

**2006 CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION  
BRIEFING PAPER  
TRANSPERENCY IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT/ACCESS  
TO MEETINGS  
JUNE 14, 2006**

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**The Issue**

*Transparency in County Government/Access to Meetings*

**Issue Support**

Councilmember Dave Somers spoke in favor of the motion. The current survey shows:

| Shall the county council be required to develop rules of procedure that include the use and publication of evening meetings, dissemination of voting records, and access to public information? |  |                  |                |
|---|--|------------------|----------------|
|   |  | Response Percent | Response Total |
| Yes   |  | 93.8%            | 75             |
| No  |  | 6.2%             | 5              |
| Other (please specify)  |  | 0%               | 0              |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>  |  |                  | <b>80</b>      |
| (skipped this question)   |  |                  | 1              |

**Other Counties**

| County                      | Meeting   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| King                        | Day time as set in ordinance                              |
| Snohomish                   | Day time as set in ordinance                              |
| Whatcom (Part time council) | 7:00 PM   |
| Pierce                      | 1 evening meeting per year in each district per ordinance |

**Options**

Within the home rule counties, Charter language does not deal with the specificity of time and place. Each county has an ordinance that specifies as shown above.

No Change which leaves the system as is with some citizens feeling marginalized.

The following was crafted by the chair for consideration:

“The county council shall enact by ordinance rules of procedure governing the time, place and conduct of its meetings, including varying time of day to best accommodate the public; hearings and the introduction, publication, consideration and adoption of ordinances. In order to provide the best possible open government, the rules of procedure shall include a method of providing timely and transparent information to the public. All meetings shall be open to the public except to the extent executive sessions are authorized by state law.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Email from Chair Mike Cooper