for governance and accountability
Provides framework for amendments and updates

HOW IS A HOME RULE CHARTER ADOPTED?

Governed by Chapter 9 of the Texas Local Government Code includes these steps:



Charter examples for Crandall



Number of Council members + Mayor



Term limits for council



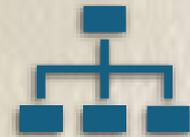
Council eligibility (registered voter, live in city for at least 12 months, etc)



Establish how ordinances shall be passed.



Appoint/remove key officials (City Manager, Attorney, Judge, Secretary)



Establish administrative departments.



Regulate Private Services – Council can set fares for private transportation services (like taxis)



**CITIZEN
INVOLVEMENT
IN THE HOME
RULE PROCESS**



Public Meetings & Input

Charter Commission holds public meetings to gather citizen feedback
Joint workshop with City Council for additional input



Transparency & Accessibility

Charter and reference materials are published online for public review
Charter presented to Council for placement on the ballot

CONCLUSION



Both General Law and Home Rule cities operate within the legal framework of the State of Texas but have different levels of autonomy.



Transitioning to Home Rule allows for customized governance, but it also comes with added responsibilities and local oversight.



The decision to adopt a Home Rule Charter should be based on community needs, growth, and long-term goals, ensuring the best governance structure for the city and its residents.



**Thank you for your
interest and
engagement in your
city's government!**

