

**2006 SNOHOMISH COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW
COMMISSION
BRIEFING PAPER
SIZE OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL
JUNE 7, 2006**

**Prepared by
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BACKGROUND

The 2006 Charter Review Commission has decided to study and debate the size of the county council not unlike the 1996 Charter Review Commission. The 96 Commission placed the issue on the ballot. The voters rejected the measure 56%-44%.

In 1996 the county population was 525,503. Today it is 655,800, an increase of 130,297.

If the Commission decides to place the issue on the ballot it may need to consider changes to the following in addition to Article 2, 2.30:

- Districting Committee Article 4,4.60
- Charter Review Commission, Article 8, 8.20.
- Transitional Provisions, Article 11

The Issue

2. Size of the County Council. Shall the size of the County Council be increased based on population growth? Shall the County Council be expanded to 7 members?

Increase	No Action
Survey 36%r (12)	Survey 52% (17)
Terwilliger, Nelson, Portman	Somers, Koster, Gossett
	8 citizens

The current survey that asks the question "Shall the county council be expanded to create 7 council districts?" shows the following responses:

Yes 42.5% 27 respondents
No 50% 32 respondents
Other 7.8% 5 respondents.

The issue like 96 is driven by the growth of the county. Attachment 1 shows the projected growth from 96 forward. Attachment 2 shows the growth from 2000 forward based on today's population. Finally attachment 3 shows the population growth by district by incorporated/unincorporated using today's Growth Management boundaries. While all districts grow, clearly 1, 4 and 5 grow at the greatest rates with district 1 nearly doubling.

In addition council members serve on a variety of regional boards, councils and committees that deal with a variety of issues ranging from transportation to mental health. Those commitments require time and attention all while attending to constituent issues.

Status of Other Home Rule Counties

Attachment 4 titled Comparison Home Rule Charter Counties Members/Staff/ Budget presents comparisons of council size, number represented, staff, and current legislative budgets. Ratios are provided to normalize data between counties. Total council budgets are provided for current operations.

King County voters changed their Charter to downsize their county council from 13 to 9. If the council were increased next year the number represented would be projected to be about 97,000 or 10,000 less than Pierce County council members.

Options to consider

1. No Change

Under this option the size of the council remains the same, while population continues to grow and with some might say increased responsibilities from state and federal governments that will place additional demands on council member's busy schedules.

Population appears to be increasing at a rate of 9% every 5 years. Based on today's growth management boundaries, the unincorporated areas in districts 1, 4 and 5 continue to outpace incorporated areas. Unincorporated nearly matches incorporated in District 3 by 2025 and District 2 remains fairly static in terms of percentage incorporated to unincorporated. Given no change in growth or growth management boundaries the unincorporated areas continue to dominate in terms of total population. By the year 2015 a year before the next Charter Review Commission meets each, council districts will average approximately 156,600 residents, about 50,000 residents more than in 1996.

2. Increase Council at a preset population trigger

Some have suggested increasing the size of the county council when the population reaches a preset target. When the population reaches the target that would trigger an election and redistricting. Some have used 700,000 as the target/trigger. Rough estimates indicate that could happen next year but probably no later than 08. Paraphrasing councilmember Gossett, "if the target is 700,000, then announce intent to hold the election next year." He suggested a trigger of 800,000/900,000 that would force the election into the future. 800,000 would be reached in approximately 2016 or when the next Charter Review Commission meets. 900,000 is projected to be reached in 2024. He suggested those numbers as being more honest in that the commission would not be announcing a trigger that in fact could happen next year. He advised against raising false expectations.

3. Increase Council size at preset time.

The final option is to put forth to the voters the decision to increase the county council to 7 members at the next general election which would be November 2006. Increasing the

council to 7 members would provide 1 member to 97,000 citizens, about what the numbers were in 1996.

Finally it should be noted that another option expressed by some is to increase the number of staff to support council members and the general workload of the council. Council already has the authority to do this via the budget process. Additional Analysts cost \$91,000 with benefits, plus another \$8,400 in other staff costs including overhead.

The following table lists year, population and number represented based on 7 equally divided districts by population. Based on population trends the growth in numbers represented continues to grow

Year	Population	Number Represented
2005	655,800	93,685
2010	720,113	102,873
2015	784,426	112,060
2020	848,738	121,248
2025	913,051	130,435

Impacts

There are costs associated with increasing the size of the county council. Council staff has provided the following cost estimates ¹

Line Item	Annual Cost/1 member	Annual Cost/2 members
Councilmember including Benefits	\$106,205	\$212,410
Legislative Aide including Benefits	\$78,752	\$157,504
Other Costs including Overhead	\$16,800	\$33,600
Totals	\$201,757.00	\$403,514.00

The following table shows the totals when adding two council members, aids and associated costs to current budget.

