



Charter

Government

What it means to you and to Frederick County

1. A CHARTER BOARD IS APPOINTED OR ELECTED.
2. A CHARTER IS DRAFTED BY THE CHARTER BOARD.
3. THE CHARTER IS PRESENTED TO THE VOTERS, IN A REGULAR OR SPECIAL ELECTION.
4. THE VOTERS APPROVE THE CHARTER BY A SIMPLE MAJORITY.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO BECOME A CHARTER COUNTY



	FEDERAL	STATE	LOCAL
EXECUTIVE BRANCH (Enforces & Implements the Law)	President	Governor	Board of County Commissioners
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH (Writes the Law)	Congress	General Assembly	Board of County Commissioners
JUDICIAL BRANCH (Interprets the Law)	Supreme Court	Court of Appeals	Circuit and District Courts (State Administered)

LEVELS & BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

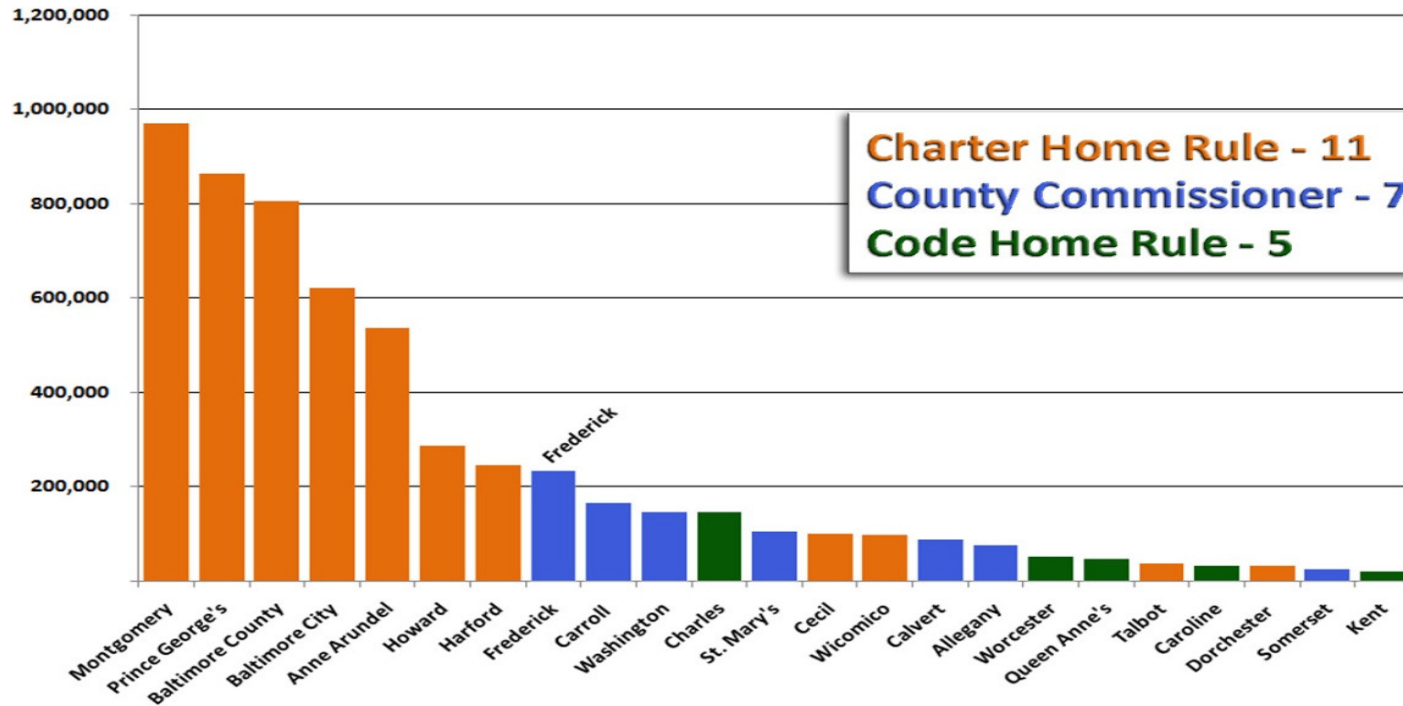
- LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE CONSIDERED CREATURES OF THE STATE WHICH GRANTS ALL LOCAL AUTHORITY & POWER
- IN MARYLAND THERE ARE TWO LEVELS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT WITH THREE FORMS
 - MUNICIPALITIES (Charter)
 - COUNTIES (Commissioner, Code, or Charter)

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT –
where does the power
come from?**



County Government Type by Population in Maryland

2010 U.S. Census Data



MARYLAND COUNTIES BY TYPE AND POPULATION

- **A CHARTER IS SIMPLY A DOCUMENT THAT SPELLS OUT THE AUTHORITY AND STRUCTURE OF A LOCAL GOVERNMENT.**
- **IT'S A MINI CONSTITUTION FOR THE COUNTY.**



WHAT IS A CHARTER?

