Attachment 2 – General Law City and Chart City Pros and Cons

Type	Pros	Cons
General Law City	**Clear statewide framework:** Operations are guided by the California Government Code, reducing ambiguity in interpretation and implementation. **Lower administrative complexity:** Fewer city-specific governance documents or procedures to maintain. **Lower legal exposure:** Following established state rules minimizes litigation risk around governance authority. **Cost-efficient:** No need to draft, adopt, or amend a city charter; avoids election costs. **Predictable processes for staff:** Standardized rules streamline training, onboarding, and compliance.	**Limited local autonomy:** Must adhere to state-mandated procedures even when they do not align well with local priorities or operational efficiency. **Less flexibility in procurement and contracting:** Required to follow Public Contract Code rules that may slow project delivery. **Governance rules are fixed:** Changes to council structure, election sequencing, or administrative organization are constrained by state law. **Innovation constraints:** Difficult to pilot or tailor policies because statewide uniformity often limits local customization.
Charter City	**Greater control over municipal affairs:** Ability to create local rules for elections, contracting, governance structure, public works delivery, and other local functions. **Local procurement flexibility:** Cities may adopt alternative bid thresholds, design-build processes, and other tools that can accelerate projects and reduce costs. **Governance customization:** Can adjust council size, district election structures, term limits, or the form of government through the charter.	**Higher legal risk:** Cities must continually assess whether a given issue is a “municipal affair” or a “matter of statewide concern,” which can lead to litigation if unclear. **Requires significant legal and administrative capacity:** Drafting, maintaining, and interpreting a charter will demand more time from the City Attorney’s Office. **Costly to adopt or amend:** Charter processes require voter approval, specialized drafting, and extensive community engagement.

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	Policy innovation: Ability to design tailored programs reflecting local needs rather than applying statewide norms. **Opportunity for cost savings:** More flexible public contracting rules can improve efficiency in capital projects. **Stronger local identity:** A charter can codify community values and governance priorities.	**Not exempt from matters of Statewide Concern:** Despite broader autonomy, state mandates still apply in areas such as housing (RHNA, SB 35), environmental laws, ethics, transparency, elections administration, and labor standards. **Ongoing maintenance:** Charters often need periodic updates as legal standards evolve, creating long-term administrative obligations.