Item	Cost
Current Budget	\$2,708,219
Two Council members	\$212,410
Two Aids	\$157,504
Other Costs 4 Staff	\$33,600
Totals	\$3,111,733.00

¹ Email from Sharie Freemanatle, 5/15/2006

Capital Costs

There are currently offices for only 5 council members. The space would need to be remodeled or take over space from Prosecuting Attorney. Remodeling is estimated to be-
(Information to be provided when received from facilities)

POPULATION BY SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICT
1995 REVISED ESTIMATE AND 2000 - 2010 FORECAST
BASED UPON SNOHOMISH CO. TOMORROW 1995 RECONCILED ALLOCATION

	1995	2000	2005	2010
** DIST1				
** Subtotal **	110468	124368	139500	151146
** DIST2				
** Subtotal **	105327	115683	125677	134186
** DIST3				
** Subtotal **	100487	105928	111897	116556
** DIST4				
** Subtotal **	100041	114902	128961	140943
** DIST5				
** Subtotal **	109180	124598	140745	153156
*** Total ***	525503	585479	646780	695986

2025 GMA Population Forecasts by County Council District
Based on the 2025 Population Targets Corresponding to the Future Land Use Map
Adopted by the Snohomish County Council on December 21, 2005

COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICT	2000 Census Pop	2005 Pop Estimate	2010 Pop Forecast	2015 Pop Forecast	2020 Pop Forecast	2025 Pop Forecast
County Council District 1 (Koster)	120,581	134,512	152,159	169,805	187,452	205,099
County Council District 2 (Stevens)	121,775	126,721	134,231	141,741	149,251	156,761
County Council District 3 (Nelson)	121,442	126,565	136,766	146,967	157,168	167,369
County Council District 4 (Gossett)	121,924	135,088	149,751	164,415	179,078	193,742
County Council District 5 (Somers)	120,302	132,914	147,206	161,497	175,789	190,080
TOTAL SNOHOMISH COUNTY	606,024	655,800	720,113	784,426	848,738	913,051

Notes:

1. These 2025 population growth forecasts are subject to further revision following the SCT "target reconciliation" process in 2006.
2. These 2025 population forecasts by Council District do not include the 15,000 population reserve established by the County Council for potential future "fully contained communities" in Snohomish County. They also do not include the 4,900 population reserve established by the County Council for potential future "TDR Receiving Areas."

CCDDist_Dec-21-05_Final_CCAction_Pop_Forecast-release.xls
 May-24-2006

2025 GMA Population Forecasts by County Council District
Based on the 2025 Population Targets Corresponding to the Future Land Use Map
Adopted by the Snohomish County Council on December 21, 2005

