How Glendora Selects Its Mayor

More than a century of council-led leadership and what the historical record shows

In Glendora, the selection of the Mayor has never been decided by a vote of the public. Since the City's incorporation on November 13, 1911, that responsibility has rested with the City Council itself. This tradition has stretched more than a century and is rooted in the structure of California general law cities. Understanding how that process works, and how it has evolved, offers important context for residents who want to know their local government.

The Current Process

Today's framework for selecting the Mayor was established by City Council resolution in 2004. Each year, as part of the Council's annual reorganization, the five-member Council selects one of its own to serve as Mayor and another to serve as Mayor Pro Tem. The selection is made by a majority vote during a public meeting.

The Mayor Pro Tem serves as the presiding officer in the Mayor's absence and is a key part of the City's leadership structure. As with the Mayor, this position is part of the Council's annual selection process, which allows flexibility to consider experience, leadership, and the needs of the community each year.

Since 2004, the process for the selection of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem, is open; there are no seniority-based appointments or automatic succession of leadership roles.

For more than a century, Glendora's Mayor has been chosen by the City Council, not by voters. The annual selection has been guided by the collective judgement of the City's elected representatives; the current process has been in place since 2004.

A Process Rooted in History

The current approach for Mayoral appointment is consistent with how Glendora has operated for most of its history. When the City was first incorporated, J.S. Brubaker served as the Council's presiding officer under the title of "President." Following his death in February 1912, R.W. Hamlin was appointed to complete the term, an early example of the Council's role in selecting its leadership.

In the decades that followed, mayoral leadership continued to evolve. Between 1912 and 1952, the Mayor changed periodically (14 times), with terms ranging from one year to as many as six. The role of Mayor Pro Tem was formally introduced in 1950, when Louis C. Wood became the first to hold that position. Over time, council members have served in the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem roles in a variety of ways, reflecting the needs and priorities of each Council and the community it serves.

Notable Moments in Mayoral History

Several moments in Glendora's history highlight how flexible and Council-driven the selection process has been.

Joe Finkbiner was selected as Mayor in January 1964 and served continuously until April 1980, marking the longest tenure in City history at 16 years. During those 16 years, five different councilmembers served as Mayor Pro Tem without succeeding him, including George McGill, who held the position for six years between 1966 and 1972. Douglas Miller served as Mayor Pro Tem during the final two years of Finkbiner's tenure but was not selected as his successor.

On May 24, 1988, Lois Shade was selected as Mayor, becoming the first woman to hold that office in Glendora's history; she had not previously served as Mayor Pro Tem. Throughout the 1990s, several councilmembers, including Larry R. Glenn, Bob Kuhn, and Sue Bauer, served multiple terms as Mayor. Consecutive terms have also been common. Over the past 50 years, nine Mayors have served back-to-back terms, and since the City's incorporation, 12 have done so.

When the Rules Were Different

Glendora has periodically experimented with more structured approaches to selecting its Mayor. In 1988, the Council adopted a resolution that introduced a seniority-based system in which the most senior councilmember would become Mayor Pro Tem before automatically transitioning to Mayor. That system was modified in 1991 to remove the seniority component while maintaining an automatic rotation concept.

During the years these frameworks were formally in place, actual practice occasionally varied from the written guidelines. The structured rotation approach was ultimately set aside, and the 2004 resolution restored the open, Council-led selection process.

The Broader Picture

Since incorporation in 1911, Glendora has recorded 44 different individuals serving as Mayor. Over time, some have served multiple terms, reflecting a tradition where experience and the trust of fellow councilmembers guide the selection. Councilmembers have taken a variety of paths into leadership roles over time, highlighting the evolving priorities of each Council.

Eight councilmembers served a full Council term before being selected as Mayor. Others, like Marshall Mouw, served multiple terms as Mayor Pro Tem across several years before ultimately being elevated to Mayor. Forty-nine councilmembers never served as Mayor during their tenure in elected office.

Current Mayor, David Fredendall, is among those who have served consecutive terms. Mayor Pro Tem Karen Davis, who has also served consecutive terms as Mayor, is the City's longest-serving Councilmember with 21 years of continuous service.

The City's election schedule has also evolved over time. Since 1911, the timing of City Council elections has changed six times, including a 2021 transition to November of even-numbered years to align with statewide elections and new State mandates. In 2017, Glendora moved from at-large to district-based elections, establishing five council districts. These changes did not alter the Council's annual process of selecting the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem.

Today, the Mayor continues to be selected each year by the City Council. This annual selection process, continues to reflect the Council's role in guiding City leadership and serving the community.

GLENDORA MAYORAL SELECTION: BY THE NUMBERS	
Year Glendora incorporated	**1911**
Year the current selection process was established by resolution for Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem	**2004**
Mayor Pro Tem role established	**1950**
Total individuals serving as Mayor since incorporation	**44**
Mayors who have served consecutive terms (since incorporation)	**12**
Councilmembers who have not served as Mayor during their tenure	**49**
Mayor Pro Tems serving in the role without transitioning to Mayor (since 1952)	**16**
Councilmembers not selected as Mayor after serving a full Council term	**9**
Longest mayoral tenure — Joe Finkbiner, 1964–1980	**16 years**
Changes to the City election schedule since incorporation	**6**
Mayor directly elected by voters	**0**

About This Article

This article is drawn from the City of Glendora's official historical records, City Council resolutions, and documented mayoral service records dating to the City's incorporation in 1911. Residents with questions about the mayoral selection process are encouraged to contact the City Clerk's Office at (626) 914-8210 or City_Clerk@CityofGlendora.gov