

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL

NO. 2007 - 467

CLEARANCES	Initial	Date	Date Received in Council Office	Agenda Date	Assigned to:
Originator:	Brenner	11/20/2007		11/20/2007	Introduction
Division Head:				12/4/2007	Council
Dept. Head:					
Prosecutor:					
Purchasing/Budget:					
Executive:					

TITLE OF DOCUMENT:
 Ordinance forwarding Charter amendment to the Auditor re: countywide voting

ATTACHMENTS:

SEPA review required? () Yes () NO SEPA review completed? () Yes () NO	Should Clerk schedule a hearing ? () Yes (X) NO Requested Date:
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SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: *(If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)*

This ordinance forwards proposed Charter Amendment 1 to the County Auditor, for inclusion on the 2008 General Election ballot, to provide that each member of the Whatcom County Council shall be elected by majority vote of all registered voters of Whatcom County.

<p>COMMITTEE ACTION:</p>	<p>COUNCIL ACTION: 11/20/2007: Introduced 12/4/2007: Council Adopted 6-1 Crawford opposed Ord. 2007-069</p>
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Related County Contract #:	Related File Numbers:	Ordinance or Resolution Number: Ord. 2007-069
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Please Note: Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County's website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council.

SPONSORED BY: CONSENT
PROPOSED BY: BRENNER
INTRODUCTION DATE: NOVEMBER 20, 2007

ORDINANCE NO. 2007-069

**FORWARDING CHARTER AMENDMENT 1 TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR, FOR
INCLUSION ON THE 2008 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT, TO PROVIDE THAT EACH
MEMBER OF THE WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL BE ELECTED BY MAJORITY VOTE OF
THE REGISTERED VOTERS OF WHATCOM COUNTY**

WHEREAS, Whatcom County is the most local form of government for over half the population of our county; and

WHEREAS, many of the Whatcom County issues determined by the County Council affect all of Whatcom County's population; and

WHEREAS, each Whatcom County district ensures candidates for county council in the general election have already met district standards by residing in the district and being forwarded from the district as the top two candidates after the primary election; and

WHEREAS, there was no comprehensive debate last year regarding general election district-only voting versus general election county-wide voting for county council members who have already been forwarded by their districts; and

WHEREAS, last year's election changed the Whatcom County voting process without a comprehensive debate on its merits; and

WHEREAS, there was no local voters pamphlet which would explain both sides of the issue before the measure was voted upon; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County has now implemented a comprehensive local voters pamphlet to be able to give all voters both sides of the issue; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council is comprised of only seven members and each general election includes no more than four positions, which is a small enough number to ensure voters can obtain ample information on all council candidates with the assistance of the recently instituted local voters pamphlet; and

WHEREAS, an election cycle has passed in which Whatcom County voters had the experience of district only voting in the general election for county council members; and

WHEREAS, many Whatcom County voters were upset by their inability to vote for all council members who directly affect their lives and were in the last general election; and

WHEREAS, district-only general election voting limits individual Whatcom County voters to only being able to elect a minority of council members who make decisions that may directly affect their lives; and

WHEREAS, the ballot title of the measure that changed Whatcom County's voting process last year may have been confusing to some voters; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Charter allows a super majority of the Whatcom County Council to place charter amendment measures as general election ballot questions to be voted on by all qualified registered voters of Whatcom County.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED that the Whatcom County Council approves placing Charter Amendment 1 on the 2008 General Election Ballot as specified in Exhibits A to this ordinance.

ADOPTE~~D~~^D this 4th day of December, 2007.



ATTEST
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM


Civil Deputy Prosecutor

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Carl Weimer, Council Chair

Approved () Denied


Pete Kremen, County Executive

Date: 12-11-07

EXHIBIT A

WHATCOM COUNTY
CHARTER AMENDMENT NO. 1

BALLOT TITLE

SHALL SECTION 2.13 OF THE WHATCOM COUNTY CHARTER BE AMENDED TO PROVIDE THAT, FOLLOWING THE PRIMARY ELECTION, THE TOP TWO CANDIDATES FROM EACH COUNCIL DISTRICT SHALL BE FORWARDED TO THE GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT TO BE ELECTED BY MAJORITY VOTE OF THE REGISTERED VOTERS OF WHATCOM COUNTY.

AMENDED CHARTER LANGUAGE

Section 2.13 – Election Countywide

~~The qualified voters in each district shall vote upon the council members in their district only at the November general election. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for each position shall be elected. The candidates standing off the council member at large shall appear on the ballot in each district.~~

The registered voters of Whatcom County shall vote upon each council member position at the November general election. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for each position shall be elected.