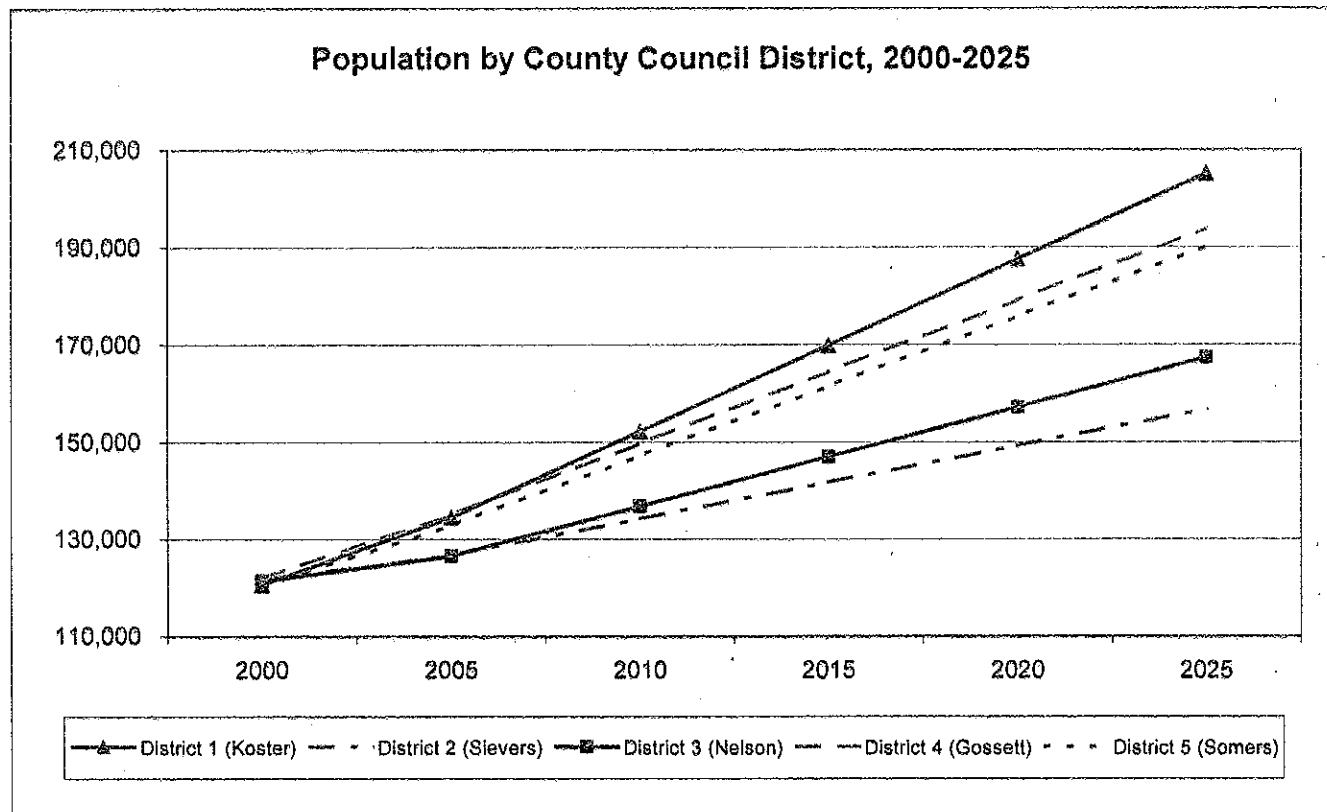
COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICT	2000 Census Pop	2005 Pop Estimate	2010 Pop Forecast	2015 Pop Forecast	2020 Pop Forecast	2025 Pop Forecast
District 1 (Koster)	120,581	134,512	152,159	169,805	187,452	205,099
Incorporated Total		53,515	57,489	61,463	65,436	69,410
Unincorporated Total		80,997	94,670	108,343	122,016	135,689
District 2 (Slevers)	121,775	126,721	134,231	141,741	149,251	156,761
Incorporated Total		116,860	123,910	130,960	138,010	145,060
Unincorporated Total		9,861	10,321	10,781	11,241	11,701
District 3 (Nelson)	121,442	126,565	136,766	146,967	157,168	167,369
Incorporated Total		75,830	78,013	80,195	82,378	84,560
Unincorporated Total		50,735	58,753	66,772	74,790	82,809
District 4 (Gossett)	121,924	135,088	149,751	164,415	179,078	193,742
Incorporated Total		55,935	59,035	62,135	65,235	68,335
Unincorporated Total		79,153	90,716	102,280	113,843	125,407
District 5 (Somers)	120,302	132,914	147,206	161,497	175,789	190,080
Incorporated Total		38,270	41,142	44,014	46,886	49,758
Unincorporated Total		94,644	106,064	117,483	128,903	140,322
TOTAL SNOHOMISH COUNTY	606,024	655,800	720,113	784,426	848,738	913,051

Notes:

- 2005 population estimates were obtained using Puget Sound Regional Council 2005 census tract level population estimates, by applying the 2000-2005 percent change for combined census tracts approximating Council District areas to the Census 2000 population by Council District.
- These 2025 population growth forecasts are subject to further revision following the SCT "target reconciliation" process in 2006.
- These 2025 population forecasts by Council District do not include the 15,000 population reserve established by the County Council for potential future "fully contained communities" in Snohomish County. They also do not include the 4,900 population reserve established by the County Council for potential future "TDR Receiving Areas."
- 2010, 2015 and 2020 population forecasts assume straight line growth between 2005 and 2025.
- The population forecasts for cities do not attempt to predict the amount and timing of population annexed by cities after 2005. As a result, the incorporated population forecasts assume static city boundaries over time.

CCDist_Dec-21-05_Final_CCAction_Pop_Forecast-release2.xls

May-26-2006



**COMPARISON HOME RULE CHART COUNTIES
MEMBERS/STAFF/BUDGET**

County	Population	# Council Members	# Aides	# Legislative Analysts	# Clerk/Staff	# Other Staff	Total Staff	Total Council Budget	# Represented
King	1,808,300	9	36	22	6	33	97	\$ 13,380,345.00	200,922
Pierce	755,900	7	7	6	2	7	22	\$ 3,560,870.00	107,986
Snohomish	655,800	5	5	5	4	3	17	\$ 2,708,219.00	131,160
Whatcom	180,800	7	0		4	2	6	\$ 822,224.00	60,267/180,800
Ratios		King	Pierce	Snohomish	Whatcom				
Staff/Population		18,642.27	34,359.09	38,576.47	30,133.33				
Staff/Members		10.78	3.14	3.4	0.86				
Total Council Budget/Population	\$	7.40	\$ 4.71	\$ 4.13	\$ 4.55				
Staff /Population: total county population divided by total staff									
Staff/Members : divides total staff by number of council members									
Dollars/Population: divides the total county budget for council operations by county population									
Dollars/Member: divides the total county budget for council operations by number of council members									
Total council budget for operations includes all program line item costs including, total salaries, taxes, benefits, allocated space, utilities etc									