

## **New York City Government at a Glance**

NYC has a **strong mayor-council type government**. This means that an elected mayor is the chief executive and administrative head of the City, and the council is the City's policy-making body.

The **City Charter** is the governing document of the City.

- The Charter is a fluid document, last reviewed in 1989, but currently being revised again.
- The Charter can be adopted and revised in 3 ways:
  - The appointment of a charter commission through City Council action
  - A petition followed by a referendum approving the creation of a commission
  - Mayoral action

New York has **three citywide offices**:

- **Mayor**
  - Works with Borough Presidents to prepare and submit budget
  - Signs or vetoes all legislation passed by the Council.
  - Appoints heads of city agencies and departments.
- **Comptroller**
  - Conducts performance analyses of city agencies
  - Issues Financial reports
  - Settles and adjusts claims against city
  - Maintains city bank accounts
- **Public Advocate**
  - Go-between for people having trouble with city services
  - Monitors compliance of city agencies with City Charter
  - Sponsors City Council legislations
  - Votes in council in event of tie
  - Interim mayor in the event of emergency

The **City Council** is the legislative body of NYC Government

- 51 members from 51 council districts
- 35 committees (such as consumer affairs, land use, aging, etc.)
- Operates as a check on the Mayor's power.
- Approves city budget
- Plays a powerful role to play in land use decisions, which can greatly affect neighborhoods, as they have the power to approve zoning changes, housing and urban renewal plans, community development plans, and the disposition of city-owned property

Each Borough also has a **Borough President**:

- Work with mayor to prepare executive budget
- Review and comment on land use decisions
- A largely ceremonial position since charter revision in 1990.

There is one **Community Board** for each of the City's 59 Community Districts:

- Up to 50 unsalaried community members serve on each board. They are appointed by the Borough President, and half of them are recommended by local City Council members.
- Have important advisory role in land use and zoning issues, the City budget, municipal service delivery, and other matters related to community welfare.
  - The Community Board can initiate its own plans for community growth and improvement.
  - Community Boards meet with City agencies to make recommendations in the City's budget process.