The City of Cerritos was incorporated upon a vote of its residents in April of 1956 and administered under the Council/Manager form of government, which was established in the Charter of the City in 1958. The five-member City Council, elected at large to staggered, four-year terms, serves as the City's chief policy-making body. Council Members may serve only two consecutive terms. The Mayor, selected by the Council, is its presiding officer and serves a one-year term. In the Mayor's absence the Mayor Pro Tem assumes his or her responsibilities.

A City Manager, appointed by the City Council, advises the City Council on matters of concern to the City and directs the day-to-day operations of the City's main departments: Administrative Services, Community and Safety Services, Community Development, Public Works, and the Theater Department. Two other positions are appointed by the City Council: the City Attorney and the City Clerk/Treasurer.

Advisory Boards, made up of individuals appointed by the City Council, provide guidance in determining how to meet the City's needs and include the following: Economic Development Commission, Fine Arts and Historical Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, Property Preservation Commission, Community Safety Committee, and the Let Freedom Ring Committee.

The City Council holds public meetings in the Council Chambers at the City Hall on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. The public is encouraged to attend Council and Commission meetings, or tune their television to Cerritos TV3 to watch local government at

work. Meetings can also be viewed through an archive available on the City's website at www.ci.cerritos.ca.us.