CITIES AND METROPOLITAN AREAS IN CALIFORNIA AND THE NATION

■ TEXT SUMMARY

In 1790 only 5% of Americans lived in urban areas. Today more than 80% of the U.S. population lives in cities or suburbs. In California, that figure is even higher, at 97%. Given this rural-urban shift, city government has become ever more important.

Each city in California has either a **mayor-council government** or a **council-manager government**. In a mayor-council government, the voters elect a mayor as the chief executive and a city council as the legislative body. In a council-manager government, the voters elect only a "weak" mayor and a city council, who then appoint a city manager to run the city. Three-fourths of California cities use a council-manager government.

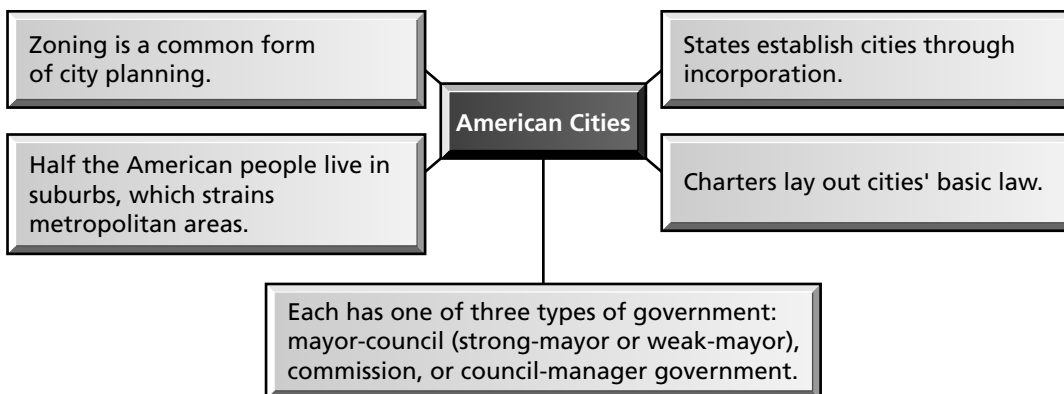Rapid growth of cities has emphasized the need for city planning. One common form of planning is **zoning**, in which a city is divided into zones in which the land can only be used for certain purposes. Zoning ordinances are an important function of city government. Other major functions of city government include providing police and fire protection, maintaining streets, collecting trash, managing sewer and water systems, and building parks and schools.

Urban growth has led to the rise of suburbs. Some government services are provided by both a city and its suburb, or by either and the county, at extra cost. California encourages local governments to cooperate by using councils of governments, which are regional districts set up to get other levels of government to work together.

THE BIG IDEA

Once primarily rural, the United States' population has become much more urban.

■ GRAPHIC SUMMARY: *Aspects of City Government*

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Zoning is a common form
of city planning.
                                    American Cities
Half the American people live in
suburbs, which strains
metropolitan areas.

States establish cities through
incorporation.

Charters lay out cities' basic law.

Each has one of three types of government:
mayor-council (strong-mayor or weak-mayor),
commission, or council-manager government.
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Cities, especially the larger ones, rely heavily on city government to provide extensive services.

■ REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do a strong-mayor and a weak-mayor government differ?

2. Diagram Skills What type of city planning is common in America's cities?