COMMISSIONER	CHARTER
<p>Form of Government – determined by the State through the General Assembly.</p>	<p>Form of Government – determined by a Charter - established and amended only by the voters.</p>
<p>Authority – limited. General Assembly has the power to pass local laws for the County.</p>	<p>Authority – broad. Local laws are the responsibility of the County Council.</p>
<p>Executive & Legislative Functions – BOCC manages both as a committee with Commissioners having equal power..</p>	<p>Executive & Legislative Functions – County executive responsible for executive function & County Council for legislative as determined by the voters and set forth in the Charter.</p>

COMPARE - CHARTER AND COMMISSIONER GOVERNMENT

COMMISSIONER	CHARTER
Number of Commissioners – determined by the General Assembly.	Number of County Council members – determined by the voters and set forth in the Charter.
Bonds – determined by the General Assembly (except for School bonding).	Bonds – determined by the voters as set in the Charter.
Civil fines/infractions – determined by the General Assembly.	Civil fines/infractions – determined by the County Council.
Referenda on laws –none allowed for BOCC ordinances, for Gen Assembly local laws 10% of voters must petition.	Referenda on laws – determined by the voters and set forth in the Charter.

COMPARE - CHARTER AND COMMISSIONER GOVERNMENT

1. Authority and functions of elected officials.
2. Elected and Appointed positions.
3. Term limits for elected officials.
4. District or at-large election of Council.
5. Referendum procedures.
6. Compensation amounts for elected officials.
7. Budget process.
8. Process for passing local laws.



WHAT CAN WE INCLUDE IN A CHARTER?

- Ask the citizens of Frederick County for their opinions regarding these choices.
- Review what the other charter counties have done and assess their experience.
- Write a charter based on all of the public inputs and the Board's best judgment of what will be most effective for managing the affairs of our county in the 21st century.

How to write a good charter

- A CHARTER ALLOWS *THE VOTERS* TO MAKE THE RULES UNDER WHICH COUNTY GOVERNMENT WILL OPERATE.



WHY CHARTER?

MYTH

- 1. A Charter will increase the cost of government.**
- 2. A Charter will make the government too powerful.**
- 3. An elected County Executive will have too much power.**
- 4. Charter government is new and untested.**

Charter Mythbusters

REALITY

- 1. False. Talbot County adopted Charter 25 years ago, is the 6th least expensive county in MD.**
- 2. False. Government authority is the same – a charter just moves local issues from state to county authority.**
- 3. False. A County Executive has only as much power as the Charter creates.**
- 4. False. Charter government is all around us – the City of Frederick, the Towns of New Market, Thurmont, Emmitsburg etc. (12 in Frederick County) are all charter governments.**

Typical Hot Topics

- **County Executive:**

*Elected or Appointed? Responsibilities? Term Limits?
Compensation?*

- **County Council:**

*Members 5, 7, 9? Districts or At Large? Responsibilities? Term
Limits? Compensation?*

- **Transition:** *How and when will the government switch from
the County Commissioner form to the Charter Home Rule
format?*

What do you want in your charter ?



We believe that being selected to serve on the Charter Board and being tasked to design a proposed charter form of government for Frederick County in the 21st century is both a civic duty and an honor.

We believe that placing this trust in us obligates us to act in the best interests of all of the people of Frederick County.

In so doing, we therefore willingly pledge to set aside our personal, professional, business and political interests to the higher criterion of what would be best for the County and its people. To help learn this, we will widely engage the public to tell us about the kind of government that they want.

The final charter design that we will place before the electorate will be the result of our best efforts to integrate and reach consensus on all of the viewpoints brought forward over the months.

In explaining that design and our rationale for choosing it, we will seek to reach all voters so that they will be able to make a fully informed decision on the charter referendum.

Frederick County

Charter Board Pledge
