

Democracy With a Small d Comparison Matrix

Laguna Beach, Seal Beach, and selected Orange County cities

Purpose

This is a factual comparison aid, not a ranking of cities and not a claim that one election system is always better. It shows structural choices that may be relevant to voter choice, representation and checks on concentrated political power.

The candidate-focused video omits the introductory election-reform discussion because it did not produce clear candidate responses. No candidate answer was altered. Because Measure E and term limits remain matters of public interest, this appendix supplies the factual foundation for written consideration.

Selected structural features

City	Council election	Term limits	Majority or runoff	Mayor selection
Laguna Beach	At-large, multi-seat	No	No	Council selects mayor
Seal Beach	Five districts	Two consecutive four-year terms	Yes; runoff if needed	Council selects mayor
Aliso Viejo	District-based	No	No	Council selects mayor
Anaheim	District-based	Yes	No	Voters elect mayor
Brea	At-large	No	No	Council selects mayor
Buena Park	District-based	Yes	No	Council selects mayor
Costa Mesa	District-based	Yes	No	Voters elect mayor
Cypress	District-based	Yes	No	Council selects mayor
Dana Point	District-based	Yes	No	Council selects mayor
Fountain Valley	At-large	Yes	No	Council selects mayor
Fullerton	District-based	Yes	No	Council selects mayor

“Selected Orange County cities” means this table is illustrative, not a complete survey. Municipal rules can change and should be verified against each city’s current charter or municipal code before publication.

Question for candidates

Should Laguna Beach continue electing City Council members in a multi-seat, at-large plurality election when a winning candidate may receive votes on fewer than half of ballots cast? Should Laguna study reforms such as a majority threshold with a runoff, district elections, ranked-choice voting or term limits? What problem would each reform address, and what tradeoffs would it create?

A related question is whether Measure E should be understood as one possible check on the accumulation of political power, while recognizing that term limits do not by themselves change the voting method by which councilmembers are elected.

Sources

Seal Beach Official Charter, Sections 400, 404, 422, 500–509 and 515: <https://sealbeachca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/CITY-CHARTER-2014-Final.pdf>

Orange County Registrar of Voters certified election results: <https://ocvote.gov/elections/election-results>

Prepared by Advocates for Laguna Residents PAC ID #1455392. This document presents questions for public discussion and does not endorse a candidate or a particular reform.